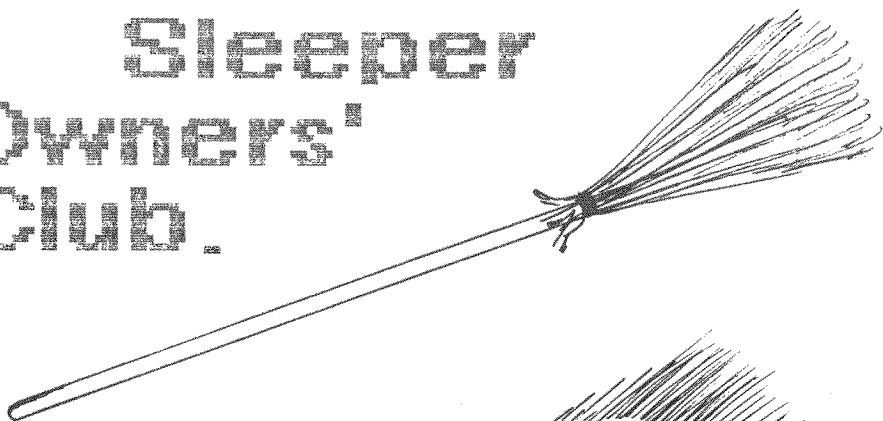


Auto-
Sleeper
Owners'
Club.



Newsletter

13

Greetings!

Having produced twelve Newsletters and circulated them to Members there was just a chance I might get into a rut, becoming even more complacent than usual. I am glad to say there is little if any chance of that happening, due to the active and independent minds of our Members.

I thought Newsletter No. 12 was quite a reasonable effort and was very pleased to have favourable comments made by two or three people but there is room for improvement! Gordon Rollinson has several ideas for you to think about (and comment on, please). Thus:-

"Dear Phil,

Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club.

The Chairman has said that the committee need to know what members want from the club. I write in response to that request.

We (that is to say me and 'er inkoons) have been motor caravanners for over ten years. Since I took early retirement three years ago, we spend about three months each year touring in our CXL, mainly abroad. Naturally we read motorcaravan magazines, notably MMM, and we are long term members of the Caravan Club and receive their excellent magazine En Route.

We appreciate and applaud the monumental efforts which have clearly been made by the A-S Owners' Club committee and in particular by the editor of the Newsletter and the Secretary. There would clearly be no Club without their impressive input. But I consider that the Club's main purpose should be to deal with matters relating to A-S motorcaravans whereas so far the Club seems to have concentrated on organising rallies and producing a general purpose Newsletter.

Although not unsociable, we are not attracted by rallies. We are usually too busy with other activities to devote a whole weekend to a rally (though we did call at South Cerney for a couple of hours and thought the spares shop to be a good idea). The "rally" which would be of more appeal would be an informal one where members touring abroad could mention in the Newsletter when they are likely to be on a particular site. Other A-S Club members in the vicinity could then make contact. It is always a particular pleasure to meet other A-S owners a long way from home and such informal "rallies" take no organising.

But reading the Newsletter is the main benefit we receive from the Club. Although we find it interesting, such articles as reports of trips to Turkey or Canada have no special Auto-Sleeper connection and are surely better dealt with by the glossy magazines mentioned above where photographs and maps can be included. I would like to see a greater technical content in the Newsletter, giving me tips on how to obtain more usefulness and pleasure from my Auto-Sleeper. In return, I would be quite happy to pass on the details of those accessories or modifications which we have adopted as a result of our own experience. The factory itself might enhance future models by incorporating those which it considered to be of general appeal to its customers. I believe a technical section in the Newsletter would be a more comprehensive and orderly way of exchanging ideas that relying on members turning up and chatting at a rally.

Might I propose one way in which this could be done without adding to the workload of the Newsletter's editor? For each model or type of recent Auto-Sleeper, the Club might invite a member to become the co-ordinator or focal point for the collection of members' ideas on that particular model. Summaries of these items could then be passed to the editor for inclusion in a "Modifications and Accessories" column, set out in sections according to model.

For what it's worth, I would be prepared to volunteer to carry out such a role for the SL/CXL/Rambler/Sportsman models for, say, 12 months (or earlier if sacked!) Is this what other members want and, if so, are there any other volunteers?

