

auto-sleeper owners' club



Newsletter No. 12

Greetings!

How nice to be getting down to work on the September Newsletter with enough contributions from Members (and some from non-Members, too) to make eleven pages seem too few and with the Club Meet at Calne very fresh in my memory. What an occasion that turned out to be, the first get-together since the Innaugural Meeting for some, the first ever for one or two and in one case, arriving, joining and staying for the weekend, all in one easy move! We had nearly fifty 'vans there, of many different patterns, ranging in age from Ven's LAL388P on a Bedford base to two "G" registered Talisman GLs and I think everybody took the opportunity to talk to everybody else! This lasted until mid-afternoon on Sunday when we had to tear ourselves away. Of course a certain amount of momentum was given to the proceedings by the greetings, assorted, dished out by Rally Marshall Audrey as we tried to get through the gate. You weren't there? You don't know? Pity! And that was the first time Audrey and David have taken on the job, believe it or not, so what will happen next year at their second, third and fourth Meets, heaven only knows... Very well done, both of you and many thanks from all of us.

"Chairman's Chat (3).

As you will remember from the Editor's rude comments in Newsletter No.10, Daphne and I took Capuccino, our Talisman II, for her first trip to France during June and July. I know some members have yet to venture across the Channel with their Auto-Sleeper so I thought some observations on our trip might be of interest - seasoned continental tourers may skip the rest of this chat!

Driving on the right presents no difficulties especially as with a motor caravan you don't do a lot of overtaking and the extra height provided by a motor caravan gives you a much better view over traffic than is possible from a car.

We had to visit friends in Switzerland before idling back through France so we used the Autoroute A 26 from Calais to Rheims in order to give us a good start. As we used a late evening ferry crossing it was our plan to stay on one of the many Aires for our first night's stop and we had chosen one - the Aire de Reveillon - near B ethune, from a very useful book "Le Guide" which describes all these laybys on the major Autoroutes. Our first experience of wild camping, though it wasn't all that wild!

Most of the time we were on the move we chose sites from the official French camping and caravanning guide which we found more reliable than our other books, including the Caravan Club, Michelin and Alan Rogers' publications. With the Camping Carnet, obtainable from the Caravan Club before setting off, checking-in formalities at camp sites are reduced to a minimum.

As to the standard of camp sites generally we found them to be much as at home - some very good, mostly good and a few not so good. The cleanliness of toilets is a pretty reliable guide to the overall standard of a site, and the owner will always let you have a look round, on foot, before deciding whether to stay.

What impressed us most of all was the generally professional approach to caravanning and camping by the French, and the good behaviour of their children. We hardly ever saw a motor caravan on a French camp site - do they all wild camp?

A useful tip - 25 metres of cable may be plenty in the U.K. but in France the electric bollards are bigger and less well distributed so an extension cable may be needed. To our surprise every site where we hooked up needed a French

style two pin plus earth socket type plug so make sure you have the necessary adaptor. Also many supplies had reversed polarity so my home-made short connector swapping live and neutral came in handy. Towards the end of our holiday we sampled several "Campings à la ferme" - the French equivalent of C.L.s - and found them excellent. Surprisingly they provided high class toilet facilities and sometimes hook ups but their main attraction was their quietness and superb locations, and also their cheapness, about £2 or £3 per night for for a van plus two adults. Finally a word of warning for those of you with Fiamina or similar roll out awnings. We were caught unawares by a sudden whirlwind which whipped the awning over the top of the van and broke the supports. The moral is always use guy ropes (we didn't) and don't rely on pegs at the bottom of the supporting legs. Better still, roll in the awning if a storm looks to be even a remote possibility.

John Normandale. August 1989."

