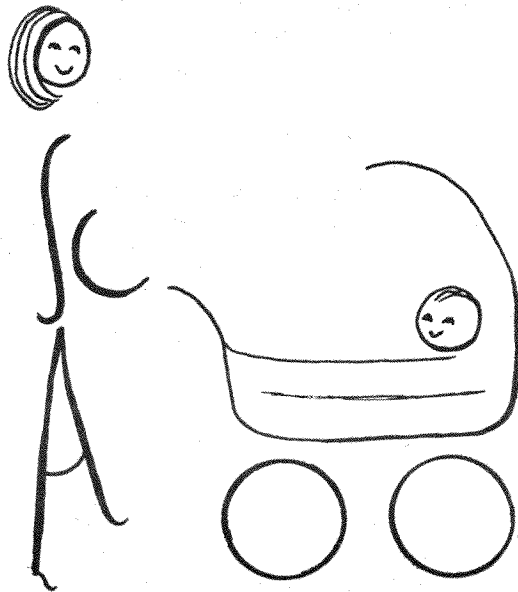


*AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB*



Newsletter 20

MAY 1990

Greetings!

This issue is later than usual because it just had to contain as much news as possible about the National Rally and our first AGM. (The meeting at South Cerney last April was the Inaugural G M, to do a bit of hair-splitting!). If you were there I won't apologise for telling you what you already know because so much happened I am confident you will find the reports that follow useful reminders and, in some cases, cause for wonder that something went on and you didn't even know about it! So let's start with comments from our Chairman:-

"CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

I am writing this on Monday 23rd April, basking in bright sunshine in my back garden - remind me to have a word with Clive Jenkins to see if he can be more successful in his negotiations with the Clerk of the Weather in future! Seriously, though, the weather for our Annual Meeting at Billing Aquadrome wasn't too bad. There was some heavy rain but not too much, and there wasn't much wind either. Like most of you who were there I was most impressed with the organisational work which Clive and his sub-committee had done and we are most grateful to them for all their hard work. You would not believe some of the problems they were faced with when they arrived at Billing last Wednesday to start marking out the pitches.

I don't yet know exactly how many Auto-Sleepers were there over the weekend but I believe it was well over 300. Let me here thank the volunteer Marshals who checked us all in, gave out the envelopes and directed us to our pitches, an essential job very well done. The Club marquee was one of the biggest I have ever seen - I am told it measured 240 feet by 40 feet and I thought the way it was laid out for the various functions was very effective. I know the Catering Manager, John Davidson, was very apprehensive as he had never dealt with such large numbers (nearly 600 people) but in my opinion the standard of the food, its presentation and service were all excellent. It was so pleasant not to have to queue for lunch as we had to at South Cerney the year before. Another thing that impressed me considerably was that the programme and timetable were followed accurately. Daphne and I really enjoyed the weekend and it was great to meet so many old friends and make more new ones. There were so many people there that I was not able to greet all my friends personally and if I missed you please accept my apologies!

The first item on the programme was the Cheese and Wine Party, kindly sponsored by V.A.G (United Kingdom) Limited - the Volkswagen distributing company. This was well organised and the "cheese" turned out to be some very enjoyable snacks in quite considerable quantity. It certainly made an ideal way to start the weekend with an oppor

tunity for members to get together.

The Club Office and Regalia Shop were opened in the Club marquee on Friday afternoon but transferred - to make room for the later events - to the Auto-Sleepers' Marquee opposite the following morning. The Auto-Sleeper Advice Centre, Spares and Accessory Shop and Dealer displays were all busy on Saturday and seemed to work even more efficiently than last year.

At 2.30 on the Saturday afternoon the formal part of the proceedings was held, that is the Annual General Meeting. The fact that this passed off smoothly reflects, I hope, your view that the Committee is doing roughly what you want it to! Probably the most important item on the Agenda was the "elevation to the peerage" of two of our Founder Members - John Cox and Rita Daley, or, to be technically correct, their appointment as the Club's very first Honorary Vice-Presidents.

As nearly all of you will know it was John's letter to M.M.M. in June, 1988 which led to the formation of the Club - so he can genuinely claim responsibility for setting up what is now almost certainly the largest one-make motor caravan owners' club in the U.K. John Cox has also done a tremendous job in organising rally the programmes for our first two years of activity and has set a very high standard of rally which seems to have been enjoyed by many members.

Rita Daley has been Secretary to the Club from its inception in August 1988 and without her we should certainly not be where we are today. She has put in a tremendous amount of hard and effective work behind the scenes and we all owe her a great debt of gratitude.

We wish them both well in their retirement from the Committee - but they will not be totally lost to us of course as they are able to attend committee meetings and I am sure they will both have much still to contribute to the success of the Club.

Ralph Dulson has also found it necessary to resign from the Committee for family reasons and we shall certainly miss his cheerful, light hearted but nevertheless useful contributions. We thank him sincerely for his help.

So we were left with three vacancies on the Committee and luckily were able to find three members willing to fill them. They are John Tidbury from Abingdon, Peter Fisher from Walsall and Jeff Worley from Yeovil. We welcome all three to the Committee and hope they will find their service on it interesting and satisfying.

At the A.G.M. the new Club Constitution, circulated with a recent Newsletter, was adopted as were the Committee's Report, the Accounts to 31st December, 1989 and the continuing appointment of Howard Duart as our Honorary Auditor.

After the A.G.M. we went on to an Open Forum Session when members were invited to express their views on the future of the Club. Not

surprisingly almost all the discussion was about Club Rallies. All the views expressed will be carefully considered by the Committee.

There was some criticism that the cost of rallies was rather high. It must be remembered, however, that up to now we have had to confine our rallies to Licensed Sites, which tend to be dearer than unlicensed ones. As we now have our Exemption Certificate we shall in future be able to organise rallies over a much wider range of sites. Clive Jenkins was able to explain the operation of the Exemption Certificate which gives the Club freedom to run rallies on unlicensed sites, such as farmers' fields, but also places quite severe responsibility on the Club to ensure that such rallies are properly run in accordance with recognised Codes of Conduct. The Club has drafted its own Code of Conduct for such rallies and this is about to be circulated to all members.