Happy wanderings,
Gordon Rollinson."

This is the first response I have received to John Normandale's request for information and there is some new stuff in it. Apart from saying that I am sure there can be a balance between the technical and general interest components of the Newsletter - if Members provide the material! - I offer my thanks to Gordon and await YOUR response. I have no doubt at all that the subjects of interest to Members are legion, the growing volume of correspondence proves that! Barry Crawshaw of Carnoustie provided a selection of questions and answers:-

"Dear Phil,

Here are a few comments for the first time since I joined. Thanks first for the welcome newsletters, right back to the first, which have provided some useful information.

Tyre Pressures. I still hope it will be possible to provide some practical guidelines for as many makes of tyre and MV models as possible. There must be an easier way than each owner having to correspond with tyre makers! Where, for example, does one write to Kleber? I am sure that all the members appreciate it would be well-informed advice, not official information.

Radio reception. GRP bodies do not seem to favour obtaining a good signal. Could this be due to having no ground plane near a roof-mounted aerial? Anyway, with my Talisman, I am getting poor signal with a roof-mounted rubber aerial, and am setting about improving things. I wonder whether we have members who have either solved this problem, or are at all expert in car radio. Advice would be much appreciated.

Area Meets. My wife and I are not ardent rally people, but it would be nice to meet other owners say once a year to discuss travels and equipment. If numbers do not justify a Scottish area group, then we'll just have to try and arrange to be in the south at a suitable time to attend a rally where they are already best established.

Ferries. One newsletter asked for some reports on these. This year we tried Sally for the first time. We found the service businesslike, and departures and arrivals exactly on time. Food satisfactory and the late-night meal good value. Seating (outside of bars and restaurants) was in rather short supply; might have been plenty if people did not sleep across three or four!

Security. Would it be worth carrying out a little enquiry into which sorts of A-S vans have suffered break-ins, and through which doors, windows, or other places? Most of my holiday time in the van is spent a long way from the A-S factory; either in Scotland or on the Continent. So, if serious damage were done to the vehicle by thieves forcing entry, it would pose real problems in getting adequate temporary repairs locally, and in getting the vehicle back to the factory for the best quality work. Consequently, my philosophy at the moment is not to reinforce any windows or locks, hoping for minimal damage if the worst came to the worst. Very little of saleable value would be found in the vehicle anyway. I just wonder what other people's approaches are.

End of remarks. You must receive enough to read without my adding to it. Thanks for all that you have undertaken. And do not apologise for all the leg-pulls in the newsletter; they come across exactly as intended!

Best wishes,
Barry Crawshaw."

I'm sure we will get some system worked out, via the tyre manufacturers before long. Bear with us. Can anyone help on the radio problem? I wonder about getting details of the method of entry, if any. Could be interesting and possibly useful if kept confidential. Comments, please.
A few tips:-

"Dear Phil,

Congratulations to you all on getting the Club off to such a super start. I am well aware of the tremendous amount of time and effort you must all put in, and although it cannot always be expressed, I am sure it is much appreciated by all the members.

A tip for the Club Talbot owners (before I get round to sending it to M.M.M.!) - I was annoyed at the way the horn sounds when the ignition is "Off" on my Talisman GL (a stray elbow can bring a whole night-time site alive!), and also the way the glove-compartment light went out with the ignition "Off". So...

- 1) Disconnect battery for safety.
- 2) Remove fusebox cover, undo 2 screws and pull fuse bank forward (don't drop screws behind the dash - you may never see them again!)
- 3) On terminal 9 remove the spade connector with two light-brown wires and place on terminal 2. (When glove compartment is opened, the light should come on, irrespective of ignition setting.)
- 4) On terminal 2 remove the spade connector with purple wire and green/red wire and place on terminal 9. (The horn will not now sound unless ignition is "ON".)
- 5) Make a note of these changes in handbook and on fuse box cover.

As manufacturers change wiring from time to time, it would be wise to test each change for correct operation as you carry them out.

I enclose a copy of an article from our office magazine about cruise controls. I have now fitted three (the last two to motor caravans) and cannot recommend them highly enough. They are particularly well suited to "our" style of motoring. Congratulations to you all once again and I look forward to meeting you all soon.

