

*Happy Christmas
Everyone*



Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club.

Newsletter No 15

Greetings!

I hope you found the November Newsletter worth the wait. Or, more precisely, that the contents of the envelope from Auto-Sleepers Limited made up for the delay! Since that was all to do with "The Show", this is a good place to put the Show report from Anthony Trevelyan-

"AUTO-SLEEPERS SWEEP THE BOARD AT THE CARAVAN SHOW."

I am delighted to be able to tell you that the Caravan Show at Earls Court was an outstanding success.

During the show, "Caravan Industry", which is a trade magazine, make a number of awards, the results of which are announced on the central feature on the ground floor on the Thursday morning of the Show. This year the Talisman GL was chosen as the best motor caravan on display and thus won the United Dominions Trust Trophy. This is a unique achievement as not only did the Talisman GL win this Trophy last year, but we are the only manufacturer to have won on three separate occasions.

Equally exciting was the fact that the newly introduced Talbot Harmony came second thus proving that yet again Auto-Sleepers have got it right! The final culmination from the award point of view was the fact that our Stand was chosen as "The Best Stand in the Motor Caravan Section". Full credit for this must not only go to our standfitters, but also to Tony Johnson, Stuart Clements, Neville Jelfs and all those who put so much effort into the Exhibition.

You will have read in previous issues that we are now producing improved handbooks for all our vehicles. The preparation of these caused an immense amount of hard work for all concerned and it was, therefore, nice to hear that the handbook we submitted in the competition for "The Best Handbook" was singled out as being the best produced by a motor caravan manufacturer.

Yet again, we broke all sales records and sold more vehicles than any of our competitors. The value of the sales made by the Dealers on our Stand was in excess of 3 million pounds. I would also like to pay tribute to those Dealers who helped us on our Stand and who worked so very hard throughout the Exhibition.

For my part perhaps one of the most pleasing aspects of the Exhibition was the vast number of Club members who came to see us on our Stand. I would especially like to thank those who wore their Club badges, as it was always nice to be able to quickly identify a friend.

Now that the year is nearly over, I would on behalf of all of us at Auto-Sleepers like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and happy motor caravanning in 1990.

ALCT. November, 1989."

Congratulations to Auto-Sleepers Limited from all of us in the Owners' Club. Keep up the good work!

Your Committee met, in full force, at the Orchard on 25th November, despite fog and warnings of freezing fog and ice. A great deal of business was done, including a very full report and discussion on progress with the organisation of the 1990 National Rally, a report from the Rally Officer on the 1990 Rally Programme (brief details enclosed), and comments from Dilys, our indefatigable Regalia Officer, on items she has investigated as possible additions to Club memorabilia. More about some of them later but I was surprised the Committee thought there would not be much demand for a Club tie, basically a plain tie (Navy, Grey or Maroon) with the Club badge embroidered just below the knot. Admittedly the price might be a little on the high side at £6.20 but it didn't seem out of the way to me. I wonder if there is a demand?

I am very pleased, and the Secretary is delighted, to be able to tell you

that we now have a brand new Membership Secretary in the person of Sheila Hammell. With immediate effect any correspondence relating to Membership - enquiries about joining the Club, subscriptions (including renewals), etc., should be addressed to Sheila, thus:-

Miss Sheila Hammell,
144 Devonshire Hill Lane,
LONDON N17 7NH.

Sheila may well be available on 01-808 9112 during the evening, for urgent queries. Or a message could be left. Don't forget the 01 code changes to 08 next May. The work involved had become too much for one and by splitting the job into two this way not only is life made easier for Rita but we have built in a safeguard against injury or illness and also made the Club records more secure by keeping them on two computers instead of one.

Another problem associated with the rapid growth of the Club is the need for additional information from you to allow us to get further activities organised. Hence the questionnaire. One wish was repeated time after time, "To make contact with other Auto-Sleeper Owners". We have little rallies or meets around the country fairly frequently but they are not enough. So, in some of the early Newsletters I asked for ideas. Daphne Normandale was one of the first to offer to be a "focal point" in Kent if we ever had enough Members within reasonable distance to make it worthwhile. Since then many more people have become involved and the interest in making contact with other "Owners" has abated not one little bit! We don't want to split the Club into Sections, each with its own Committee, etc. but it does seem silly for members in, say, Cornwall, to have to contact us in the West Midlands or Sheila in London in order to find out names and phone numbers of Members living in the same town! So, what are we doing about it?