A show of hands indicated that about a third to a quarter of those present would be interested in rallies on "green field" sites, whilst the remainder would prefer rallies on sites with full facilities. The Committee will obviously bear this in mind when preparing future rally programmes which will need to contain a mixture of rally types - presumably indicating against each one the type of facilities, if any, available at the site. "Follow On" rallies were also suggested for those able to spend longer than a weekend at a Club rally.

With our expanding range of available rally sites it will be helpful if members in all parts of the country, perhaps through their regional groupings which Phil is planning, can identify sites and be prepared to run rallies on them. It was pointed out by Bob Measom that when negotiating with site owners, particularly for an out of season period, it should be possible to obtain a fairly substantial reduction on normal site fees. Pauline Newton asked why it was necessary to book in advance for Club rallies as other clubs managed without. The reason has been that licensed sites generally need to know how many pitches to reserve well in advance. The question of method of payment was also raised. As you know, our procedure for 1990 is that members send a cheque to the Rally Marshal, payable TO HIM BY NAME, and this system should work well. I personally do not subscribe to the theory "The So and So club does it this way, why can't we?" There are more ways of killing a cat than by drowning it in cream, and I feel that one of the attractions of a Club may be that we do things a bit differently. What do you think?

Heather Tidbury made an impassioned plea for dog owners to keep their dogs on a lead, as required by site regulations, and to make sure any droppings were properly "scooped". This is a continuing source of difficulty at rallies - some members seem to think their dogs are so obedient that a lead is not necessary. Apart from contravening the site regulations this can cause annoyance to other ralliers.

The supply of rally plaques and whether it was necessary to continue

the separate "rally fee" were two other items discussed. A final point on rallies was the importance of actually identifying the field where the rally will be held. Many sites have several fields and the one where touring vans pitch may not be the one where rallies are sited. A case in point may be the Newton Hill Touring Centre, Bath where it is likely that the rally will be sited on an elevated field with a long flight of wooden stairs to be negotiated to reach the toilet block. Heather and John Tidbury will be looking into this.

Getting back to the National Rally programme, Saturday evening was the occasion for the Club Dinner - an excellent meal followed by a most enjoyable Social Evening.

Sunday morning saw the initial gathering of the "Wagon Train" - see separate item - and the well attended Salvation Army service in the marquee. Our President, now a proud father, Charles Trevelyan read the lesson most expertly and the whole service was a most moving experience.

After coffee and farewells we all had to think about our journeys home. What a great weekend it was and what a lot of work went into making it such a success. Thank you, again, Clive and your hardworking sub-committee! With so much going on and so many people to thank it is easy to leave out somebody - and I think I have been guilty of this. One group of people who have helped a lot during the last year's rallies are those who have kindly given prizes for our raffles. As you will have seen from our accounts, raffles make a substantial contribution to our finances and I would like to thank all those kind and generous people who have given us raffle prizes.

So a chapter in the life of the Club comes to an end. What a year it has been - so much achieved and so much yet to do. The challenge available with our Exemption Certificate is probably the most exciting prospect but I am sure there will be many more in the coming year. I hope we can continue to make good progress and ensure that you, the Members, get satisfaction from being part of the Club.

John Normandale, April 1990"

There you have the view of the "Establishment", so to speak, but here is another view:-

"A JAUNDICED VIEW ON THE NATIONAL"

"With our second National now tucked under our seat-belts, perhaps it is now not a bad time to take a critical look at ourselves. My arrival at Billing alerted suspicions that the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club may still be in post-natal confusion on some points of organisation. My

allocated site was occupied. No big deal really except that consultation with the intruder revealed a problem which just should not be allowed. Most of my G28 space conflicted with his F28 due to converging roadways pushing these two lines of vans ever closer. There must be a minimum of 20ft between all vans at all times. It's a matter of fire safety and social acceptance.

A walk round the site revealed many infringements. If the A-SOC cannot get it right with the vast acres at Billing to play with then it is time they called in some experts from other clubs. For myself, I didn't mind in the slightest since, with conscience clear, I found myself a site on the high bank by the River Nene away from problems of congestion.

So, on to the AGM. A more bland non-event I just cannot imagine.

The Committee indulged itself with self-congratulations and applause was dragged from the waiting membership on any and every pretext. Then for some reason which quite eludes me, they doled out high offices to some who found that twelve months on the Committee was all they could take. There was hope when the mic. was handed over to the audience. Perhaps the thing would now take off. One lady rightfully complained about the effects of dog-doo on her young. Sadly, she directed her attack at the wrong people... the site management of Billing Aquadrome should deal with this problem which effects all their grounds. My heart went out to the bloke who complained that site fees of over £6 for A-SOC rallies are excessive. How right he was.. it is outrageous for a club which should and could produce bargain rates for its members.

I much enjoyed the outcome of a consensus which indicated some 95% support for farm sites. Did I, however detect a reluctance in the Committee to accept this viewpoint? There was really no need to give assurances that they would still maintain a few expensive indulgences on organised sites when an overwhelming majority indicated they should not.

Following the pattern set at the AGM, it came as no surprise when someone after the evening meal, sought a round of applause for the cook! Personally, I would have preferred her lightly broiled on Regulo 7 and served as an alternative to what we were given. I've never been much in favour of cold boiled rice, limp lettuce and something bright red in a pot.

Maybe an Indian rabbit would have found something to commend in this dish but judging by uneaten leftovers, putting this sort of thing before hungry owners of Auto-Sleepers was akin to giving roast pork to a Rabbi on Easter Sunday.

What then, would be an alternative? Well, why not set up a dozen or so barbecue points, dish out individual rations of sausages, beefburgers and chops along with primitive wire forks and let everyone cook their own? There would have been much jolly togetherness, nobody would blame the cook and there's always a chance of a blazing row as to

who's sausage is which, to enliven the affair. Apart from anything else, a few barbecues in full cry would have warmed up that darned tent. So... on to the Social Evening for which you needed tickets...