Regards,

Barry & Sue Brown. (370)"

The article mentioned by Barry is given below in full:-

"CRUISE CONTROL.

For the last two years I have driven to the South of France for my summer holiday, using the French "Autoroutes". This has enabled me to complete the journey overnight in something less than 12 hours. However, on the first year's holiday the strain of maintaining a reasonably constant speed throughout the 750 miles journey resulted in aching back, legs and right ankle and made a tiring journey far worse than it need be. The answer, I decided, for the second year, was a "Cruise Control".

A cruise control is a simple electro/mechanical device which, basically, registers the speed at which you wish to travel and maintains that speed irrespective of terrain. The controller I chose from several on the market is, I believe, the cheapest - the Zemco, and costs in the region of £95. It is very straightforward to fit requiring only the most basic tools (i.e. drill, screwdriver, a couple of spanners, etc.). Everything else is supplied in the kit together with full instructions and took me about two and a half hours to fit. The system has (1) a set of small magnets wired to the prop-shaft and a sensor nearby which registers their movement, (2) a vacuum unit which physically operates the throttle by its own cable and (3) the controller, a small box of electronics (smaller than a matchbox!) which mounts the three switches (OFF, SET, RESUME), reads the sensor and adjusts the vacuum unit correspondingly.

Mount the controller near to the steering wheel.

Operation is simplicity itself:-

Press the "SET" button to accelerate the car to the desired speed OR touch the "SET" button when you are at the desired speed (either having accelerated the car in the ordinary way, or after braking the speed down to a new lower speed). The unit will switch off when the clutch is depressed (clutch switch optional), the brake is touched, the "OFF" switch on the controller is operated or, when the ignition is switched off.

The unit will resume the previously set speed (after braking, etc.) by merely touching the "RESUME" button (surprise, surprise!).

A feature exclusive to the ZEMCO is the ability to adjust the set speed by half a mile an hour by "tapping" the SET to accelerate and by "tapping" the RESUME to decelerate (i.e four taps on the SET button increases your speed by 2 m.p.h.) This is an admirable feature, permitting accurate running of the car's speed to the surrounding traffic.

The speed of the vehicle is maintained to within 1 m.p.h

And all this without touching the accelerator pedal!

Needless to say, this year's trip was delightful and, moreover, I find I am using the cruise control in everyday traffic merely to reduce strain.

I recommend a cruise control for anyone who does a reasonable amount of main road driving and consider it a must for towing and motorway work.

Happy motoring (and motor caravanning!)."

This is where I am duty bound to say all contributions from Members which appear in the Newsletter are published in good faith in the hope that they will prove useful or interesting. All reasonable care has been taken to ensure accuracy but none of the modifications has been tested by me therefore neither the Editor nor the Club can accept responsibility for the consequences if you try them out. For instance, if your passenger's knees get slapped by the glove compartment lid every time you sound the horn, don't blame me!

A letter from Roy Williams adds fuel to the tyre pressure discussion so here it is in full:-

"Dear Phil,

Auto Sleeper Clubman, Bedford 2.5 P - 1985 model.

I have read many items in magazines and your newsletter on the question of tyre pressures. I thought I would solve the question by asking other owners of this vehicle at our Inaugural Meet at South Cerney but the outcome left me even more confused as the figures varied alarmingly - Auto-Sleepers suggested Front 40, Rear 36- so decided to go back to square one and weigh the van fully loaded, and I mean fully - just before our six weeks tour of the Italian Lakes and with my wife and myself sitting in the van. The outcome: Front: 980 kg (Max 1130 kg). Back: 1500 kg (Max 1550 kg), Gross: 2520 kg (GVW 2570 kg).

Tyres are Goodyear steel-belted Radial, 185R 14C. From this information Vauxhall Motors advised me that fully loaded the tyre pressures should be:

Front 36 psi.

Back 54 psi.

I merely pass this on for the benefit of "Clubman" owners to try and settle the question.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Williams.

P.S. I am also informed by Vauxhalls that from engine number 20T0005895 (Jan 1985) the 2 litre camhead engine can run on unleaded petrol. Prior to this number engine after max 5 tankfuls of unleaded use a tankful of leaded petrol 90 RON Octane"

Message to all Renault owners. Extract from a letter to Auto-Sleepers Limited from Renault UK Limited, dated 31 JULY 1989:-

"With regards to the use of unleaded fuel our technical Services department have advised that all Traffic vans since model year 1983 can operate on both leaded and unleaded petrol."