On the day after I had sent the August Newsletter to the Printer I received a letter from Roy Davies, with an "assist", ice hockey style, from Cynthia which not only supplied responses to almost every query I have raised in the past but put in some new ideas and with humour, too. Thank you, both, very much! For covering a lot of ground in minimum space it would be difficult to beat Roy's style, thus:

- (1) Handbag Snatchers (Operating on motor cycles) in the South of France - usually only Spain & Italy get mentioned. We were caught near Antibes a few weeks ago. As the Gendarme said, "You 'ave the 'coligans - we 'ave the bag snatchers." Beware!
- (2) Rallies. - we prefer "low key" as at Honeybourne & Appleby. (If we called them "meets" as suggested we could then become "Auto-Sleeper Meeters" - the wife!) (I don't suppose our ladies would like to be known as "Auto-Sleeper Meeter Maids!... " Ed.)
- (3) Tyre Pressures. - I run our Talisman on Michelin 185/75 R 14 tyres with 54 lb/sq.in at the front and 57 at the rear as recommended by my dealer. Seem O.K. to me - tried 65 at the rear & felt every pebble! Petrol consumption about 23 - 24 mpg on average.
- (4) Accessory Shops. - Have enclosed ad. from M.M.M. of our local shop - TODDS - quite worth a look around & near M.6 Motorway." (Can't give too much free publicity but it says, inter alia, "60,000 square feet of indoor display, Large display of motorcaravan awnings, Probably the largest accessory shop in the U.K. Todds Mobile Leisure, Coote Lane, Lostock Hall, Preston." Any more copy will cost them!!Ed)".
- (5) "Water in Spare Wheel" in Talbot Express motor caravans complain readers of M.M.M. - what about the other side, ie., water on the battery? - which is worse I feel.
- (6) Also a lot of chat in M.M.M. about inaccuracies of water gauges in Auto-Sleeper motor caravans. Mine is the same. No comments from either Auto-Sleepers or Lab Craft. Can they advise? Why won't the type used on millions of petrol tanks do instead of the electrical resistance over the 2 rods/water type?
- (7) Ferries. We have found the Felixstowe-Zeebrugge route of P & O quite satisfactory for us. Good ships, helpful crew, clean, good cafeteria, on time. (3 trips now all O.K.) Conversely, Brittany Ferries not so good. Our return from Brittany last year was scheduled from St. Malo to Portsmouth. Arriving in

plenty of time we were told the ship was at Cherbourg! - Fuel oil trouble overnight apparently. We were given 150 FFY and told to catch it at Cherbourg. I didn't realise it was about 130 miles away!

Anyone understand how the Ferry fares are arrived at? Certainly not on time or distance - but all seem to end up about the same (and too much!).

A lovely comment from a French lady eyeing up our Talisman recently (you need the accent). "Monsieur, Monsieur, - the Camping Car, - eet ees sen-s-a-t-i-o-n-a-1!" (spreading her arms wide.)

Finally, congratulations to the designer(s) of the A-SOC heading on your Newsletters - Very clever - who does them?

Regards & Yours sincerely,

R. T. Davies."

(I haven't been able to include your cartoon but we're working on it! Ed.) I'm going to take this opportunity to put in a comment about names and titles. That "R. T. Davies" goes well with the "Dear Mr. Daley" at the beginning but wouldn't "Dear Phil" and "Regards - Bob" have been more in keeping with the Club atmosphere we are building up so successfully? Please don't take offence. Bob, I know only too well that threshold which lies between formality and familiarity, it took me long enough to climb over it! I answer to "Phil" and like it. Several people - well, at least two - have said they like the informal, not to say personal, tone of the Newsletter and while I am writing it I hope to keep it as a letter rather than a Bulletin Board. Enough. Point made, I hope.

As for the Front Page of the Newsletter...Well, it wasn't easy to find a suitable artist but after much searching and at great expense... I'd better admit Rita does them.

Please don't forget to let us know when you change your vehicle - we hope to be able to keep lists of members by vehicle type as well as by address. I noticed that a number of impending changes, even some impending first motor caravans, were listed in the questionnaires and August is likely to be a peak month. We will have to change ours, too from CX 1000 GTL to Talisman GL, from B200REA to G686MWD. If you have changed and haven't told us, please do, before you forget.

"TROUBLES COME IN THREES.

