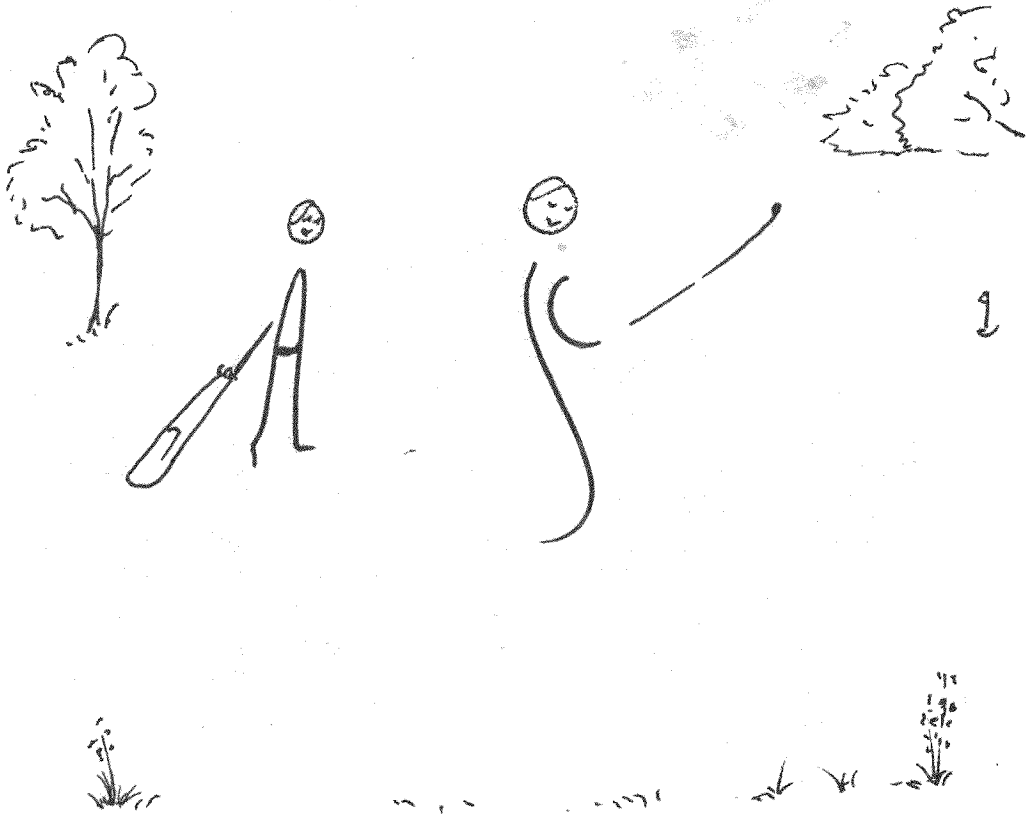


AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB



NEWSLETTER 25

OCTOBER 1990

Hello!

I am sure that you will remember that I was hoping to get something from our Secretary on the very important subject of fire precautions? Peter has produced an article and I recommend all readers, experienced or novice, to read it in detail. Here it is:

## FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Probably one of the best things we can do is to fit a smoke alarm; they are proven life savers and will give the earliest possible warning, allowing us to minimise any damage.

The FIRST PRIORITY IN ANY FIRE is the safety of the occupants of the van. When everyone is safe then, and only then, the fire-fighting takes priority. Get everybody out of the van - F A S T !

Now consider what a fire needs - heat, fuel and oxygen. Remove these and there is no fire. So we or the appliance must remove one or more of these needs.

Where is the fire? What does it involve? What can we do? Is it an engine fire, a cab fire or a van fire? Is it electrical, oil/petrol, gas or other? If it is ELECTRICAL then switch everything off and, preferably, disconnect the battery and/or 240 volt supply. If it involves GAS switch of ALL the gas-driven appliances, the isolator taps and the cylinder tap. In either case this may be enough but be prepared to use an extinguisher. Oil or Petrol fires will normally need an extinguisher but again if the fuel can be cut off so much the better. If the fire is underneath the van (and not part of the van!) can the van safely be moved away?

Next comes the appliances, there are three really suitable for use in vans. These are Fire Blankets, Dry Powder Extinguishers and Vapour-forming or Gaseous extinguishers.

Whichever we choose there are several things to bear in mind. First, we MUST be able to reach the chosen appliance from anywhere INCLUDING outside the van. Therefore we should give careful thought to siting the extinguisher. As Harry said last month, the end of the upper nearside cupboards is a good position, accessible yet unobtrusive.

What sort? And what does each do?