For a start I have produced lists of Members by Counties. The format I have come up with is this, for each county:-

Him (first name)	Her (first name)	Surname	Post Town	Phone.	Model.
Phil	Rita	Daley	Solihull	021 706 1816	Talisman GL

Those are the only details shown. This is experimental but seems to give the essential information without publishing full addresses, which some Members didn't want us to do. I would be glad to have your comments if you feel there is a better way of doing it. Obviously there are cases where there is no "him" and others where there is no "her" but if that applies to you please bear with me. There is a slight chance you may be one of some 38 who have not declared their first names. Shame on you! There are one or two without telephone numbers but then, not everyone has a phone. Lucky people.

The next stage is to let you know the details of your "focal point", who will have copies of the county lists for his/her area.

I think, subject to correction, that we could start with Groups like this:-

South-East, South, South-West, West, South Wales, North Wales & North-West, North (to include Scotland), North East, East and Central. Sorry, Ulster but what can we do? These we propose calling Regional Contact Groups, for want of a name, and every Member would belong to one but there would be nothing exclusive about it - there's no reason why you shouldn't have contact with another neighbouring Group too.

If you didn't get a full questionnaire originally and would like to add your twopennyworth now we would be delighted to send you a fresh form. Just let us know, with a SAE, please! The more we know about you, your wishes, dislikes, circumstances, interests, hobbies etc. the better we are able to judge what we ought to be doing for you - we're not being nosy! You might wonder why we would want to know the registration details of your vehicle; two reasons come

to mind (my mind works like this), firstly, when we prepare a reception pack for you at a Rally we can put the Number on the envelope so the Marshall can sort it out as you arrive; secondly, we get this kind of query: "At Hurley - or wherever - I was pitched next to a couple in a Legend and they lent me a map of the district. When I came back to the site they had gone - can't remember their name, she was called Vera and the registration was XXXXX. Can you help me to return the map?" Yes, we can, if we have the information on file. Having it in the computer records just makes finding it so much quicker.

We can do all sorts of things given time, enthusiasm (never lacking) and INFORMATION. So, please don't hesitate to tell us what you want and, if you must, what you don't want! (Give out with those positive vibrations!). So we would like, not only a Bankers Order which seriously reduces office work, but another little questionnaire completed. Please?

There is not a great deal of news on the DIY front this month but this letter from Sue Brown will be important to several Members:-

"Dear Phil,

My apologies to all who disconnected their radio when swapping fuse terminals (Newsletter 13) and my thanks to John & Hilary Williams (424) for pointing this out along with the remedy. (My own radio is wired through a separate amplifier so I wasn't aware of your problem!) This clearly illustrates your warning, Phil, that modifications have not been tested and approved by the Club. We are each of us responsible for what we chose to undertake and if one is not entirely comfortable with the undertaking of any task then it should not be attempted.

I'm sorry, John and Hilary, but the article on Cruise Controls reproduced was a few years old. I do not know what this year's price is but if you care to contact Zemco themselves (I only have an old telephone number, Coventry (0203) 441428), I am sure that you will find them as helpful as I have done in the past. I chose the AP120 model, and it now dispenses with the need for speed-sensing magnets (though still supplied in the kit), using a simple coil connection instead. A firm called Ultimate Design, who used to advertise in MMM, supplied (and fitted if required) Zemco equipment. The address in an old MMM is 37 Pytchley Road, Kettering, Northants NN15 6ND (tel. 0536 51440 - 24 hours),

Good luck,

Barry & Sue Brown (3/0)."

Once again, many thanks for your help, both of you.

John Cox tells me owners of VWs prior to 1989 models, can now easily add a intermittent stage to their windscreen wipers. Obtain the correct relay from your VW (VAG?) agent, remove the shroud from the steering wheel, remove the white plastic "plug" which prevents the wiper stalk moving down any further, move stalk down that extra bit. Go to the fuse panel in the glove compartment and insert the relay in the only possible position, replace the covers and you now have an extra position on your wiper control which gives an intermittent wipe. I don't know if I have taken John's instructions over the telephone correctly but I'm hoping to hear from Roger Slim who has done a lot of mods on his VW. Are you receiving me, Roger?