This is written to warn other Club Members who have a cassette Porta Potti in their vans, of a potential problem which they may face at any time, and the other two problems that our "Loo" compartment gave us.

1) My wife and I took our Talisman II, new last year and only 2,500 miles on the clock, to France in May for a month's holiday. On the second day whilst travelling south to the Med., my wife thought she heard a noise in the rear of the van, but I put it down to a noisy diesel car which was behind us. How wrong I was! When we pulled up for lunch, I could hear the whirling noise from the rear of the 'van, and it was obviously an electric pump. When we opened the loo door, the mat was floating in about 2"-3" of pink coloured water, which had also splashed everywhere, and soaked all the carpet around the outside of the loo door. By manipulation of the flushing knob I stopped the pump, but not before it had pumped the contents of the full flushing tank (3 galls) onto the floor of the shower tray via the pan. The shower tray plug was, unfortunately, in place.

After a big clean-up, we settled down to lunch, when, all of a sudden, the pump started up again. The only way to stop it was to take out No 2 fuse,

which, incidentally, Auto-Sleepers handbook only mentions as the fridge control. We do not normally use an electric hook-up on one night stands, so the same evening when we tried to start the fridge with the electronic starter there was no joy because it was in No 2 fuse circuit. Inserted fuse, pump started but also started fridge, and when the thermo-couple had taken over, removed fuse. Finally, I took out the electric control panel, disconnected the wire from the pump on the terminal block, and relied thereafter on French toilets.

2) A few days later and only a mile after leaving a campsite we stopped to do some shopping. Found the loo awash again! Water had run down from the tip-up sink. Removed sink by withdrawing four fixing screws and found a small square block of wood had blocked the drain hole in the base of the receptacle which funnels the water to the waste tank. This had obviously been in the back of the unit since it's construction and had slipped into the hole, thus forming an efficient plug! This also soaked the carpet in the two cupboards under the sink! (Auto-Sleepers please note.)

3) Our next visit was to Andorra. Coming out of the main town, on the way into France, you have to climb a very high pass. At the top we stopped to admire the view, and once again found the loo compartment had water in, only this time it seemed it had syphoned back up the pipe from the waste tank. When we had started off, we only had about 3-4 gallons in the waste tank so I concluded that it was due to the altitude (8-9,000 feet) but I may be wrong. On our return, I phoned Thetford P.P. and they were obviously not surprised and sent a replacement kit of parts. It was apparently a common occurrence. The micro-switch controlling the flush pump corrodes and shorts the contacts. Kit comprises new switch, new cover for waterfill, and a new plastic shield. We normally travel with our sink and tray plugs in to stop any possible smells from the waste tank. In future the waste tank will be emptied and the shower tray left un-plugged!

W.L.Clarke. 29/6/89"

I have replies, if not exactly answers, to the three problems.

1) Cassette toilets were first fitted to coachbuilt Auto-Sleepers in October, 1987. The fault described was discovered early in 1988 and only modified models were fitted after August, 1988. When the fault was found to be widespread, Thetford were supplied with a list of names and addresses of all known purchasers of Talisman and Legend models thought to be affected and a kit of replacements, as described, was sent to each of them. Mr Clarke somehow slipped through the net. A-S don't know how but apologise, just in case it was their fault. The serial numbers of cassettes likely to cause this trouble are being obtained for us by Thetford but haven't come through in time for this NL. The serial number is on a label on the rear wall of the compartment, clearly visible when the filler tank is drawn out, as for filling. I will give you the numbers A S A P.

2) To prevent the wash basin dropping down too far when opened, two pieces of wood are stuck in the unit as stops. If they don't stop there they are just the right size to block the outlet pipe from the catchment basin. Sorry for the trouble but, to be on the safe side, take off the four screw caps, remove the four screws, withdraw the unit and have a look in the catchment basin, from time to time. A better solution is being sought.

3) The fuses on the panel are identified in detail in the new Owner's Handbook, currently at the printers and to be made available to existing owners through the Club soon. There will have to be a charge for this comprehensive document to cover cost to us, postage etc.