The following letter dated 14th August from Gordon Rollinson, reached me a bit too late for inclusion in the September Newsletter. Since it contains some fresh information on Talbot conversions with reference to tyre pressures, here it comes:-

"Dear Mr Daley,

Before you are compelled to bring down the editorial guillotine on the subject of tyre pressures, may I tell you of my own research into the subject?

As delivered, my Talbot CXL high-top had the handbook-specified pressure of 70 psi in the rear tyres. Not only did this give a very uncomfortable ride, but I consider that it would have been hazardous to have driven it unloaded on wet or icy roads.

Fortunately, the owner of a Talbot Express can check the rear axle loading without recourse to a weighbridge. On the driver's door pillar, a diagram indicates the linkage/floor distance which can be measured beneath the vehicle giving, by reference to the table, the static load on the rear axle. This showed that, empty, my CXL was carrying a static load of around 820 kgs.

I worked out what additional weight I would put into the van for an extended continental touring trip including clothing, food and drink, tools and spares, a full water tank, a full waste tank (an extra) a large tent, (more versatile than a fitted awning), chairs, folding bicycle (the £49, ones from Sterling House fit neatly into our big cupboard with the mudguards removed) and not forgetting - ourselves (!). I proportioned the loads between front and rear axles, depending on their position in the van and came to the conclusion that we would be very unlikely to add more than another 250 kgs to the rear axle. That gives a total of 1100 kgs, considerably below the 1680 kgs maximum quoted in the Talbot handbook. Each wheel would then carry-about 550 kgs or 1200 lbs.

I rang Michelin's technical service department who told me that for my Michelin X 185/75 R 14C tyres, a pressure of 40 psi would be perfectly safe for this load.

Front tyres are, of course, a different problem since they carry the weight of the power unit. Pressures of 50 psi would seem most appropriate for them. In practice, to compensate for a slightly greater load on the left hand side of the vehicle and to give a higher safety factor, I use 50 psi all round which gives a comfortable ride.

These figures relate to the Talbot CXL with the tyres I have mentioned. However, it is likely that most "panel vans" converted to motorcaravans also carry a comparatively light load on their chassis. Coachbuilt vans may be quite different. My research has not gone that far.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Rollinson."

Many thanks, Gordon. I can confirm the presence of the label you mention also on the door pillar of the Talbot Express chassis-cab but I haven't yet crawled underneath far enough to satisfy myself that the floor of the coachbuilt van is in the same place as the chassis builders anticipated and that the measurements I might make

would give the same answer as that given by the weighbridge. I will try to do so when time permits.

For interest only, our Talisman GL (Diesel) weighed in at 1120 kg front, 1230 kg rear (Gross 2360 kg) before we started to load it and without us aboard. Must get to the weighbridge now we have it in travelling trim. Since the tyre pressure question will not go away, I may as well add a couple more bits of probably useless information. In the Owner's Handbook supplied by Peugeot Talbot with the new vehicle (August 1989) they state on page 90 that with 185-75 R 14 tyres the pressures should be 57 Front and 70 Rear, but with 185 SR 14 tyres they should be 50 Front and 45.5 Rear. And, just for fun, on the nearside door pillar a label advises 63 Front, 66 Rear for 185-14 and 57 Front, 70.5 Rear for 185/75-14. Thank goodness my vehicle has the 75% aspect ratio tyres where the recommendations agree but the confusion over the 185-14 is very strange, isn't it? Would anyone like to sort the bones out of that little lot? A word with Peugeot-Talbot seems indicated and I will have one with my new contact at International House, shortly.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT (4).

Isn't it surprising how quickly these Newsletters come round? It certainly doesn't seem like a month since I wrote about our French holiday. This time I thought I would reminisce about how we got involved in motor caravanning.