Mind, if you never got one you need not have worried. Inside or outside the marquee you were much involved. In fact, with the multi-speakered pop group in full cry you had no choice... everyone for miles around was involved. I managed to get off to sleep about eleven in spite of the noise.. others didn't. Does anyone ever think these things out? Folk who buy motor caravans must relish the peace of the countryside. Most, having been dragged through the disco scene by their young, are now seeking the escape they have long promised themselves. My main comfort was the thought of the Committee in their prime positions enduring the cacophony at short range.

Came the dawn. The Salvation Army thing was very well attended so it must have brought comfort to many. Auto-Sleepers themselves are to be congratulated on the efforts of their cheerful and hard-working staff even though an early call for help over a frig igniter which didn't, went unanswered. Also, charging little short of five quid for a small pot of Deep Mango touch-up paint was, in any language, a right rip-off.

Well, I've said it as I see it. I *am* concerned about those new to the game amongst us. Judging by the plentitude of F and G reg. units in attendance, it seems likely that there were a fair few. I just hope they were not too dis-encharnted by it all. They must be assured that motor caravanning is about mobility. It's about getting away from the hassle, from the noise and from the crowds. Above all, it's about shedding fun-packed entertainment in favour of parts you just cannot reach without your Auto-Sleeper.

Aubrey Wagstaffe."

I must say that reading that over the toast and marmalade didn't do a lot for my morale - probably did more to my blood pressure - but there it is. I am NOT going to comment now on any of it. This is YOUR club and YOUR Newsletter so let's have YOUR views.

John covered so much ground in his little lot it will be a bit of a problem to find all the supplementary reports, notes and comments which provide the details. On the subject of the pre-selection of rally sites, Heather and John have indeed investigated Newton Mill and report as follows:-

"Notes on the Newton Mill Touring Centre, 22nd - 24th June 1990. This is a pleasant site set in a small valley just to the west of Bath. Access to the city and its sights can be by bus, Park & Ride (near and no height barrier!) or for the early birds, you might just manage to park in the city. The campsite is in the process of being sold so some of our comments on what we found on our visit at Easter may not be valid.

The part of the site allocated for the rally is on a wide terrace along the valley side. It is part of the normal campsite with allocated pitches - not a separate rally field.

Toilets and free hot showers etc. are down a flight of twenty steps which are in a poor state of repair (John slipped and fell when they were damp with dew) or a longish walk to a far superior block at the other end of the site but at least it is on the level (well almost!). Disabled facilities are available at this (second) block.

No electric hook-ups are available in our area.

Dogs allowed.

Trout stream through the site.

Shop, bar and restaurant on site - limited range of goods in the shop but this may well change when the site is fuller in June. We suggest it is probably best to order papers, milk and bread if required.

Children's play area, games room.

As the site does not have a special rally field, we are using normal pitches which could earn the site double what we are paying per night. We have reserved what we hope is sufficient space for our rally, but if we book too much it will mean the site turning away other campers - they are usually full in June - on the other hand it may be difficult for us to get more pitches at the last minute. PLEASE PLEASE if you intend to come could we have your bookings by 1st JUNE as the site wants confirmed numbers as soon as possible. If after that date you find you can come give us a ring (John and Heather Tidbury 0235 525730). We will do our best to negotiate with the site to fit you in.

Looking forward to seeing you at Bath.

John and Heather Tidbury."

Directions to Newton Mill are included on the rally slip with this Newsletter but this has to be the LAST CALL because booking must be done by 1st June. (Late comers can take a chance and 'phone.)

"WAGON TRAIN.

A first meeting of those interested in a Wagon Train abroad was held in the Club Marquee at Billing on Sunday morning and was well attended. Reg Rogers and John Normandale explained how they foresaw the trip and the following sets out the general pattern.

Those involved will meet at a specified caravan site near Portsmouth either on Sunday 2nd September or, if they prefer, on the morning of Monday 3rd September and then catch the P&O ferry to Le Havre sailing at 1445. On arrival in France (due 2130 French time) the Wagon Train will head for a pre-booked site near the port for the first night. When on the road caravans will travel in groups of three, each group containing at least one experienced in continental touring. Some of the party will wish to make their visit into a full fortnight's holiday whilst others will wish to

stay only 5 days and take advantage of the reduced ferry fares for a short stay. Suggested return dates are Saturday, 8th September for the short stayers and Sunday, 16th September for the "fortnighters." (On each day, although there are 3 sailings from Le Havre only the 0830 sailing is at the lowest, Tariff E, rate. This docks at Portsmouth at 1315 U K time. The 0800 sailing from Cherbourg docks in Portsmouth at 1145 U K time possibly allowing a return home in daylight. Phil.)

After the first night in the pre-booked site the Wagon Train will, depending on the wishes of members, decide where to go next and the whole programme will be very flexible. The trip is certainly not restricted to "first timers" although they should certainly find this a convenient and easy way to make their first foreign caravanning trip.

The whole idea is to provide a relaxed and friendly expedition for those wishing to visit Northern and possibly Western France. Reg has had experience of such trips and will be the organiser. John will identify the sites for the assembly point in the U K and the first night in France.

Further information will be given in future Newsletters. Reg is investigating the possibility of getting a discounted block booking fare, but anyone who is entitled to P&O concessionary fares as a shareholder should contact him as soon as possible.

In due course those going will need to arrange travel and personal insurance (perhaps Europ Assistance?) a Green Card, a Camping Car-net, Form E111 for emergency medical treatment and a photocopy of the vehicle registration document. At this stage it would be a good idea to check that your passport will still be valid beyond the date of your return to the U K - if not or if you haven't got one you should apply for one soon since they take quite a long time to come through. Obtain a form from any Crown Post Office. (Sub Post Offices don't have the form).