FIRE BLANKETS are used to smother a fire but many are really too large for use in vans. For many of our purposes a damp, but not wet, tea-towel will be just as good. To use hold the damp tea-towel in front of you, put the base of it at the nearest part of the fire, drop the rest of it across the fire and remove the source of heat, e.g. turn off the gas. Normally this would be used on a small isolated fire such as a pan.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS. Dry Powders are effective as they form a coating which excludes air from a fire thus preventing further combustion. A Vapour-forming extinguisher like B.C.F. (Bromo-chloro-di-fluoro-methane!) again works by excluding air BUT naturally the gas does not hang around if there is much air movement. Therefore this type is best in enclosed spaces like under a bonnet.

Having said that, a Dry Powder extinguisher makes an awful mess and I would advise that every effort is made to keep the powder dry since dampness will act in much the same way as it does with salt. After everything has been made safe at least most of the powder can be vacuumed up, something insurance companies tend to look upon favourably as it minimises damage! Vapour-forming liquids do not, as a rule, leave any such residues.

A word of warning here. Vapour-forming extinguishers by their very nature make the atmosphere in the vicinity at least unbreathable if not poisonous so take care. Dry Powder extinguishers will move you from the area without any problem!

In my opinion the best set up will have both types of extinguisher with the dry powder one being the secondary one. I realise that this may not be official advice but if, as many people do, you are spending a long time away in your van then the lack of messy dry powder all around the van can make the difference between carrying on with the holiday or abandoning it altogether.

When buying an extinguisher the B.S.I. Kitemark is a good guide and for most vans a weight of 1.5 to 2.5 kilos will strike a good balance between size and usefulness. Instructions for use and maintenance should also be printed clearly. If anyone has an extinguisher which suggests that it should be tested by pulling the trigger occasionally I would seriously suggest throwing it away because the quality is probably about as good as the advice!!

Having acquired and fitted our chosen extinguisher(s) make sure that the occupants of the van (ALL of them)

know how to release and use it(them). They should also know what to expect! A vapour-forming extinguisher can go off with a startling "whoosh" which is quite normal. A dry powder version is quite gentle in comparison. PLEASE get used to releasing the extinguisher from its bracket and learn the manufacturer's instructions.

I know that this article is not comprehensive by any means but if you have any comments or questions please forward them to me and I will try to answer them.

*Peter Fisher*

Maybe it isn't fully comprehensive but it is a very good guide to us non-fire-persons! The only thing which I think Peter has omitted is that we should NOT waste time trying to put out something which is out of control, CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE without delay!!

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"The Case of the Vanishing Wheel-trims" (A Mystery story, now in many parts!). Following references to these I've received a letter from Cowbridge in South Glamorgan. "I bought my Clubman five years ago and left two of the trims in Scotland. (Would any Scottish member please have a look round and see if you can see them? - Ed.) I obtained another pair from A/S and rather than rely on a regular supply of replacements in this way (this would be asking too much of our manufacturers) I solved the problem by fitting the original metal hubcaps, drilling holes through the centre of these and the trims and bolting the trims to the hubcaps. (Nuts were brazed to the inside of the hubcaps.) I still have the original trims - oops! I tell a fib - I still have trims of the original design. A stupid mechanic, during a service, pulled off the trim without taking out the bolt despite my warnings verbal and written! His garage provided a new set!

It is such a simple and cheap modification and so well thought of at 'The Factory' that I had presumed such a mod formed part of the manufacture of all new vehicles.

*Roy Williams*

So there's another way to get round the problem. (Incidentally I've just lost yet another trim - somewhere in London! Must get some good glue for any new ones!)

Our members certainly don't lack for ideas, do they? I've heard from *Arthur Smith* of Lincoln with a useful

"In case you don't know" tip regarding the electric Porta-Potti. This prompts me to suggest another Club booklet with these odds and ends of tips which are not thought of when needed. What about your ideas? We want to hear from you, even if you think that the tip is so simple that everybody must have thought of it. We usually find that they haven't! So come on, people, let's be having you! Tips for the van, "get you home", what to do if the cook has run out of something, push-starting a Talisman or whatever. Even how to tie the dog to the front bumper to pull the van out of a muddy spot - it all helps. Drop me a note NOW so that I can start on the booklet.

'Other uses for the van' (started by John Normandale) has produced this letter.