Originally we were planning to buy a motor caravan when we had both retired with the intention of following the example of a good friend who winters abroad in Agadir in such a vehicle. About six years ago, however, we decided it might be a good idea to see how we got on with a home on wheels. At that time Australians and New Zealanders opened an open air market for motor caravans on the South Bank near the Festival Hall - originally this activity took place around Australia House in Aldwych until that got too congested. So, just to see what was available, we travelled up to the South Bank one Sunday to get some idea of what was on offer and at what price. Then, as now, the majority of vans for sale were elderly VWs, many left hand drive, with a variety of different elevating roofs. Most of them looked as though they would never make Dover, let alone Greece or Spain, whose campsite labels they mostly displayed! Prices varied enormously and seemed to be more linked to how desperate the owner was to sell than to the age or condition of the vehicle. One particular left hand drive VW caught our eye, mainly because it was so much cleaner and obviously cared for than most of the others. Anyway, we weren't up there to buy, only to look around so home we went.

A week later after an excellent Sunday lunch I suddenly said to Daphne, "I wonder if that VW's still there?" So off I set for town and sure enough it was still available. I had another look round, a brief drive and decided this was the one for us! So much for all the good advice about an AA engineer's report and all that jazz.

So Bluebell I entered our lives and a lot of fun we had with her. I had never driven a VW van before and found it more like steering a boat than a motor vehicle. And the remoteness of the engine made the selection of the right gear, particularly reverse, into a game of chance. The elevating roof had fabric sides and was held open and shut by gas filled struts. Over the years the ball and socket joints had become very worn and we had great fun with trying to keep them together. I remember very vividly one journey from Stamford when the ball and sockets had finally given out and I sat throughout the whole journey holding the roof down. Somebody told us that Renault 5 gas struts had the same fixings - they did, and no more problems.

After about 18 months we were offered, out of the blue, a Sherpa Auto-Sleeper with an elevating roof. Even then we had realised that Auto-Sleepers were something special so we went to have a look at it. The test drive was a big disappointment as the engine seemed very rough and the colour of the van - a dark blue - was most

unattractive. But the van layout and the condition of the woodwork in particular won us over! So, back to the South Bank to sell Bluebell I, to another Australian and for slightly more than we had paid for her.

Bluebell II was an ugly brute. Luckily the engine just needed a proper service and then behaved beautifully, but we could never get to like her appearance. We have seen others of the same model since and they look much better in lighter colours. With the original Sherpa vans the seam between the main body sides and the lower panels were real rust traps and Bluebell II was no exception - trying to keep that area of paintwork tidy was an impossible task.

We took Bluebell II across to France and then drove her up through Belgium and Germany to Denmark for a wonderful holiday. We loved Denmark but found eating out exorbitant. It was on that trip we had our only mechanical problem - well, not mechanical really, electrical. After spending an enjoyable night in Hameln (of Pied Piper fame) we found the battery absolutely flat. Luckily an accessory shop was nearby and we managed to get a replacement. The only other complaint we had about Bluebell II was the low gearing - a fifth gear would have been more than welcome. One benefit of this was that we never had any problems getting up hills - we always said she would go up the side of a wall if necessary.

By then we had our eyes firmly fixed on a Clubman and then, even more firmly, on a Talisman with that extra length in the body providing those welcome cupboards beside fridge and wardrobe. And then when the Talisman II arrived with cassette Porta Potti - well... but that's another story!

John Normandale.

September, 1989."

A letter from Doug Wood of Sevenoaks was of particular interest to me for several reasons. Firstly, I feel Mr Pritchard of Tor Point got unfair treatment by me when he wrote advising us of his problems; if apologies are in order I offer mine. Secondly, the blocked fuel filter problem hasn't gone away, Gordon Denham had had the same trouble before we met at Calne but had been able, eventually, to persuade the AA patrolman that the answer lay in a new petrol filter, one was fitted and no trouble since... Also, at Calne, John Slater described somewhat similar symptoms, akin to fuel starvation. Has anything developed from there, John? Here's Doug's letter:-

"Dear Phil,

May I refer to Mr Pritchard's letter in issue No.10. So that he may not feel he was the "Chosen One" would you please forward the brief account of the events I experienced whilst on a touring holiday (much shortened) of Wales this summer. I fully endorse our President's concern that the Newsletter should not become an agony column but I feel that a brief sentence in the Newsletter (ie. "Has anyone experienced trouble with...") The unprinted replies should enable the committee to give helpful advice on future occasions.