Reg Rogers,
Flat 1, Clift House,
Langley Road,
CHIPPENHAM,
Wilts.
SN15 1DS
(0249 659742)"

Where does one get all that lot?

Insurance is not compulsory but is advised (by Insurance Companies?) So if you think you are likely to have a mechanical breakdown or fall seriously ill, break a limb, say, consult John! Your vehicle Insurance company will provide a Green Card when you tell them the dates you'll be out of the UK and this serves to extend the type of cover you enjoy (?)

here while you are there. For example Comprehensive or Fire & Theft - ask them. The card is usually free. Without it you only have the minimum, legally required cover. A **Camping Carnet** is not strictly essential on most French camp sites but is very useful and not all that expensive. Only organisations affiliated to international touring and camping associations, AIT, FIA, FICC, can issue them, eg Caravan Club, Automobile Association, Royal Automobile Club and a few others you may know. You will need, horror of horrors, a passport type photograph.

Form E111. Obtain an application form from your nearest Department of Health and Social Security Office - I know the name is wrong now but that's what you'll find them under in the telephone directory.

Vehicle Registration document. You need to take the original nowadays but a copy could be of use under certain circumstances. It'll last until you change the van anyway!

A current **Tax Disc** and a **G B Plate** (sticker) will be needed. P&O will provide the latter - free - but only you can buy the former.

I don't know why I put all that information in here - it's all in "**First Timers Abroad**", available for 75 pence direct from Dilys or Rita at rallies or plus 15p postage by post from this address. It was received with critical acclaim on first publication, even by old timers. You might find the stories contributed by members about, or roughly based on, their foreign touring experiences fun to read before you go. Or even afterwards. You'll find them in a little booklet called "**Travellers' Tales**". Same price but postage 24p. Same people. Need I say that in both cases the money raised from sales goes directly into Club Funds; It's not a get-rich-quick scheme devised by Rita who produced them both! (We just want to sell them so we can get into our "Office" without falling over them...)

Honeybourne Rally.

The Club held its first rally of the year at Honeybourne over the weekend of 6th - 8th April. We were fortunate in having Tony and Barbara Jones as Marshals once again - they did a wonderful job here last year under rather difficult circumstances - and, with reasonable notice and kind weather they did us proud, again. Some 44 vans turned up, 45 if you count Aldo Lanteri who put in a useful appearance on Sunday Morning to show us his new Brabantia Security Box and one or two other mods to his Turbo Diesel Rambler!

I think a little aside is justified here:- Aldo had sent details of the Security Box to Rita a week or so before because he thought they were a good idea, likely to be of interest to other members and not too expensive at £18.00 each. Rita had contacted Brabantia and negotiated

*****"AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB"*****
*
* APPLICATION TO JOIN "WAGON TRAIN TO FRANCE" DEPARTING FROM PORTSMOUTH ON THE*
* 3rd SEPTEMBER 1990 FOR 5 AND 14 DAYS. *

Full Name.....Names of Companions.....
Address.....
.....
.....
.....Membership No.....Tel. No.....

Motorcaravan Model.....Year.....Reg. No.....
Have you been abroad with your Motorcaravan? Yes... No ...
Have you driven any vehicle abroad? Yes ... No ...
Do you use a C.B. in your Motorcaravan? Yes ... No ...

I wish to book for: 5 Days Ferry Return
14 Days Ferry Return

Do you wish to be booked into a campsite in or near Portsmouth on Sunday 2nd
September? Yes ... No ...

Please note that the assembly point for all participants of the Wagon Train will be
at this site on 3rd September.

Do you wish to take out Travel Insurance with Europ Assistance? Yes ... No ...

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB
RALLY SUPPLEMENT

May & June 1990

WILL YOU PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED SLIP AND CHEQUE MADE OUT TO THE RALLY MARSHAL NAMED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, and preferably at least 10 days before the rally, so that the site can be informed and everything prepared in good time. Last minute arrivals are still accepted but it does help the Marshal if he knows how many to expect. EARLY BOOKING PLEASE, IF POSSIBLE. Rally Fees are to be discussed at the next Committee Meeting, as instructed at the Annual General Meeting.

18th to 20th May. RIVERSIDE CARAVAN PARK, SWANSEA. £2.00 per night, plus £1.50 Rally Fee. Electricity to be paid for on arrival. Marshals Dilys and Frank Stinchcombe, 40, Hillesley Road, Kingswood, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos. GL12 8RU. Leave M4 at exit 45. Turn off roundabout under motorway at 2nd Exit (travelling west) into road to site by River Tawe. Dilys says we should take care, the island is rather confusing.

The site is handy for the Gower Peninsula, but a journey to Tenby, Pembroke and St. Davids could be worthwhile. A circular tour via Brecon, Llandrindod Wells and back via Llandovery (or a shorter version via Sennybridge and Llandovery) takes you through some very pleasant scenery and across the Black Mountains. The site and Marshals have information available for other places.

1st - 3rd June, COTSWOLD GATES CARAVAN PARK, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, GLOS. £3.50 per night, plus £1.50 Rally Fee. No Electricity. Marshals Dilys and Frank Stinchcombe, address as above. From Junction 14 on M5 turn onto B 4509. On to T Junct. L. to B 4058 (Chatfield to Wotton,u,Edge) Fork left at Y Junc. near old toll house, S.P. North Nibley/Dursley, Site half a mile on left. Camping sign at this junction. It is approx 4 miles from Motorway. Berkley Castle, near the village of Berkley, is one of the most striking castles still in existence. A real stronghold with dungeons and a fierce history. Slimbridge, in contrast, is also closeby at New Grounds on the Severn. A popular Arboretum at Westonbirt, the A433 south of Tetbury. This was established many years ago and has a wide selection of mature trees in a large park.