After DIY Mods, Foreign Travel.

I can only quote a portion of a long and very interesting letter I have received from Bruce Cunningham (yes, he wrote about Turkey!) but the rest will follow when space permits:-

"TALISMAN GL TURBO DIESEL.

We have made our first trip, (four weeks round France) in our new Talisman GL Turbo-Diesel.

Will restrict the details to the van rather than the trip - taking cognizance

of a recent suggestion that tour reports should be sent to the "Glossies" rather than the Newsletter - with which, by the way, we don't agree. We think that detailed tour reports are a good way of helping others.

First service carried out by Peugeot-Talbot dealer in St Malo most efficiently. Incidentally French Peugeot-Talbot garages will provide "instant" service on Mondays and Wednesdays, i.e. without prior booking.

'Van performed extremely well, especially over several high passes going West to East across the Pyrenees, from Pau to Carcassonne. Only used motorway from Paris area, ('Terrorpherique') to Calais. The Motorway is now through to outskirts of Calais. Better than our pathetic efforts with the M20 and the M2, but motor caravans are charged tolls in Group 3, at a high rate.

Average fuel consumption 27 mpg, not as good as we had hoped. Maybe it will loosen up a little more yet, but engine is lugging 3 tonnes instead of the 2 tonnes of the FS85. Consumption not helped by 80 mph capability on motorway! Engine oil consumption seemed a little high at first, but has now reduced to minimal.

Fuel almost always purchased in Intermarche supermarkets which unlike ours, all sell diesel and don't have height barriers. Although, with a left hand filler, one does usually have to drive through the pump lanes the wrong way! French diesel (and petrol) prices competitive, with a wide variation. Diesel a little cheaper than ours in September, with a FFr10.10 to £1 exchange rate.

MICROWAVE OVEN.

We rang Alan Major at Willersey, to find that we had been beaten to it by someone else and a microwave oven had already been fitted to a Talisman in lieu of the gas oven. We discovered that the "hole size" is 450mm wide by 311mm high by 330mm deep. The previous purchaser had had a Toshiba ER 5420E fitted, (and indeed it fits beautifully). We had read a review of microwaves in motor caravans in MMM, in which only Sanyo supported the idea, saying their oven was ideal for such a use. We searched the High Streets and Discount Stores but could still only find this particular 0.6 cu ft microwave to "fill the hole". So our predecessors had done their work well!

So we rang Toshiba to see what they thought of the idea. They were rather pessimistic because of the magnetron. They said this is a delicate item which doesn't like being shaken about and those supplied to Britain consume 240 volts. They said the voltage tolerance was 10% i.e., it would not work at less than 216 volts. As voltages outside Britain are mainly 220 they foresaw problems. Despite what other makers might say the principles and installation were all similar.

After discussion we decided to go ahead anyway with the Toshiba. If it didn't work on site then the worst would be uncooked food and this would be immediately obvious and could be dealt with in pots on the gas rings. On our recent four-week trip around France in September we used it successfully twice a day on every site except one, on which we arrived too late to get access to an electric point. Operating at 650 watts (and probably a bit more initially), it needs a minimum of 6 amps but this is available on most sites and many of the others can put a bridge in the supply to increase from 3 to 6 amps. My wife tells me it has taken the "chore" out of caravan cooking and made it a pleasure. No more wet gas and almost immediate food from fresh basic items - i.e. not cook-chill food, which we avoid for obvious reasons. We take along three small Pyrex-type dishes with covers and each item gets about 10 minutes on the turntable. By the time each item has "stood" to complete cooking then the meal is ready.

Alan Major tells me that Auto-Sleepers may make a microwave oven an option, in lieu of the gas oven and are investigating suitable products. We had to take ours along for fitting but a supply may be available at the Works soon.

Bruce Cunningham, November 1989."

I liked that little lot and there's more to come, next month. Many thanks, Bruce. If microwaves DO become an option they will have to be ordered with the vehicle, no more retro-fitting. Sorry.