May I thank you and the committee for all the work entailed in running the club and every success in the future,

Yours sincerely,

Doug."

His harrowing tale of involuntary stops, and ineffective treatment by various Talbot agents, spread over several weeks, was only brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the replacement of the petrol filter and that course of action was suggested by John Pritchard's letter. Well done, John!

Since the "Fuel starvation" symptoms MAY mean a blocked petrol filter, a check on the filter could prevent a lot of trouble later.

"FROM INSIDE THE FACTORY."

With winter around the corner and cold autumn mornings already upon us, the benefit of having a room heater in a motor caravan becomes less of a luxury more an essential part of all-year motor caravanning. With better insulated and warmer vans the question of gas bottle performance is one we are always being asked about. Our expert on gas, Alan Curry gave me the following interesting facts. Both Propane and Butane are gasses, stored as a liquid, under pressure in steel cylinders. Butane in the usually blue coloured cylinders (ie. Calor gas and Camping gaz) is stored at 25 p.s.i., and Propane in the red cylinders stored at 100 p.s.i.

All appliances fitted to Auto-Sleepers are able to run on either Butane or Propane provided that the correct regulator is fitted. The question of which is best depends on individual needs. Should long continental holidays be your objective. Butane Camping Gaz is the most readily available and would probably be your choice. However, anyone contemplating a skiing holiday in sub-zero temperatures would be well advised to use Propane due to its better low-temperature performance. It will readily work down to minus 40 degrees C and it is ideally suited to those of you planning that visit to Siberia. Butane will work quite adequately down to Zero Centigrade, however many of the brand names such as Calor Gas now add a small percentage of Propane into their cylinders which enhances it's low-temperature performance, down to approximately minus ten degrees C - this being the temperature round the cylinder wall. A word of advice, do NOT wrap your gas cylinders in insulating material in the belief that it will keep them warm! In fact, it has just the opposite effect, preventing the cylinders from drawing heat from their environment.

These gases in their natural form do not smell. During the refining process a stenching agent is added to them, enabling gas leaks to be detected by smell before a dangerous build-up can occur.

Finally, all motor caravan appliances run on low pressure gas and it is essential to use the correct regulator pressures. These are: Butane 28 mbar (11.2 inches water gauge.) and Propane 37 mbar (14.8 inches water gauge.). One last word of warning - NEVER use or store any type of gas cylinder on its side. ALWAYS stand it upright. Here endeth this month's lesson.

Neville Jelfs.

P S We could have filled another two pages on the subject. Nev."

Nev asks me to say where gas can be bought on the continent, knowing this is quite a subject if dealt with fully! Camping Gaz is often stocked by the Campsite shop, especially in Spain. Some filling stations in France and Italy stock it, especially in the more popular Tourist areas. If you need to buy some in a small town try the local hardware store, though it may be a bit more expensive. Usually the best bet in France is a Supermarket in popular areas. Germany and Austria have their own blend of Propane and Butane which is totally unsuitable, not to say downright dangerous, for use with our appliances (theirs work at quite a different pressure) but the Campsite shop is the place to get Camping Gaz which is always Butane. In Scandinavia a firm you may have heard of, Primus, is the sole supplier of gas and gas appliances and their bottles have different connectors, invariably contain Propane (it gets COLD there in the Winter!) and you will have a job to find Camping Gaz.

This has only skated over that subject. A new subject: Because most (97.687% at the last survey) of the correspondence comes to this address, Rita & I think we know more than other Committee members about what you want, need or would enjoy if you could have it. We, mostly me because I have the time to sit and think, (so I am told) are

sure there is a need to help new motor caravanners and especially new A-S owners, overcome their fear of Going Foreign! We can remember quite well the fears/worries we had before we got up and went. I also remember vividly the feeling I had, sitting by a lake in Switzerland about three days after Crossing The Channel, not just how easy it was but, "Why hadn't we done it years ago?". My expression then was, "Come on in, the water's fine!". And nothing has changed since then, except everything has become simpler and easier.