11th - 14th June, (midweek) TRENTHAM GARDENS. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME, STAFFS. £4.50 per night plus £1.50 Rally Fee. Marshals Barbara and Jeff Worley, 26, Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22. 8SQ. "2 minutes from Junction 15, M6". A34 Northbound. At Ashgreen roundabout

continue past both sets of entrance gates, turn L 300 metres after traffic lights into Whitmore Road, follow signs to Caravan Park. A34 Southbound At the Hanford roundabout take the A500 (S.P. Eccleshall, Market Drayton, Shrewsbury) proceed to the traffic lights and filter off left. After 1 mile, immed. before a sharp L.H bend, turn R - S.P. Trentham Caravan Park". The gardens and park will probably provide enough interest during your stay.

15th - 17th June. HALE-HALL CARAVAN PARK, CHEADLE, STAFFS. (Nr Alton Towers) £2.00 per night plus £1.50 Rally Fee. Marshals Barbara and John Cox, 73, Westhead Road, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs. DE13 8JR. On L of B 5417 (Cheadle/Oakamoor). Site in about three quarters of a mile from Cheadle. Alton Towers is described as a 19th C. neo Gothic mansion with a splendid park and gardens. The adventure park is particularly good. Dove Dale north of Ashbourne is good Derbyshire walking country and very popular.

22nd - 24th June, NEWTON HILL TOURING CENTRE, BATH, AVON. £3.80 per night plus £1.50 Rally Fee. Marshals Heather and John Tidbury, 26, Ferny Close, Radley, Abingdon, Oxon. OX14 3AN. OS Map 172 grid ref. 715645. LEAVE BATH westwards on A4 or A36, these join to become a dual carriageway. In about 1m you reach new roundabout (The Globe pub.). Take 1st exit (sp Newton St Loe) Site is on Left just over a mile along this road, ignore all roads off to the R. FROM BRISTOL leave on A4 & continue to roundabout junction with A39 (The Globe pub.) Take 2nd exit then continue as above.

FROM WEST COUNTRY head towards Bath on A39 if possible. When you reach the roundabout junction with A4 take 3rd exit and continue as above. HEATHER SAYS SOME BACK ROADS IN THE AREA HAVE 6FT WIDTH LIMITS, so take care if you want to try short cuts to avoid the traffic in Bath.

The area round Bath has many places of interest including Wells, Longleat House and Wildlife Park (near Frome), Weston-super-Mare for a promenade and sea air, Cheddar, etc.

A U T O - S L E E P E R O W N E R S ' C L U B .

Send one of these slips to the Marshal named 10 days before the event, and earlier if you can manage it. If you arrive at the site without booking, you will be welcomed, but please, only do this if absolutely unavoidable. If the rally field only holds a limited number you might be disappointed.

R A L L Y S L I P

Rally Site.....

Name.....Membership No.....Van No.....

Time of arrival, Fri. pm.....Sat am.....other.....Electricity.....

We are/are not interested in a meal on Saturday night if a suitable one can be arranged.

Please send this slip to the Marshal named with your fee.

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Name.....Membership No.....Van No.....

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GUIDE TO COST FOR MOTORCARAVAN + 2 ADULTS by P & O Ferries.

5 Day Return £80. 00)These prices do not include discount which can be negotiated
14 Day Return £132. 00)if available, when I have firm numbers.....Reg.

NON REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT to be enclosed with each form per Motorcaravan £40.00 (Forty Pounds). Please make cheques payable to R.C.Rogers.

- This deposit covers 1) Sunday 2.9.90 night in or near Portsmouth Campsite (Optional)
2) Return Ferry
3) Monday 3.9.90 night in or near Cherbourg or Le Havre Campsite

I AGREE to the condition that R.C.Rogers and the "Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club" do not accept any liability for any financial loss, loss or damage to property and injury or loss of life to any participating member and companions.

Signed.....Date.....

All Correspondence regarding "Wagon Train to France" September 1990 to:-
Reg. Rogers,
Flat 1, Clift House,
Langley Road, Chippenham
Wiltshire, SN 15 1DS.

Tel. No 0249 659742
for any queries.

(When returning this form, or writing, please enclose S.A.E.)

SPECIAL NOTE: There is a limit to the number of Motorcaravans that can join this "Wagon Train". All those members who attended the meeting at the National Rally and put their names down, will definitely be included if I receive a completed application and deposit by 31st May. All other members are most welcome and will be treated on a "first come" basis. Reg Rogers.
1st MAY 1990

what appeared to be a very good deal, if we were prepared to lay out a chunk of money to buy in bulk. Since most of the Committee were on the site they were shown Aldo's box on Sunday morning, heard the price and agreed the purchase. Frank gave us a cheque and on Monday R & P went on to Nailsea, collected 30 boxes and carted them home - having reduced the price a little more by paying cash and collecting! At the National the lot were sold at £12.50 each (Sorry, Aldo - makes you sick, doesn't it!) and orders taken for more. A nice little earner for the Club.

The weather was kind, clear sunny days with a chilly east wind and cold, clear nights. The nights may not have been cold enough to cause brass monkeys any problems but Butane users found difficulty in firing up in the very early morning. Peter Fisher needed to do a bit of dog walking on Sunday morning and failed to light his "traumatic" space heater before running out of time but noticed our chimney steaming away as he passed. Thankfully he was able to contain his curiosity until after breakfast when I could answer all his questions in one word, "Propane". You may not know it but we have a 30 litre gas tank slung under the Tally and this holds 25 litres of liquid propane quite comfortably, giving us at least two months supply and trouble free heating and cooking even in winter temperatures. A supply of "domestic" propane is available in Birmingham at 18p per litre so I can fill the tank with 25 litres for £4.50. (This does not bear light hydrocarbon oil duty nor VAT since it is a domestic fuel). 25 litres weighs 12.5 kilos approx. Of course, there has to be a snag - the tank nowadays would cost £200, fitting extra, so I can't really recommend the set-up unless you spend almost all your time living and eating in the van, away from electric hook-ups, especially in winter! Another slight advantage is the availability throughout Europe, except Spain and Portugal, of Auto Gaz or GLP (Gaz Liquid Petroleum) on filling station forecourts. Not so cheap as "domestic" propane but available at thousands of outlets. Even in Scandinavia where neither Calor Gas nor Camping Gaz are widely available some filling stations can top up the tank if need be - if one has the required adaptor. But for six to eight weeks we have no worries about running out of gas anyway.