4) Water gets back from the waste tank to the lowest points in the pipes leading from basin, sink and shower tray because it surges from end to end of the tank during travel, especially when negotiating hairpin bends. There is a sort of pump action because the weight of moving water in the tank is greater than the weight of water in the pipe. Since the bottom of the shower tray is only very slightly higher than the top of the waste tank, the tray gets the full benefit - if the plug is out. One, not entirely satisfactory, answer is to empty the tank before leaving the site. Another is to re-design the system but this is very difficult due to the chassis members around which the pipes have to be led. (On our CX1000GTL we cut the pipe and used a bucket to catch the soapy water. Don't forget to seal the hole in the waste tank where the shower tray pipe entered.)

Derek Crick gave me a bit of a problem; do I include any travel stories from Members or only ones they have done in Auto-Sleepers? So I read the article again, enjoyed it again and here it is for you to enjoy, too, I hope:

"HAVE A GOOD...!"

When we decided to go to Canada and spend some time motor-caravanning in British Columbia we never realised how often we were going to hear the phrase, "have a good... " followed by one of the following, "day", "trip", "visit", "vacation", "meal", "time", etc.

We left Manchester by Wardair on the 31st May, 1989 and after a very good flight with excellent service arrived at Vancouver. This flight was a first for both of us, first by 747 and first trans-Atlantic. The views over Greenland, Baffin Island, Northern Canada and the Rockies were terrific. The weather was lovely, hot and sunny as we left in our hired "Camper", travelling up the Fraser Valley and the Fraser Canyon to Hell's Gate. Here the railway workers had blasted too much rock out of the canyon-side playing havoc with the river and hence the salmon stocks. The next day we took the Yellowhead Highway from Kamloops on our way to Jasper. Travelling north on this highway we began to get views of the Rockies. We stopped at a viewpoint for Mount Terry Fox. Terry Fox was a Canadian who suffered from cancer; after losing a leg and being given an artificial one he decided to run across Canada. Unfortunately Terry did not make it - he was taken very ill and died after covering an enormous distance. There are so many mountains in the Rockies that the Canadians gave his name to one. Soon after that we passed Mount Robson (the highest) and were lucky to see the summit which is usually covered by cloud, so we were told. That night, our third, we were in Jasper, having a look at the town.

The next day found us on our way to Maligne Lake, passing Medicine Lake and stopping at the various viewpoints to see and photograph some of the mountains. We took the boat tour on the fourteen mile lake, the views of the surrounding mountains were terrific. Of course we took photographs of the lake's "Spirit Island", this is perhaps the most photographed spot in the Canadian Rockies. On the return journey we came upon what seemed to be a traffic jam, this was caused by a coach and several cars that were stopped whilst the occupants photographed a bear feeding by the roadside. After came a walk in Maligne Canyon where bridges and viewpoints enabled us to see the sculptured limestone and waterfalls.

A Journey on the Jasper Sky Train took us up the Whistle Mountain to an altitude of 2,285 metres. A trail lead to the summit and there were some tremendous views. On our return to the Camper we set off down the Icefield Parkway. Stops were made to view Mount Edith Cavell, the Athabasca Falls where

the Athabasca river is funnelled into a narrow gorge and the Sunwapta Falls where the river suddenly changes course from northwest to southwest and plunges into a deep canyon. That night we camped at the Columbia Icefield camp site.

The following day we arose early in order to have a tour on the Athabasca Glacier. This tour was taken in a gigantic "Snowmobile" with the girl driver giving us a very good commentary. We had about 15 minutes on the glacier before returning to the Snowmobile. Continuing down the Parkway we stopped to see the waterfall known as the "Weeping Wall", the view of the Mistaya. Howse and Saskatchewan River valley to the west of Mount Forbes (the highest in the National Park), another sculptured gorge - the Mistaya Canyon and finally the beautiful Peyto Lake. A short walk from Bow Summit led to this lake where our breath was taken away by the colour of the lake, a beautiful deep turquoise. This was the most beautiful lake that we have ever seen.