So, what are we going to do about it? Well, we would like/firmly intend to produce a booklet or large, loose-leaf folder containing fairly brief information on all the countries of Europe and Scandinavia, for a start, plus North Africa and Asian Turkey. The first section would contain the very basics like, Getting a Passport, Booking your Ferry (or, Getting a hitch through the Chunnel, by the time this is done!). I think we will be able to suggest preferred ferries, based on Members' comments (Keep the reports coming, please) and little, important things like, Where to park overnight at or near a Ferry Terminal. Details of preferred Super Markets, special areas for bargains in wines and spirits, (how did Andorra compare with San Marino in 1989?) Every country has it's own way of doing things, or, should I say, not only, "When in Rome do as the Romans do" but point out that in France politeness is de rigueur. A smile and "Bon jour, Madame" on entering the village bakery - boulangerie makes pointing to the type of loaf you want fun rather than arrogance! We are prepared/determined to produce a draft version which we will then submit to volunteers to edit (that'll be a change!) and add hints, tips, comments, whole pages of previously undiscovered information on all sorts of topics. We may well have to cut down the volume but, at least let's have a go and build up a worthwhile database. We already have a fund of information from Bruce Cunningham and Neville Blackshaw on how to get to Turkey and what to do when you have but you won't know we already have a small booklet on Morocco from Tom Conway. I am just itching to describe various ways to get to the North Cape and what to do when you get there so, between us, and you all, we can go to town. Or, to Press.

If someone should say, "This is not exclusively Auto-Sleeper territory", I am willing to bet you will see more Auto-Sleepers in out-of-the-way places than any other UK conversion. Let's keep it that way!

To start the pot boiling, here are a few, "off the top of my head", ideas for the "First Timers" section:-

- 1) Passports. Forms available at any main Post Office. We suggest separate passports for adults because, although the husband can travel alone on a joint, husband & wife, passport, the wife cannot. Without wishing trouble on anyone, accidents can happen and, if he is injured, she might need to fly home to sort something out - and, hopefully, fly back again!
- 2) Ferry Tickets. Decide which country you wish to go to (a Map of Europe can be a help, here), then visit your friendly, local Travel Agent, who will surprise you with the number of Ferry Companies offering "unrepeatable " low fares to the Continent. Take as many brochures as you can conveniently carry home with you and settle down to some evenings of sorting out what you would like to do, what you can afford to do, and what you can find time to do.
- 3) When to go is probably the most important factor. You will be staggered at the difference in ferry costs between, say, March and August.
- 4) Where to go. I cannot resist putting in my own recommendation here; try France first. But, then, everyone speaks English in Holland!
- 5) What you should, or have to, take with you. This does vary a little from country to country. You can't fault taking a complete set of light bulbs for the vehicle lights you use either by day or night. A complete spare set of bulbs is a legal requirement in Andorra, France, East Germany, Hungary, Spain, and Yugoslavia.

In Spain an International Driving Permit is required if a "pink" EEC licence is not held. The Green Card requirements are simple if you let yourself be guided by your Insurance Company. Most Insurers will issue a Green Card, free, for up to one month.

6) Define a Green Card. Yes, please, Mike Lavercombe!
I'm sure you see the potential here for a few minutes/hours jotting down thoughts on paper some cold, dark winter evenings. Your favourite scenic route, in detail but not too long. Favourite campsites or "recognised" wild camping places, where this is permitted. Having jotted, please post to us - never mind the writing, we can probably read it!

An extract from a letter from Keith Leedham of Kempshot:

"Note on Isolator Switch.

12v Isolator switch for Aux. Electrics. I spoke to Mr Harrington of Bury St Edmunds, recommended by NM Magazine as an expert on Motorvan electrics. He strongly advised the use of such an isolator switch and gave me the following data:

"Hella Heavy Duty Isolation Switch: Part No. 006705. (About £7). I have also contacted Three Counties Motorcaravans - my suppliers, to ask for advice on the best way to fit such a switch but to date have no reply.

As a reasonably experienced caravanner, I have had three vans in the last seven years, all fitted with Aux. & Mains electrics. These were all provided with battery isolation switches for those times when the van was not in use. Recent comment in the caravanning press has drawn attention to the growing incidence of fires in vans and motorvans attributable to electrical sources. Anything to reduce such a risk - however small - is I feel worth the small expense."

I am informed by Auto-Sleepers Limited that the desirability of fitting an isolating switch on the 12 volt electrics has exercised their minds for some time and they hope to be able to announce their decision before long. (How about at the Caravan & Camping Holiday Show?)