Which brings me back to reality and Ron Lear of Coventry. Ron feels very strongly, and said so at Billing, that motor caravanners would be a happier lot (a lot happier?) if they could buy propane in 7kg cylinders. The reason may not immediately spring to mind but Ron maintains that 2 cylinders of propane, each of 7kg., should be more than sufficient for a month away from home. Anywhere. So, leave home with two full cylinders (bottles) and you have no need to worry about availability of cylinders of the right size or the right price

wherever you go. So, what's the problem? One potential supplier, Calor Gas, says there is insufficient demand to make the provision of propane in 7kg cylinders a viable proposition. (At least, I expect that is the wording they used). So Ron, refusing to be defeated at the first setback, put a notice on the Notice Board (where else?) at Billing, asking for signatures for a petition to Calor Gas to demonstrate that there is a real demand. There were 143 signatures on the sheets by the time I came to take them down (I had to rescue them from Neville who needed the notice board for the production of more Auto-Sleepers!).

So, if you feel the need for 7kg propane bottles please write to me or direct to Ron Lear, (109) at

132 Cannon Hill Road, Coventry. CV4 7BX.

A letter has been sent to Calor by Auto-Sleepers Limited (27th April). Send in your comments and watch this space.

Talking of gas reminds me - I have been put in my place by Cyril Coombs for daring to suggest he had stored 904 (type) Gaz bottles **horizontally**. He assures me they fit vertically in his home-made rack.

I didn't ask him if he had sold it, probably because I was too busy doing what he told me to do. Anyway he's off to Poland for a few weeks so I want something in writing when he gets back. Or would we like a slide show? Cyril might be prevailed upon to put one on if we can find a suitable place and date. Eastern Europe enthusiasts please signify, if you know what I mean.

RAFFLE PRIZES.

A list in no particular order.

Reclining Chair	Cotswold Motor Caravans
Toyota Knitting Machine & stand	Harry Henthorne
Jones Knitting Machine	Sheila Hammell
Box of Wine	John Cox
Cool Box (electrical)	Electrolux Ltd
Smoke Alarms	Lab Craft
Bottle of Wine	Mr & Mrs Starr
Snow White & Seven Dwarfs	Frank & Dilys Stinchcombe
Porta Potti	Thetford (Aqua) Products Ltd.
Porta Potti	Southern Cross Campers
Roof Extractor Fan	Auto-Sleepers Limited
Waterproof Brief Case Cover	Centyun
Pair of Levelling Wedges	H Burden Ltd
Voucher for one Club Sweater	A-S O C
Ferry Tickets (return for 2+ Van)	P&O European Ferries
Ferry Tickets (5 day return)	Sally Line
10 Guest Tickets to Jamboree	Bromley Motor Caravans
Two Stuffed animal toys	Rita Daley

Sweat shirts, Sports Bag, Apron,
Umbrella, etc

Carling Black Label

Frank says other prizes were slipped onto the stand surreptitiously so he doesn't know the names of the donors. Someone counted the prizes as they went and told me there were 29 plus the ten Jamboree tickets. The amount raised for Club funds was considerable (I haven't got the final figure yet) so we are extremely grateful to all donors. A more detailed report should be available when the dust has settled.

Future Rally Programmes.

The Chairman mentioned the involvement of the Committee in the preparation of future rally programmes and I think it would be useful to enlarge on that a little. Over the last few months some of us have come to realise that the task taken on by John Cox as Rally Officer was much too great for any one person to manage. It is unrealistic to expect someone to have detailed knowledge of suitable rally sites from the North of England through Wales to the South Coast. John, with typical dogged determination, was trying hard to make it work but not only was the task impossible it was also very unfair. With about 1,100 people entitled to wear the Club badge and attend Club functions it's time to spread the load so that each of us helps in accordance with his/her ability and no one gets worn down to a stump. Just how rallies will be organised in future is to be decided by the Committee but in my view it will have to be different. I'd better get off the subject before I'm accused of canvassing!

With this Newsletter you should receive a copy of the Code of Conduct which all members must observe when attending a Club rally on an unlicensed site. This Code was drawn up using guidelines provided by the Department of the Environment and has been approved by them. It appears to cover spacing of vehicles, provision of fire extinguishers and other points raised here and there by Members apart from being 99% common sense.

I was glad the subject of regional groups was of interest and will try to produce some lists of members in each region and send them to the volunteer Co-ordinators (?) for comment in the near future. These lists will contain only brief details, such as:

Mem.No	His Name	Her Name	Surname	Post	Town	Telephone	Model
3	Phil	Rita	Daley	Solihull	021 706 1816	Talisman	

Computers make life a bit more complicated than it might other

wise be because one can now sort lists in many, many ways. For example, alphabetically by Surname or by Post Town or by Model or numerically by membership number, up or down! I will produce a few variations for consideration.

An extract from a letter I have received from Sybil Scotney:-

“Ken would like to thank all the Marshals who stood around in some nasty weather on Friday - some for a number of hours - and also to all those - including yourself - who offered assistance on Thursday when we were getting ready!

We had so many people come up to us thanking us for many different reasons it made all the months of preparation worthwhile.”

May I just add that Rita and I also found the expressions of thanks and general goodwill almost embarrassing but very welcome. Club funds benefitted from a donation from someone who receives the Newsletter but is not entitled to join the Club.

Did you realise A-S had brought all nine of their current models for us to gaze at and poke about in? If you didn't, sit down now and list the names of all nine with the correct base vehicle!

I will let a note from Clive, the Rally Co-ordinator, round off our current comments on the weekend at Billing:-

“Dear National Folk,

Because of a certain lack of throat power I didn't have an opportunity to thank you all for your co-operation in making the “National” such a pleasant event. Our requests for help were willingly met and if I couldn't meet your special needs in some way you seemed to understand the problems. I was even able to relax and enjoy myself at the end.