This is the time of year when many of us turn our thoughts towards next year and the worse the weather the more we look forward to some holidays in the sun. So, how about some comments on ferries which may help the foreign tourist decide on a route. I could not include all the comments in full and there was a degree of duplication (confirmation) of comments, so here is a summary, starting in the North-East and coming round the coast clockwise:- Newcastle-upon-Tyne/Stavanger/Bergen (Norway Line) 19 hours to Stavanger and 24 to Bergen. Good facilities but food and drink very expensive - you might do better to buy alcohol in a supermarket at home rather than in the "Duty Free" shop!

Newcastle/Gotenburg. No reports.

Hull/Rotterdam/Zeebrugge. No reports.

Felixstowe/Zeebrugge (P & O). About a five and a half hour crossing, sailing at 11.00 and 23.00. Quite good facilities on board. Cost for 'van and two passengers on daytime crossing £154 return. Night crossings cost more and cabins come extra, too.

Harwich/Hook of Holland. (Sealink). Sailing at 11.15, arriving 19.00, and at 21.45, arriving 06.30 next day. Facilities quite good. Cabins for night crossings should be booked with care since some are cramped and situated under the lower car deck!

Harwich/Oslo via Hirtshals (Denmark). Fred Olsen Lines. No report.

Tilbury/Oslo, Copenhagen, Leningrad. No reports.

Ramsgate/Dunkerque. Sally Line. All reports good. Sailings on time.

Accommodation adequate. Food and drink at reasonable prices. Fares competitive.

Dover/Calais. Sealink & P&O. Shortest crossing, lots of rush. Tolerable.

Dover/Boulogne. Same companies, not much longer, ditto, ditto.

Dover/Calais/Boulogne: Hoverspeed. Shortest, quickest, easiest, most expensive. Hoverports on each side only dealing with 30 - 40 vehicles instead of several hundred. If you arrive 30 minutes before "flight time" you just have time for a visit to the Duty Free shop, etc., before boarding then, off to France. We reckon the elapsed time from arrival at the Hoverport at either side, to driving out onto the public road at the other, is about one hour & twenty minutes, average.

More on Ferries next month, space permitting.

Another sort of cross-referencing is starting to form as a result of Gordon Rollinson and Pam & Geoff Franks offering to act as clearing house for mods and additions done by Members to their own vehicles. It seems there is a need for this service which could happily exist without involving our secretarial services. Gordon feels it should be divided into quite small fragments to start with because each model has its own characteristics and lends itself to different types of mods. He would like to start collecting and recording details of things done to CXLs because he owns one. I wonder if Pam and Geoff would be prepared to take on the Rapport & Rimini, as well as the RCX? Whether this could extend to other panel van conversions in time remains to be seen but I can see that the differences in current Talbot models - Rambler, Rhapsody and Harmony - make things complicated. Certainly the coachbuilt models need a different collecting point so I guess I could offer to do that, unless a keen D I Y man like Bill Clarke would like to have a go? We want a VW owner to offer comments and, possibly, his/her services because I am sure lots of mods have been done to Troopers, Tridents and their predecessors. That would leave the Frisky, Flair and precursors needing a collator and mentor. (Interesting things, these Thesauri!)

To give you some idea of what we are talking about here is Gordon's latest letter:-

"Dear Phil,

CXL Matters.

Here are some of the mods and additions which we have made to our CXL:-

1. The edges of the working surfaces, which are of the iron-on type, are prone to curl and break. (They appear to be superseded in current models.) We took them off to expose a hardwood strip which can be filled and varnished to give a more durable edge finish. The lift-up tops have a plywood edge but even this looks quite attractive when sand-papered and varnished.

2. Flyscreens are essential on some sites. We have made one for the side window by cutting the shape from fine aluminium mesh, about 15 inches by 19, which we edged with heavy duty black adhesive tape. This is sprung into the spare groove which exists inside the window frame. The free edge of the flyscreen is stiffened by one of those black plastic edging strips which are used as a binder for calendars and similar stationery items.

3. A mirror above the back door (now apparently standard) is easy to fit providing that suitable fasteners are used. A mirror 14 inches by 10 with two holes was fitted using small Rawlnut-type cavity fixings designed for use with thin sheet materials. It was necessary to shorten the bolts to prevent penetration of the outside skin.