"When our children were small I used to think there should be a competition 'Yet another use for a Nappy Pin'. It was amazing what ingenious uses that small item could fulfil. Our Auto-Sleepers (2 Bedford Utopians and now a Talbot Rambler) may not fall into quite the same category but I can recognize the same principle in Newsletter 23. As well as family transport and Secondary Choir Bus when the choir to which Richard belongs is singing in some far-flung Wiltshire village our Auto-Sleeper is a Ticket Office on Bonfire night and other similar occasions. Tickets for food, soup, tea and coffee are sold through the front windows so speeding up service through the back doors and reducing the queues at the barbeque as they do not have to break off to handle money. We also sport a 'Garfield' sticker stating "My car is a part-time Café"

Back to those nappy pins for a moment. Our first Utopian turned parenthood and days at the beach into a pleasure for everyone. Drying and de-sanding were accomplished on flat surfaces with warm water instead of balanced on one leg in a gale or huddled into the back seat of a car.

*Prudence Osborne. (Salisbury)*

And what may even be a 'First' as an alternative use:

"Prior to visiting my Archaeologist daughter who was working on an excavation some distance from home I was requested to take my hairdressing scissors as her boyfriend was long overdue for his summer haircut. The only time available for this operation was during the morning of their one day off. We arrived on site in a heat-wave the previous evening and it was with

consternation that I awoke to the sound of heavy rain falling on the van roof. All thoughts of an 'al-fresco' hair session vanished and the van was brought into service.

The boyfriend had long, flowing locks which he had decided to dispense with during the hot weather so the task was quite formidable for an amateur. Being rather short of space in the van my client squatted on the floor and was entertained by the gradual discolouration of his legs and feet as his circulation was impeded. Daughter draped herself on the rear seat and watched with great interest. Husband, who abhors hair in any shape or form, sat hunched in the driving seat intently studying his road maps. I stood, sat, crouched, shuffled and even ventured outside in the rain at one point, to achieve the correct angles for cutting. Lengths of discarded hair cascaded onto inadequately placed newspapers and scattered throughout the van. Some even turned up in a disused milk jug at the bottom of the crockery cupboard.

The atmosphere was one of damp despondency until at last the boyfriend emerged from his torment looking considerably more civilised and thankfully able to regain the use of his attractively coloured feet!

The rain continued steadily down making the cleaning up operation frustrating and inadequate. However, as a general murmur of approval was heard throughout the site on my client's return to work the following day - in brilliant sunshine - I felt that on the whole my efforts had provided an added sense of satisfaction to our brief visit.

*Frances Wells*

All this in a VW VX50 and I can understand the apparent lack of space for such a pastime! Living as they do near the Steamtown Museum in Carnforth I'm quite surprised that they didn't save the long locks to make fancy cords for the Traction Engines. Or did they?

One use of our Clubman which I forgot to mention is one which is echoed by at least a Talisman II and a Legend and that is as a tug for a trailer with some ancient motorbikes on board. Sheila and I have this interest and often attend Steam Rallies and suchlike to show the bikes to interested people. Over the Bank Holiday weekend in August we were at Hellingly, near Hailsham, for the "Festival of Transport". We were intrigued to see that two other A/S 'tugs' were also pulling trailers with motorbikes of similar ages to ours.

Following last month's item about Senior Citizenship I've received another offering in similar vein:

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### SAD, BUT TRUE

Everything is further away than it used to be. It is twice as far to the shops now and I notice they have added a hill. They're making stairs steeper too! I've given up running for the bus - it leaves faster than it used to.

It isn't any use asking anyone to read aloud - everyone speaks in such a low voice I can hardly hear them. Have you noticed that the print in the papers has got smaller? And material in clothes is so skimpy, especially around the waist.

Even people are changing - they are so much younger now than when I was their age. On the other hand people of my age are so much older than I am. I met an old classmate in the street the other day and he had aged so badly that I hardly knew him! I got to thinking about the poor soul this morning and in doing so glanced at my reflection in my new mirror.

Really! They don't even make good mirrors any more, do they?

A. Veteran

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### CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

It is quite amazing the way 1990 is rushing by - it only seems a short while since the A.G.M. at Billing and here we are at the beginning of Autumn.

Daphne and I returned home yesterday at the end of the "Short-term" Wagon Train having spent only 5 nights in France - we thoroughly enjoyed the trip and hope that the occupants of the other three Auto-Sleepers which made up our group did so too. Meg Andrew has kindly agreed to write up our excursion so I will not say any more about it except how pleased we were that Reg Rogers had organised it and to hope that those over in France for two weeks had as good a time as we did.