My sub-committee consisted of Frank and Dilys Stinchcombe, Ken and Sybil Scotney, Neville Jelfs for part of the time and the President in his works liason capacity. I have thanked them all for their efforts but I gladly acknowledge here that we could not have survived the weekend without the hard work they put in, not only during the “National” but in the long preparation period. The help I received is much appreciated.

Regards,

• *Clive Jenkins.*”

Since the rally I have been told by Edward Rowe, Public Relations Manager, Commercial Vehicles, V.A.G (United Kingdom) Limited, that your Editor's name has been added to their mailing list. I

have already received a gigantic mail shot, including "Sicherheit in VW-Nutzfahrzeugen", the book of the film you may have been lucky enough to see at the National last year - "Safety in VW Commercial Vehicles", which I am working my way through. More details next month. I must confess to being flattered. We have added Mr Rowe to OUR mailing list but I can't help feeling we are getting the best of the deal!

"Volkswagen Launches Motorcaravan Recovery Service.

All Volkswagen Motorcaravans produced by the Volkswagen-approved converters, Autohomes, Auto-Sleepers and Richard Holdsworth Conversions, and registered since 1 January 1990 are now covered by a comprehensive rescue and recovery scheme for three years. Operated in conjunction with the internationally renowned AA-BRS Services Ltd, the scheme will operate through all Volkswagen Van Centres, the newly launched Volkswagen dealer network, which means that all vehicles will be attended by Volkswagen experts, who will be dispatched by AA-BRS from its central computerised control room in Birmingham

Specially organised to meet motorcaravan needs.

"This recovery scheme has been designed to recognise that the requirements of motorcaravan owners are different from other road users and to meet their needs," explains Robin Woolcock, commercial vehicle director for the UK Volkswagen importer.

"This is why we have chosen to operate the scheme with AA-BRS and to use our Van Centres and their Volkswagen trained staff. This means when a motorcaravan owner calls in on the dedicated freephone number, he will talk to a Volkswagen Transporter expert and when the recovery vehicle arrives, it will be manned by personnel who are Volkswagen specialists."

I have a lot more information on this topic but since it refers only to very few new VWs I will not put it in the Newsletter - let me know if you would like a photo copy - sending a stamped, addressed envelope, please. (Just a stamp will do if you don't have a large envelope within your grasp...

I will also quote a little from the release concerning "Vankind":

"VOLKSWAGEN APPEALS TO "VANKIND" FOR VAN CENTRE LAUNCH

After interviewing thousands of van owners, Volkswagen established that van owners were not receiving the service they required from the entire industry. Car dealerships, say Volkswagen, do not specialise in meeting van operator needs and see van owners as customers who just need estate cars to carry things. Truck dealerships, on the other hand, regard van owners as nonprofessional operators, who only need small vehicles.

“So the first task of our advertising campaign has to be to tell “Van-kind” that Volkswagen understands their problems, knows what their special requirements are and realises they are in business too,” says Malcom Pitcher, UK Marketing Manager for Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles.

“The next step is to show, stage by stage, that Volkswagen Van Centres are totally geared to their needs - that our salesmen, technicians and parts people are trained to understand van operators and that dealerships, with dedicated display areas, service reception areas, workshop bays and even parking, are geared to deliver the business.” At the same time the 100 Volkswagen Van Centres will start local advertising with a choice of over 20 local newspaper advertisements, Yellow Pages and directory advertisements.”

There’s more but it will keep. I think I must get onto the mailing lists of Peugeot Talbot, Ford and Renault, increase the size of the Newsletter by four pages and fill it with pre-digested information. Wouldn’t be quite the same though, would it...

TALISMAN MODS. from Bill Clarke.

“END OUTLINE MARKER LAMPS.

A number of Motorvan manufacturers have recently fitted Marker Lights to both front and rear top corners as standard fittings, and it was unofficially leaked to me that Auto-Sleepers may be doing this later this year. I have for some time considered that these lights were desirable, particularly when negotiating country lanes in the dark. They warn approaching drivers that you are bigger than a car and, as most big lorries carry them, approaching drivers usually make adequate provision for their own safety.

I have negotiated with Britax who are one manufacturer, to supply through one of their Distributors, a set of these lamps to Club members at a discounted price. The set will consist of 2 Front Clear, 2 Red Rear, complete with bulbs, for £12.85 including postage and VAT. Order Forms can be obtained from:

C.F.Parkinson Ltd., Brund Drive, Northern Road Industrial Estate, NEWARK, Notts. NG24 2EG. (Attention of Mr D. Petett)

I have fitted a set to my van and the following note may be of interest to any members who may wish to fit and wire the lamps.

- 1) The lamps are positioned in the groove which runs round the Talisman just below the white roof. The dimension from a straight edge held against the side is 4 inches to the outer front edge of the lamp, both front and rear. This takes care of the radius on the corner.
- 2) Three holes need drilling for each lamp position. Two for fixing

screws (I used No 6 x 5/8inch pan-headed stainless steel selftapping) and the other hole for the two wires. Remember to extend the green wire and to fit an earth lead as you are fixing into fibre-glass.

3) Put sealing compound on the back of the lamps.

4) WIRING.

FRONT. Remove the side panel on the off side which is in front of the slit window in the Luton area (12 screws). Connect the wires from the near and off sides together (in parallel) and run them along the back of the panel on to the shelf, and then into the door frame by the driver's courtesy light. A hole needs to be drilled through the shelf to run the wires. The earth wire can be connected to the frame here whilst the green wire can be fed down the front door frame pillar to the bunch of wires below the speaker grill and adjacent to the accelerator.

Connect the green wire to the wire which has alternate YELLOW and BLACK stripes. This is the sidelight supply.