The weather began to break and the following day was really quite poor - some drizzle as we visited Lake Louise with its monumental railway hotel, Chateau Lake Louise. Although we didn't see the lake at its best the setting was quite impressive. We then took the mountain road to Moraine Lake and the skyline of the Valley of the Ten Peaks. This is the lake that is featured on the back of the Canadian Twenty Dollar bill. We took a photograph at the exact spot and the result showed the reflections of the mountain in the lake and the lake's lovely colour. Leaving this beautiful scene we passed Castle Mountain (once named after Eisenhower) on our way to Banff.

Two days were spent in Banff, there is so much to do and see - elevenses on the terrace of the Banff Springs Hotel (like Chateau Lake Louise a famed C.P.R. Hotel), swim in the hot Sulphur Springs or in the Cave and Basin Springs, by gondola to the summit of Sulphur Mountain, some weird rock formation known as the "Hoodoos" and a very good and interesting Indian Museum. We also visited Lake Minnewanka and the better known Two Jack Lake before watching the daily trans-Canadian passenger train leave Banff station. Whilst at Banff the weather improved and held for our trip over the Vermillion Pass to Radium. On the way we passed the Great Divide, the continental watershed where all waters flow either west to the Pacific Ocean or east to the Atlantic Ocean.

That night we camped at Kimberley, the town with a Bavarian style, boasting the world's largest cuckoo clock. The next morning was spent finding St. Eugene Mission church - a church built in the 1890s to serve the Kootenay Indians.

Being a Railway "Buff" I had planned this route to take in the C.P.R. Museum at Cranbrook, this was well worth the detour we made, featuring the lovely woodwork of the coaches together with some of the special crockery. We had tea, jam and scones in the dining car feeling every bit an early traveller. Fort Steele, the next stop, was also worth the detour. This was a Heritage Town - a place of sixty restored and reconstructed homes and buildings from the turn of the century. We returned to Radium, after visiting Lake Windermere, to have a swim in the Hot Springs, then north through Golden to camp in Glacier National Park.

Soon after breakfast the next day a stop was made at the Ghost Town of Three Valley Gap, then on to Craigellachie. This was the spot where Canada was joined sea to sea by rail in 1885 - there is a monument to the event and on the track a brass spike indicates the "last spike" - naturally I had to drive in a spike on a nearby length of track.

From now on the weather really turned bad - rain. At Sicamous we turned south to the famed Okanagan, famed that is for Sunshine, etc. We went through

quickly because of the rain. We did make a stop at one of the "Fruit Stands". On returning to Hope the weather cleared so we made our way to Vancouver and to Tsawassen to catch the ferry to Vancouver Island. The ferry arrived at Schwartz Bay and we had a good run down the Marine Drive. The sun came out for our visit to Fable Cottage, a story book seaside cottage in a wonderful setting - the builder enjoyed working in wood and both he and his wife were a little eccentric I suspect.