4. The folding flaps which support the bench seats were retained by stiff plastic clips. After three broken finger nails, I was told to replace them. I believe my magnetic catches are less obtrusive and easier to operate than the barrel bolts now used by the "Orchard" to solve the problem on current models.

5. A spare Desmo tubular table leg for use outside the van is one of our most useful accessories. There is space for storage in the extra trough provided. Combined with a folding aluminium tripod base, it means that either the large or small table top can be used outside. It is necessary to have a separate leg since the standard leg is much too long. A 20 inch leg gives the correct "sitting at" height but I had difficulty buying one so I had to cut down an oversize one and then glue in a hardwood taper produced on a friend's lathe. (At Earls Court I saw a 20" leg for sale - not a Desmo, but it looked as if it might fit.)

6. Reversed polarity switches have been mentioned both by the Chairman and Alan Wheeler. It is worth emphasizing their desirability. A large percentage of overseas sites are likely to have positive and negative reversed on the electricity supplied. If so, an electricity fault within the van could easily result in the tripping of one of the small circuit breakers which would then not cut off the live supply, as intended, since they are single pole only. Instead the electrical appliance would remain alive, unbeknown to the user. The best solution is to fit a reversing switch within the electrical control panel. I used a double-throw Kraus & Neimwer switch without an off position, recommended by my local expert electrical supplier. It was not difficult to fit it between the main on-off twist switch and the mains socket in which I plug my Martindale polarity indicator. The switch cost about £5.

7. Labels to the water and fuel filler caps. The water cap has a lock and it is easy to buy a lockable fuel cap. Even so, perhaps through illness or somebody else's "helpfulness" the wrong liquid can finish up in a tank. (Last year we met a SL owner at Salamanca who had had petrol in his water tank and this year, near Alicante, a CXL owner who had spent the night on a garage forecourt waiting for his petrol system to be cleared of Diesel.) The label "Water" is meaningless to a Spanish pump attendant and the Talbot Express is assumed to be diesel-powered, particularly in Spain. It costs little to fix a Dymo adhesive label above the water tank cap saying "Eau Agua Wasser", not my idea, I am sure I have seen it on earlier models. The equivalent for petrol might be "ESSENCE GASOLINA BENZIN".

I could go on about items like wheel discs, levelling blocks and the fitting of a waste tank but perhaps I've taken up too much space already. In the meantime, has anybody solved the problem of stopping your sausages being knocked off the grill pan as you push it into place? (I can't seem to buy the cranked hinges which would lower the grill flap to the level of the grill compartment.). And has anyone fitted an Isabella Sun-Z sun canopy to a motorcaravan? It has attractive triangular side curtains, no vertical poles, no weight on the high-top except a strip of aluminium beading, can be erected

in one minute and is considerably cheaper than a Fiamma.

Happy wanderings,
Gordon Rollinson."

If that doesn't start something I'll be surprised. Many thanks, Gordon. We solved the sausage problem by removing the stay which holds the grill flap horizontal when open since it seemed to us to serve no useful purpose. Are we the only nation to persist in using single pole switches in our mains supply and apparatus as well as being (almost) the only ones to use 240 volts? Also, the table fittings on our new vehicle were made by "Mid America Sales Company Inc., Elkhart, Indiana" and the legs seem to be interchangeable with Desmo bits.

"CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

A very Merry Christmas to you all and successful, enjoyable caravanning in 1990! It is almost incredible that this time last year the Club was still in embryo form and that it wasn't until late March that things began to happen. Now we have nearly 500 members and who knows what the total will be this time next year.

As mentioned last month we are hoping that as many people as possible will use the Banker's Order form, enclosed with this Newsletter, to renew their subscriptions. This will reduce the administrative work considerably and mean that the money from your subscriptions is applied to more worthwhile purposes. Please remember to insert your Membership Number in the box "Quoting Reference..." - this will help us to identify your payment. If you have lost or forgotten your membership Number a brief phone call to Rita will provide the information. (Sheila will soon be able to supply this information, too. Ed.)

Did you get to the Show at Earls Court? Daphne and I went on the Tuesday afternoon. It amazes me how they manage to pack all the caravans, motorcaravans and mobile homes in so tightly - it must take a lot of organising. A visit to the Auto-Sleepers stand again served to convince us that we had bought the right conversion. No other manufacturer seems able to achieve such a coherent and tidy internal layout. I haven't yet seen the awards for this year but I shall be surprised if the new Talbot Harmony doesn't win something special. To fit a shower and cassette Porta-Potti into a panel van and still leave ample space for everything else is an amazing achievement. Good luck to the latest member of the family!