REAR. Remove the back panel in the lower cupboard under the sink (2 screws). This will expose the wires to the rear light cluster. Remove the tip-up basin in the vanity unit (4 screws). Feed Green and Earth wire from the off side rear marker lamp, down to right hand side of the basin, behind the cooker and into the aperture behind the sink cupboard.

Remove top panel above side door (4 screws). Feed wires from near side rear marker lamp down the back of the wall panel by the draining board into the lower sink cupboard.

With suitable connectors connect the two green wires from the new lamps to the YELLOW wire which goes to the near side rear light cluster, and connect the earth wire to the BLACK wire in the same cluster. To run wires behind panels a length of string, an expanding curtain runner and a bent wire coat hanger can be a help, but remember to disconnect the vehicle battery before starting the modification.

Regards, *Bill & Barbara Clarke.*"

I think this type of lighting will be required by EEC regulation before long for vehicles over certain dimensions and agree with Bill that it's a very good idea, anyway. All I have to do now is persuade my DIY Person to find time to fit them!

"CXL, Rhapsody, etc.. matters from Gordon Rollinson.

Battery Charging. My CXL has a built-in charger and I am very glad of it. Most of the time we use sites in Britain or abroad which have electric hook-ups and it is comforting to know that, as soon as we plug in, the battery is automatically recharged if it needs it. Until Nancy and Doug Vaughan of Blackwood, Gwent wrote to me I had not

realised that a battery charger was no longer provided as standard equipment on non-coachbuilt A-S models. A phone call to the Orchard put the matter into perspective.

As the result of a questionnaire to customers, it was found that only a minority thought it a good idea to provide chargers as standard equipment. Others thought that a second battery was a better option. A-S now offer battery chargers or second batteries as alternative options on new vehicles. The results of their survey have been confirmed by the numbers of new customers opting for a second battery, 25%, almost twice as many as those opting for a charger. The choice is not due to cost. As optional equipment on a new vehicle, a battery charger costs £106-86, compared to the cost of a second battery of £135-24, inclusive of car tax and VAT. (Diesel and VW vehicles cost more).

I agree with the Orchard that the conclusion to be drawn is that many motor caravan owners "wild camp", maybe not in some remote foreign mountain country, but in a car park or in a field at sporting events or by some favourite beach, where no electricity supply is available. Or maybe they do not wish to pay the extra for an electric hook-up; some sites do seem to charge an unreasonably high price for the privilege. Under these circumstances one is given confidence by the presence of the vehicle's own battery whose charge has not been reduced by prolonged use of the interior lights. However, although my previous motor caravan did have a second battery, I have never felt concern with the CXL's single battery. Two of the interior lights left on for four hours will use up less than a quarter of the battery's capacity, so even on a pitch with no electricity supply there is not normally a problem for the odd night's stay.

Where does this leave owners like Nancy and Doug who would like to fit a charger? Obviously it would be possible to retrofit a charger and A-S are invariably so helpful that they would do it, but it may cost appreciably more than the figures mentioned above which are for fitting to a new vehicle. The alternative would be to buy a portable charger from a local supplier and plug it in as needed. A 1 amp charger is available from Argos for as little as £7 or a superior version with microchip overcharging facility and reverse polarity protection for £20. You pay your money and takes your choice.

Happy Wanderings,

Gordon."

(G.V. Rollinson, Long Lichen, Woodbine Lane, Burghclere, Newbury, Berks. RG15 9EB. Tel (0635) 27368.)

Mention of wild camping prompts me to point out that members of (Certificated Locations) which are "tame" under the regulations but which usually offer only a fresh water tap and waste disposal facilities.

With a second battery we can spend up to three nights on one of these sites in Spring or Autumn before the lights become too dim for reading in bed, even with quartz/halogen bulbs!

NOTICE BOARD

There was a real notice board at Billing and it would be interesting to know what results were obtained by placing notices on it. When I cleared the board I retained the cards with the intention of reproducing them here, partly to show others what a wide range of topics were covered and partly to try to tie up any loose ends. However there were so many cards it would not be possible to reproduce them all but if you did not meet with success, let me know and we can have another go in the Newsletter.

We have one active one:

FOR SALE

Silver Screens for inside windows of VHT or "Trident" type Volkswagen. Screens for the top side windows included. All insulated. £80.00 Mr Southward has changed his vehicle. Tel (0325) 352432 (Darlington area).

FRENCH SITE CLOSED.

Fred Rogers of Brighton writes as follows:

"Dear Phil,

Probably the best and most certainly the most popular camp site on the Cote d'Azur is "Camping Les Mimosas", Cavaliere, le Lavandou, Var, France.

I know this site is visited by some of our members and to save them the disappointment of travelling all that way only to find it closed may I mention it through your first class Newsletter.

Yours sincerely, *Fred Rogers. (344)*"

Wem Rally Off.

John Cox recently visited the site of our proposed rally here and found it to be unsuitable. He hopes to find another site in this part of Shropshire and to fix a rally for the same dates, also to be marshalled by Barbara and himself.

RALLY PHOTOGRAPHS

Garry Clarke, our Official Photographer, took very many "snaps" during the National Rally and we have prints of them. Some members we can identify and where their vehicle is included we can trace them through Club records but, honestly folks, there dozens of smiling, happy faces, mainly in pairs, which we just cannot put names to. If you

think you were caught at Billing and have a way to guide us to the right photograph, we'll do our best to sort it out and send a copy to you. We could bring them all to rallies but perhaps you aren't ralliers? Ideas welcome.

There's just room to say Rita and I are off to Wombleton on 4th May but hope to get this into the post before then, otherwise we'll have to rush back! Keep the correspondence coming in because I like an easy life and anyway, I must have something on the spike to hand over to Harry just before we dash off to the North Cape towards the end of June.

Why the perambulator on the front this month? Just our quiet way of announcing the arrival, on Saturday, 14th April of a son for Charles and Angela Trevelyan. We think Angela was such a clever girl to hurry things up enough to set Charles' mind at rest before the National - but then, we always knew she wasn't just a pretty face!

Your Editor,

Phil Daley

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(021 706 1816)

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