We continued to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. Victoria is a fine city with so much to occupy your time there, the B.C. Legislative Building, have tea in the Empress Hotel (yes, another C.P.R. one), the Totem Poles in Thunderbird Park, with the old London Transport buses with their sides painted with the Union Jack. All these were in the area round the inner harbour. There are beautiful parks, in Beacon Hill Park we saw the start of a cricket match between a Victorian team and a visiting New Zealand Eleven. We went to the famous Butchart Gardens which is regarded as a must for flower lovers. The sunken garden made in a quarry is truly marvellous. We had tea in the camper and returned to the gardens at night to see them with the lights turned on. After Victoria a few days were spent on Vancouver Island visiting such places as Duncan, the City of Totems, the B.C. Forest Museum (and of course a ride on the old steam train); Chemainus, the "Little Town that Died" - when the mill closed and left so many unemployed, the people painted at least twenty-one murals depicting the town's history; some waterfalls and "Cathedral Grove", a place of 300 year old Douglas Fir trees, ten feet in diameter and two hundred and forty feet high. Finally we reached the Pacific Rim National Park with miles of good sandy beaches and the town of Tofino. This was our furthest point west. We returned to Vancouver via the Nanaimo-to-Horseshoe Bay ferry. Vancouver is a city of much interest. We enjoyed visiting the various museums, the lovely Gardens (Van Dusen and Queen Elizabeth Park), walking in the famous Stanley Park with its collection of Totem Poles, and strolling the streets of "Gastown" and listening to the Steam Clock. Weather spoilt our trip by cable car to Grouse Mountain, but only after we had seen the panoramic view of greater Victoria. Nerves spoilt our walk on the Capilano Suspension Bridge - we returned soon after the start, although many others went the full way. Perhaps the best trip was the day trip to Squamish - going by the Royal Hudson (a former C.P.R. loco and coaches) and returning by the sea on M.V. Britannia. Whilst in Vancouver we managed a day trip to Everett in the U.S.A. to the Boeing Aircraft Plant for a visit to see the 747s being assembled. This was our second trip to the U.S.A., our first being on the 4th July, two days before, but there did not seem to be much celebration. Our return flight was again by Wardair and we were recognised by some of the cabin crew, that was grand. It was also very interesting to see the Cuillin Mountains of Skye and follow the Scottish coast down to Barrow then over Lancashire to Manchester.

In the words of the Canadians, we had had "a Nice Vacation" in a lovely country amidst some of the most friendly people we have ever met.

Derek Crick, 14 July, 1969."

There is nothing I can add to that, except to say "Thank you, Derek for taking the trouble to tell us about your "adventure"". I understand statistics - cost, distances, etc., may be available later for the record or for those especially interested. This is probably the best place to introduce this month's supplement, another visit to Turkey and an up-date of Bruce Cunningham's item in an earlier Newsletter. This has been provided, very promptly, by Neville Blackshaw (209) and my thanks to him, too. I have had

both these travelogues as supplements partly for ease of keeping by those seriously considering a visit but also to cram as much as possible into one sheet, reducing costs! I feel it is important to have up-to-date travel news from the less well-known areas and hope we can continue to provide it. It all depends on YOU!

Our President was not able to do much travelling this month, having to hold the fort at Willersey during the annual summer shutdown but he has managed to send us some news.

"FACTORY NEWS.

As several of you will be aware, we are currently closed for our summer holiday and once again I am accompanied by the ladies of our clerical staff to keep me in good humour! Contrary, however, to previous holidays, when the factory was uncannily silent, there is during this fortnight plenty of activity which I shall now describe.

Firstly, we have employed an industrial cleaning firm to come and clean our factory, both inside and out. All the accumulated dust and grime from inside the works is being removed, metal girders are being repainted, and the floor is being scrubbed and acid cleaned. In addition to all this, the factory has been completely re-wired and now boasts four lines of twin-tube fluorescent lights with reflectors, an enormous amount of new plugs and, of course, all the conduit and wiring replaced. As if this were not enough, the roof lights in the factory have been cleaned, the doors repainted, and the complete roof of the office block replaced with new felt and woodwork. Our Woodwork Shop which is, as you know, one of our original buildings, has also been extensively re-wired and even at this early stage of the work the result is quite remarkable. In addition to the re-wiring of the factory, we are also fitting roof fans that will make it much more pleasant in which to work during this warm weather.

Our plans for the autumn include, of course, the run up to the Caravan Show which is always the high-light of the year. You should note that the Caravan Show is from the 11th-19th November inclusive, and please be assured that there is always something of interest to see on our Stand, so please pay us a visit.

On this quiet note, therefore, I end our Factory News, but rest assured that once we are all back in harness, there will hopefully be something more positive to report!

With good wishes to you all, and make the most of the good weather!

CHARLES TREVELYAN."

Last month I told Mary C that the only spoilers approved by VW for their vans were those supplied by VW. Shortly after receiving a reprimand from Mary for not having told her that before she had not only bought one but persuaded her brother-in-law to spend a happy hour or two fitting it (!), a very nice letter arrived from Dennis Oxley of Elite Vehicles, 29, Greenhill Drive, Bramley, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS13 4JZ. I feel I should reproduce it in full in order to nullify any harm my previous comments may have done:-

"Letter dated 15 August 1989.