I had the opportunity to read through members' interests as set out on their membership application forms recently. Very interesting it was too. Not surprisingly because of the independence provided by our Auto-Sleepers many members expressed an interest in using sites with less facilities than those we have visited this year. When we have our exemption certificate we shall be in a position to organise such rallies. What I have found pleasing during the Summer rallies is the number of members who do not consider themselves "rallying types" who have attended and enjoyed our Club rallies: Gerry Woolley's letter in the last Newsletter illustrates the point well.

One other fact that emerged very strongly from members' interests was the large number who have not yet taken their Auto-Sleeper abroad and would like to have an introductory trip organized by the Club. The Editor covered this point some months ago - those who have been abroad take such expeditions as a matter of course and soon forget the anxieties and apprehension which may have arisen when they first ventured across the Channel with their motor caravans. P & O offer 5 day return fares which are about half way between the cost of single and return fares and are therefore good value. If interested members would write to me or ring me one evening indicating when they would be able to go perhaps we could organise such a trip in 1990.

Those of you who go through the Newsletter meticulously will know that I recently visited Portugal - by air, not with Capuccino. The purpose of my journey was to visit my younger daughter who has married a Portuguese and now

lives there. Her husband is a carpenter and joiner and has a business at Vila Nova de Milfontes (Meel-Fonsh is how they pronounce it). This is a small coastal town in the Alentejo, South of Lisbon at the mouth of the River Mira. I was most impressed with the town, which is being developed in a quiet way as a resort. There are only a few small hotels but some excellent restaurants and a very good daily fish market. Right by the fish market is a caravan site, Parque de Campismo de Milfontes which impressed me greatly. It was well laid out in a pinewooded area with immaculate toilet blocks with free hot water, restaurant and shop - all operating all the year round. What this is leading up to is the cost - between 1st October and 31st March there is a 40% discount from the normal rates so that the daily charge in winter for a van, two adults and electric hook-up is 522 Escudos - about £2.20. It is possible to wild camp in Milfontes up near the lighthouse but for just over £2 a night I think I would prefer to have the security of an organised site - and electricity, not to mention the nearby fish market.

Finally before I finish my last ramblings of 1989 I must say a particular "thank you" to Phil and Rita. I am sure we all agree that without them the Club could not possibly have grown and thrived the way it has done. The Newsletter is without doubt the lifeblood of the Club. Many, many thanks to you both. My very sincere thanks also to all members of the Committee for their hard work and support during the year, and to those who have marshalled at our rallies. Finally very best wishes to all Members for 1990.

John Normandale, December 1989"

While Rita and I appreciate John's thanks, we feel just a little bit uneasy about it because our names are known to all of you through the jobs we do but I can assure you one heck of a lot of work is going on "in the background" all the time, what with Rallies, Regalia and the 1990 National Rally to name but a few. So, thank you, John very much for your kind words but may we please share them out!

While Chairman John was writing his "Chat", Reg Rogers was writing the following interesting and co-incidental letter:-

"WAGON TRAIN."

Are there any Club members who would like to go on a "Wagon Train Party Tour" abroad? Suggested dates for the holiday - 3rd to 16th September 1990. If you have never taken your motor caravan abroad this could be your chance to do so. If you have - your support would be most welcome. The three main advantages of a party tour are Companionship, Security and Mutual Aid.

If enough interest is shown we can hold a meeting and develop the idea further. A good time to have this meeting would be one morning at the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club National Rally in April, 1990.

I can only gauge how well received this idea is by the number of calls I get - so please phone 0249 659742.

Reg Rogers. "

I think that is a wonderful idea and fits in so well with thoughts some of us have had but not done anything about, until now. Please, Reg, keep us advised of progress and don't hesitate to involve me or any other Committee member if we can be of help in getting things "off the ground".

"Dear Phil,

Issue No 13 has provided me with a lot of very interesting reading and I enclose a couple of pages of notes for "First Timers" compiled immediately on, a. reading your notes for first timers and,

b. On return from four weeks in Germany.