The new range of vehicle handbooks is now available direct from Auto-Sleepers Limited at a cost of £6.32 each, inclusive of VAT, packing and postage. They are most comprehensive, containing about 40 pages of useful details including vehicle wiring diagram, etcetera. It even tells you where to find the 2.5 amp fuse for the Cassette Porta Potti, if you have one! Just between you and I, it is in the microswitch assembly on the left hand side of the roof of the cassette chamber, in a barrel holder. It would now be of considerable assistance to know where one can buy replacement fuses... I have been told by Thetford that the early trouble with the cassette Porta Potti was caused by water from the fresh water fill funnel spilling onto the microswitch due to over-filling of the fresh water tank and an unsatisfactory cap on the funnel. The serial number won't help very much since several mods. were carried out before Thetford were satisfied they had the answer. If you took delivery of a Legend or Talisman between October 1987 and the beginning of July, 1988 and have NOT had a replacement kit, contact Thetford with details.

Our Chairman is turning himself into a Rally Marshall to run a weekend meet at Abbey Wood Caravan Club site. It was once known to all and sundry as "Co-operative Woods" for some reason but now the correct name and address is:- Abbey Wood Caravan & Camping Site, Federation Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2 0LS. John asks me to say that the Street name sign has been broken and reads, "ATTION ROAD" The negotiated fee for the two nights, Friday & Saturday, 1st & 2nd, December is £6.00 per night, inclusive of VAT but does not include the usual rally fee of £1.50 nor the site charge for electric hookup which is £1.25 per night, where available. Since the Site manager

cannot guarantee a specific number of electric points being available this item will have to be dealt with on arrival. If 240v electricity is very important to you, please let chairman John know when you send him your booking slip so that he can try to sort out pitches for people. Remember your levelling blocks or wedges! Booking direct to John Normandale, 87, Lower Camden, Chislehurst, Kent. BR7 5JD.

Our Regalia Officer, the ever-active Dilys, says she has only a few copies of the VHS video, "The Making of an Auto-Sleeper", in stock and since it covered the 1988/89 models she feels it will be slightly out of date next year. (I think it will be a collectors item, because I am fairly confident it will be the only one of its kind. However!) In order to tidy up her stock cupboard, she is prepared to sell off the remainder at £13.50 each and this will include packing and postage. If you have both an Auto-Sleeper AND a VHS video recorder, can you really afford to be without this rare record? In colour, of course and with a good commentary? Cheques, payable to "Auto-Sleepers Owners' Club", direct to Dilys, with your Name and Address and it will have to be first come, first served, I'm afraid. Lost her address?:- Mrs Dilys Stinchcombe, 40, Hillesley Road, Kingswood, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos. GL12 8RU.

Legend Wanted. Mr Lyndon Garfirth, who lives near Kettering, is looking for a used Legend, mainly, of course so that he can join the Club... Contact him on 0536 722632 if you have a spare one.

FOR SALE. Leisure Executive. B registration. £8,500. Two front swivel seats, Toilet compartment. Awning. Long wheelbase Freight Rover. Very good condition. Contact Mrs Phipps on 0364 896136 (Lye, Stourbridge).

LATE NEWS IN BRIEF. Straight from the Committee Meeting at Hurley on Saturday, 23rd. September.

Annual Subscriptions: Members joining on and after 1st September will be given Membership until the end of December next year. Join now and pay no more until January, 1991! This applies until further notice. The current 1989 cards will be issued until we get new ones printed but those who joined after 1st September will hear further. Payment may be made by Bankers Order (Standing Order). Details next month.

Volunteers requested to run Meets/Rallies next year - do your own thing, within Club Rules. Choose your type of site and your date then we'll try to fit it into the programme. Next year and until further notice, Rally Marshalls will have the Site & Rally fee for that rally paid by the Club.

Europ Assistance. The full discount of 15% will be passed on to Members. Contact: John Normandale, address above. At 25/9/89 we are waiting for forms from them.

Please write to me on any matter concerning the Club that you would like aired in the Newsletter. Deadline for the next one is Saturday, 21st October.

Your Editor


Phil Daley.

October, 1989. Editor: Phil Daley, 46, Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands. B92 8BQ (021-706 1816).