Dear Mr Daley,

I read with interest your comments to Mary C in a recent issue of your magazine, re the fitting spoilers to V W vans.

We being manufacturers and suppliers of spoilers & body kits for V W vans to fit all models from the early split screen types to the latest versions, are

at all times in close contact with the sales and technical department of Man Volkswagen, and adhere strictly to any guidelines suggested by them.

Thus I feel that perhaps you may have misunderstood the information you received, so perhaps you will allow me to put the record straight.

In June 1988 we received a letter from Man Volkswagen pointing out the dangers of fitting spot lamps in the ducts on the front of the spoilers, although we have never recommended the fitting of anything within these air ducts, at the suggestion of Man V W, we have since that date included in our fitting instructions a warning, pointing out that these ducts are positioned to allow airflow and to provide the correct levels of brake cooling. (Fitting instructions enclosed)

A copy of this was forwarded to Man V W for their appraisal, and was accepted. Should you require any other information or I can help in any way please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dennis Oxley

for Elite Vehicles."

Thank you, Mr Oxley for puttings things straight. Our Members now know where they can buy a spoiler for their VWs! Of course, life being the way it is, Mary C didn't buy an Elite spoiler...

"SECRETARY'S CORNER"

Firstly, Hurley. When you get an item wrong, sometimes a worse mess is made in putting it right. I won't go into details but the charge for Hurley Meet is £5 for the weekend, plus rally fee. Electric hook up on normal pitches but not on the rally field. Frank Stinchcombe is starting the Marshalling as Heather & John Tidbury will not be there at first. Frank's address is on the slip, and early booking does help as the site needs notice of numbers.

I had some items for last month, but Phil and I caught the dreaded 'flu at Auto-Sleepers, whose commitment to excellence we could well have done without in this case. I sat looking at the computer screen and thought, "If I was at work I would have taken the day off!" That didn't seem to make sense, so I switched off, dragged a camp bed under the silver birch and spent the rest of the day dozing and taking light refreshment.

We did not have many entries for the competition to write an article for Auto-Sleepers' Magazine, perhaps there was not time enough. The ones we did receive have been passed to Charles Trevelyan, together with the photographs deemed suitable for the Club Page. A little time will pass before they are returned, so don't get worried.

We all know (now) that a lot of Members have dogs and a few have cats but welcome to the budgies! There were two enjoying the rally at Galne, and I think their owners had quite a good time, too. I told a new member whose hobbies are "Birdwatching, Air Rifles", that I hoped he kept the hobbies separate. I now hope he likes budgies.

A most URGENT request has come from two new Members. They are intending to travel, in their Clubman, to Western Europe, parts of North Africa, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Eastern Europe for about 9 or 10 months and want to talk to anyone with experience of those places. They are leaving in October so if you can help a telephone call to 0279 815432 (John & Ruth) would be welcome. They also intend to emigrate to the USA late summer 1990 so if anyone can help with that it would be appreciated. I will forward any correspondence. The extract from the Europ Assistance insurance leaflet (separate sheet) is for information only. Their actual leaflet has to be filled in when insurance

is required and I will shortly be receiving a supply of them. The Club is allowed a 15% discount which we will share with any Member wishing to take up the offer. (SAE for leaflet, please.) One section which is not made clear in my opinion, is the annual cover. In conversation with Ms O'Beirne it was made clear to me that the cover does NOT mean you may go away for a year. It DOES mean that you may go away on a number of trips abroad during the year, none of them longer than 91 days, and you are allowed to be out of the country for a TOTAL of 183 days each year. I suspect there is some other cover available for longterm travel and this one is meant to bridge the gap between that and short stays. Also, the dates for which each cover is required must be inclusive - don't overrun into the following week without paying the extra stated. Incidentally, Ms O'Beirne asked if I knew where a Camping Carnet can be obtained by non-club members. The Caravan Club will only issue them to their own members I understand, and she is sometimes asked for this advice, so if anyone can tell me I would appreciate it. It is something I may be asked, and I like to be prepared with ready (accurate) answers. I also get letters from people who want an Auto-Sleeper, having seen one on a site or jetty. They hear of the Club and reckon it is the best place to start enquiries, a good idea for non-owner and Club Member alike. There were two this month asking if they could advertise in our Newsletter, but last night we had a telephone call cancelling one of them. They have now seen a Talisman GL and the piggy bank will lose a hock and a trotter!