Here are a few tips which have proved useful to me and perhaps may help some other members too. When camping in hot weather "Capuccino's" fridge is particularly

welcome and it is amazing how much can be stowed inside with careful packing. To save the fridge from overwork it is a good idea to site the caravan with its fridge side (usually nearside) facing North, if at all possible, so that it doesn't have the sun beating down on it. If, like us, you have other items which you want to keep cool and for which there is no room in the fridge or in the cold box which we usually carry as well it is worth remembering that the floor boxes, i.e. those under the seats, keep remarkably cool. I have never quite worked out why this is but you just try!

Have you ever thought what would happen if when you were away from your locked motor-caravan you were to lose your keys? My answer to this potentially embarrassing situation is to have a full spare set (why do we need so many keys?) stowed safely away inside "Capuccino" and then a spare rear door key kept quite separately to permit access if I do lose the keys.

Do you have difficulty in remembering your Customs Allowances when shopping in a Hypermarket at the end of your Continental holiday? I know that H.M. Customs and Excise do produce a very good card (Notice No.1; March 1990) but that sets out the quantities in litres and we usually buy wines, spirits etc., in 75cl bottles so that takes a bit of working out. My formula for remembering how much to buy is to think of the old-fashioned Lavender Water that used to be so popular "4711". Your duty free allowance is as follows:

4 half bottles of spirits or strong liqueurs or full bottles of fortified wines, sparkling wines or weak liqueurs - plus -

7 bottles of table wine

or, as an alternative to the above,

11 bottles of table wine.

These allowances only apply, of course, if you buy your booze abroad in an E.C. country.

Before our trip to France, Daphne and I very much enjoyed the Moreton Rally organised by Jeff and Barbara Woolley. It was an excellent site and we had a really good crowd of people there. The site proprietor was very helpful, gave us a couple of raffle prizes and also came to our Sunday coffee gathering which, unfortunately, was during a shower of rain. We were sorry that Dave and Barbara Clarke had to cancel at the

last minute but it was very good of them to get a phone message through to Jeff to let him know.

Finally a brief word about the running of the Club. Many people say that it is only mugs who volunteer to serve on Committees. But if it wasn't for the fact that some members are prepared to take on that responsibility there just wouldn't be any Club! The reason I am writing this now is that I would ask you all seriously to consider whether you would be prepared to stand for the Committee next year. There are certainly going to be several vacancies and we are going to need some new Committee members. Committee meetings are usually arranged to coincide with rallies and we really aren't too bad a bunch when you get to know us!

*John Normandale*

9/9/90

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### "Feeling Frisky

We had been campers for many years until arriving at a rally in the pouring rain June and I were pegging out the tent when a 'colleague' tapped on the window of his caravan, smiled, and toasted us with his mug of tea! "That's IT!", I said, "We're getting a caravan!" We kept the van for a couple of years but were forced to sell it when we moved house. That was about twelve years ago.

Last September (1989) we were moored up on a boat in the Carmargue and over a glass of wine with friends were toying with the idea of buying a boat or villa in the South of France when we retire. Just then a French motorcaravan drew up on the quayside and June said that she would like to 'try one out' one year for a holiday. That got us to thinking, a big plus being that we could be mobile, but why wait ten years? So we decided to look around to see what was on the market. When we got home I found a copy of "M.M.M." in my local newsagent, a great publication.

We decided that we need a camper with an elevating roof as our carport has a ceiling of seven feet. Also we would be using it on a daily basis for work and didn't fancy pushing a coachbuilt about. We knew nothing about campers but I did know that the VW had a good reputation for reliability and keeping rust at bay. After several months of reading about what all you motorcaravanners get up to we decided to join the ranks

and started to look for 'our van'. The first thing that struck us was the prices - they seemed to be very expensive. We could only afford a maximum of £8,500 and have seen some right old wrecks for £7,000. We must have visited every dealer in the South-East but could find nothing we liked in our price range. But we did discover that we did not like the layout of any VW based vehicle - we couldn't live with the two strengthening bars. So now we were looking for a different base vehicle - my preference being a Ford for ease of maintenance and spares.

Then it happened! The local paper had an advert for an A/S Frisky at a bargain price. We went straight round and couldn't believe our luck! There she was, not a mark on her apart from one or two minor stone chips on the paintwork; 22,000 miles; 1985 model; complete with all the original china and fittings (the grill pan was still in the original wrapping!) and an awning thrown in as well! We left a deposit and picked up 'Bertha' two days later. The seller had had her fully serviced as well.

Now what do we do with her - it's December and surely nobody camps in the winter? Back to M.M.M. and we read of a mystical group called A.S.O.C. We send for information and are told that there are nearly 500 members. We thought it would be nice to be the 500th so sent of our subs - tough - we are number 558.