Hope they are of use. (Yes, very useful, will be used -thank you. Ed) Arthur continues:-

"Whilst abroad I noticed the outside edge of the nearside front tyre was

showing signs of wear and the tread was somewhat thin (I have a Rambler on a Talbot Express and have done some 10,500 miles) and this morning, on our return, went into the local Service Agents who were "Not surprised at this wearing as this is a problem with all Expresses. It is the fact they are front wheel drive." I did mention that part of the service they had done some 2750 miles previously viz just before we left for our holiday was for them to report on the condition of the tyres, and if this condition had been pointed out to me then I could have arranged for corrective action to be taken. They have now agreed after discussion and some coercion to correct the tracking and to change the tyres around - at their expense.

I asked about tyre pressures and they contend my tyres were, on service and now, correctly inflated. (Unfortunately I didn't get a chance to see the tyre pressure gauge having been diverted!!)

Have any other members encountered such tyre wear and what followed?

I will ensure when the vehicle is taken to the Service Agents that I know what pressure they use. However, as Barry Crawshaw, in Newsletter No 13 asks, can some well-informed practical advice be provided on tyre pressures. It seemed to be so simple, to me, previous V W conversions (not Auto-Sleeper) had simple advice and information on tyre pressures, and I always received sound advice from my local V W Agents.

Hopefully your contact at International House can prove helpful to us all. Many thanks for all your interesting Newsletters and thanks, too, to your contributors.

Kind regards,

Arthur Irving."

I wonder why garages always seem to treat motorists as half-wits? What have we done to deserve such contempt? Having driven my last Talbot Express for more than 64,000 miles I can tell Arthur that the front tyres wear much faster than the rear ones, because they do nearly all the work. As mentioned some months ago, the tread on the rear ones seems to last "forever" - a very long time anyway - so it is important to change the wheels from front to rear from time to time, probably at about 5000 mile intervals. That is rather a counsel of perfection no doubt but I am convinced 10,000 miles is the longest possible interval since front tyres will need renewing at 20,000 or less. Perhaps "Six months or 5000 miles, whichever is the less", would meet the case. Any comments, please? However, the front tyres only wear unevenly if the track is set incorrectly. I found the nearside front was feathering on the outside edge at a fairly early stage, had the track reset and had no further problems, perhaps because I took more care not to clout the kerb on parking after that! I wonder if Arthur is pulling our leg (s?) about checking pressures - I bet he got out his gauge and checked them when he got home... He is of course quite correct about the "official" advice being simple, just look in the vehicle handbook and there it is, just as Peugeot Talbot, Ford, Renault, VW etc., decided, in their infinite wisdom. If you have different tyres or want to run on different pressures for some reason or other, that's up to you but you won't get any other official figures from manufacturers or converters.

Just one little bit more about tyres, pressures and weights and then I promise to leave it "forever". I had our (Award Winning!) Talisman GL weighed the other day, in touring trim and I was surprised to find the front weighed more than the rear, albeit with a nearly full fuel tank, full fresh water tank and empty waste tank. Oh, yes, with both of us aboard, too. Interesting to think that the weight distribution will change as we go along, burning Diesel and transferring fresh water to the waste tank... The weights were:

	Actual	Max. permitted.
Front	1400 kg	1550 kg
Rear	1300 kg	1680 kg
Total	2700 kg	3000 kg (GVW)

No, we don't transfer water from the fresh tank to the waste tank as we go along but, after two days on the road, the fuel tank is likely to be nearly empty, we will need fresh water soon and if we don't empty the waste tank before tackling the next mountain road with hairpin bends we'll have a wet loo floor afterwards!

I have been taken to task - no, that's not correct! Some interested readers have suggested it might be a good idea to keep the same sort of items in the same sort of place each month. Something like DIY at the beginning, Travel in the middle and For Sale & Wanted at the end. What a good idea. I'm just surprised to find anyone is interested enough to keep them and want to look back at earlier issues. But then, I still don't really believe I'm doing this at all and the fact that this is going to become Newsletter No 15 is quite incredible. However, within the limits of what Members send to me, I will try to sort out main sections like that.