Rita"

As I thought it would, space is running out. So much to say, so little time! Some brief items:-

It is proposed to hold a Club Meet at Abbey Wood Caravan Site, London, over the weekend of 1st, 2nd & 3rd December to combine Christmas shopping in the capital with some rather relaxed, Club type conviviality in the evenings for those who could not face a return to the West End for a night out. We are open to suggestions, preferably written and signed, from anyone interested.

French Christmas Shopping Trip. Further thought makes this appear unlikely due to the very great travelling time involved. 6 am departure from Broadway plus 14 hours travel plus 3 hours fighting in the Super Marche, plus coach driver's rest time results in a return to Broadway in the not-so-small hours of the following day, with little or no profit.

Your Secretary wants to produce a booklet for sale at Christmas to raise funds for the Club. Contents would include Travel Tales, some of which have already appeared in the NL, plus almost anything Members care to submit, just so long as it has something to do with Motor Caravanning and especially, of course, doing it in an Auto-Sleeper. "Even hobbies which are of a general interest" she says. Contributions as soon as possible, please so that we will have a chance to sort them out/censor them and get a quote from our Printer.

Mr K Leedham wants to know if anyone has fitted an isolating switch to the 12 volt electrics on a Talisman and if so, how? Letters forwarded. Watch this space, later, for further info.

Antony Lowe of Worsley would like to belong to the Club but, even more, he would like to own the requisite Auto-Sleeper. He has his eye on a Clubman or early Talisman. Intending sellers should contact Antony at:- 81, Chaddock Lane, Boothstown, Worsley, Manchester. M28 4DE.

Brian McDonnell who lives on Hayling Island, would dearly (but not too dearly, I suspect!) like to buy a Clubman. Anyone who might be able to help could contact Brian at:- "Newcroft", 6b Yew Tree Road, Hayling Island, Hants. PO11 0QE.

Hurley Meet or Rally. It has been suggested that a "Barbecue Party" could be of interest/entertainment value on the Friday or Saturday evening. The Club doesn't own such equipment so, if you are coming, are interested and do own a Barbecue, bring it along, please. Perhaps one word on the booking slip you send to Frank would give him some idea of the amount of interest. Oh yes! I suggest "Bar-B-Q" would do!

Ivan Newton, a very active Club Member, is organising the Motor Caravan arrangements for the Bath & West Show, 22nd/24th September. He has allocated an area for the Club so that Members can pitch together. He has found himself short of helpers and asks if anyone would be able and willing to assist with parking Members as they arrive. Some 20/30 A-SOC Members have indicated their intention to be there so the job will not be onerous but is necessary. A phone call to Ivan any evening on 0454 775976 would be welcomed. Can you help?

I feel I must point out that this is the Twelfth Newsletter and that it was only twelve months ago that the first "Proper" Committee Meeting was held at the Orchard. That was when John, Frank, Charles, Neville, Rita & I sat down in Charles' office to start finding out what it took to start a Club. (Dilys wasn't there, having left hospital, without her appendix, only the day before.) In a rare quiet moment at Calne I thought how very worthwhile all our efforts had been. There were about 100 people there, obviously enjoying themselves and, in fact, saying so from time to time, none of whom would have been there without the A-SOC! From the letters and telephone calls we get it is plain to see we are growing in numbers and friendliness day by day. May we continue to go from strength to strength. (Have I said that before, somewhere?)

See you at Hurley. Or Scarborough. Or both, perhaps...

Your Editor



Phil Daley

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