To make life easier for those who do keep it, Dilys has found a source of "Cordex" binders; they have thin cord and tensioning springs in the spine; open out the Newsletter, slip it under the cord, close it and there you are.) The binder, in a nice shade of blue, will hold 24 copies. The spine has "A-S O C Newsletter" on it in gold lettering. They are supplied in a case and cost £4 each, but post and packing has to be extra @ 50 pence. Orders, with cheque payable to Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club direct to the Regalia Officer,

Mrs Dilys Stinchcombe,
40 Gillesley Road,
Kingswood,
Motton-under-Edge, Glos. GL12 8RU

While her address is in front of you I can tell you she has some embroidered Club items in stock which she would like to sell before Christmas, if possible. They consist of Two Sweaters, one Royal Blue, to fit 36" chest, one Yellow (with navy lettering), 40" chest; these are £16.50 each. One Sweat-shirt, Navy, medium size (38"-40" chest) @ £14.50. These three items have to have postage at £1 each charged extra, please.

DIGNIFIED PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION.

Identify yourself. Your name engraved on laminated plastic with a satin finish, blue letters on a white ground and blue edging. The badge size is 2 3/8in by 3/4in (2.375" X 0.75" is easier to type!) which makes it big enough for clearly legible letters but not so big that it looks silly. As one who hates wearing labels, I have to say I have taken to this one quite happily. Two lines of lettering, Name of your choice, either first & last name (recommended) or one or the other on the top line. The second line is standard: AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB. Dilys asks you to take particular care to PRINT the name you want to have on the badge very clearly, for obvious reasons. Cost per badge £2.50, which includes postage. It is strong, very lightweight and has a safety fastener that works! I commend this item to you and feel it will be of tremendous help at rallies, especially the National Rally where one meets several hundred new faces and can't possibly remember all those names! It can also reduce the possibility of embarrassment. For instance, the case of the Member who asked me if I had read the comment in the Newsletter about defects in the sanitary unit as fitted in the Coachbults. Had he known I was Phil Daley and had a badge to prove it, he probably would have phrased the question another way! No names, no pack drill and I refuse to stay behind after school but I have written rather more than a hundred lines since then!

Derek Williams of Usk has changed from a Rapport to a Talisman GL and finds he has a new Ralaigh Motorvilla awning on his hands. It has only been used on one occasion to weather the canvas. He is asking £180, O.N.O. Call Derek on 02913 3582.

If that one is not exactly what you want, how about this:
"Freestanding awning 10' X 6' (8' high at rear). Large gusset suitable for side or rear door. Good condition. Originally £200, will sell for £90 O.N.O." He says he used it successfully with his CX1000. Who is he? David Hodgson of Holt, Norfolk. Contact him on 0263 712194.

It is always sad to hear that since one partner is no longer able to share the pleasures of motor caravanning the other feels unable to continue. This has happened to Mr Richards of Strood (Kent) and he is offering his 1983 Clubman for sale. He tells me he paid £12,500 for it in November 1988, it has 22,000 miles on the clock and he is open to "Fair" offers. Please contact him on 0634 711405 if you are really interested.

"Talbot Express CXL Hightop, Y Reg. Good condition, new upholstery and curtains, passenger seat swivel plus extras. Offers around £7,750. Telephone: Peter or Wendy Fisher, 0543 377777" (yes, 37 77 77)

I must say I was somewhat alarmed when Peter phoned me to ask if this could go into the Newsletter because it seemed he and Wendy were getting rid of their Auto-Sleeper after only a few months. What had gone wrong? They had appeared to enjoy the rallies so was it something we'd said? The next paragraph of their letter says it all:-

"May we also take this opportunity to thank you both and all other committee members for setting up such a lovely club, we thoroughly enjoy ourselves at rallies and hope that next year we will be able to do some marshalling ourselves. As for our Auto-Sleeper - our 1st motor caravan - we have been so pleased with it that we are going to progress to a Talisman." Now that really is nice. Thank you, Peter & Wendy.

No room for any more, beyond wishing you all the Happiest of Christmasses! See you in the New Year.

Your Editor,

Phil Daley.

46, Ulverley Green Road, SOLIHULL, West Midlands. B92 8BQ (012 706 1816).
December 1989.

DISCLAIMER.

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 us therefore neither the Editor nor the Club will accept responsibility for the consequences if you try them out.