Off to our first rally at Honeybourne. We left on Thursday night having no idea how long 'Bertha' would take to get there. At 1 am we pulled into a layby about 10 miles from the site. That was our first mistake! Up to that time we had been practically the only vehicle on the road but every time I'd just 'dropped off' a heavy came thundering by and woke us up! On top of that it was freezing. We gave up at 7 am and decided to have a nice, hot cup of coffee. Guess what? The water was frozen, the gas was frozen and the battery decided it was too cold to work! Came 9 o'clock I managed to get enough water for a brew, the gas thawed and we had our coffee AND a cooked breakfast! The battery voted to go back to work and we were off. 200 yards further on there was a beautiful, screened, layby - if only we had known! We arrived at Honeybourne and were made very welcome. We have to confess that it was us that turned up too early - we had badly misjudged how long it would take from Sussex - we've learned better since.

After a couple of rallies and talking to other members we've made one or two additions - the first, of course, was a second battery! At the A.G.M. June spent the

AUTO - SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB  
RALLY SUPPLEMENT  
=====

October and November 1990

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PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO THE RALLY MARSHAL NAMED AND SEND IT WITH THE COMPLETED BOOKING SLIP AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, and preferably at least 10 days before the rally. YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER printed on the back of the slip will help the marshal. Last minute arrivals are still accepted but it does help the Marshal to advise the site of about how many will be coming and to have everything prepared. So the motto is EARLY BOOKING PLEASE, IF POSSIBLE!

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There isn't a lot going on now, as it is towards the end of the year. We hope that you have had an enjoyable rally season in 1990 and, if you haven't tried one yet, invite you to one in 1991. Please come along and enjoy yourselves - there is absolutely NO compulsion to be over-active if you don't want to. We try always to keep to what you want to do and just to offer suggestions as to what there is in the district.

And yet another reminder - if you have any suggestions for sites, places of interest or anything else connected with rallies - please write to Jeff Worley. We WANT your suggestions!

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Spread the details out a bit, leave plenty of spaces and it will look as if there is more than there really is!

5th-7th October. Curry Pools Mills Caravan Site, Bridgwater, Somerset.  
£1.50 per night, Rally Fee £1.50.

Marshals: Brenda & John Slater, 25, Farriers Close, Reading, Berks.,  
RG5 3DD.

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19th-21st October. St. Helens in the Park, Wykeham, Nr. Scarborough,  
Nth. Yorkshire. £2.95 per night, Rally Fee £1.50. Electricity  
available.

Marshals: Marion & Jim Henwood with Vera & Brian McLean. Bookings to  
Marion & Jim at 1, Fairfield Avenue, Linthorpe, Middlesborough,  
Cleveland, TS5 5HB, please.

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23rd-25th November. Possible "End of Year" Rally

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30th Nov.-2nd December. Christmas Shopping Rally, London (possibly  
Abbey Wood C.C.Site - as last year.

Marshals: Daphne & John Normandale, 87, Lower Camden, Chislehurst,  
Kent, BR7 5JD. Tel:081 467 0798. Contact them for details, please.

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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 at least 10 days before the event. You can arrive at the site without booking and you will be welcomed but if the rally is limited you may be disappointed.

ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE MARSHAL BY NAME, PLEASE

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R A L L Y S L I P

Site..... Date.....

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

Day/Time of arrival..... 1st Rally? Y/N Electricity? Y/N

Saturday night meal, if available? Y/N. Any Special Needs?.....

.....  
Please send this slip to the Marshal with the fee. Please complete  
BACK of slip IN FULL!

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R A L L Y S L I P

Site..... Date.....

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

Day/Time of arrival..... 1st Rally? Y/N Electricity? Y/N

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Saturday night meal, if available? Y/N. Any Special Needs?.....

.....  
Please send this slip to the Marshal with the fee. Please complete  
BACK of slip IN FULL!

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BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of an emergency at a rally whom should we contact?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No: \_\_\_\_\_  
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BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of an emergency at a rally whom should we contact?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No: \_\_\_\_\_  
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BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of an emergency at a rally whom should we contact?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No: \_\_\_\_\_

first night absolutely frozen (I slept like a log myself!) So off to the accessory marquee - "Two heavyweight sleeping bags and a portable gas fire please." "Yes, Sir, £60 please." Now she complains she's too hot! Preparing dinner she said she had no work surface while cooking. I had a minor brainwave, walked back to the A/S people and got them to cut me a piece of chipboard to fit over the sink unit and they gave me a turnbuckle to hold it in place at the end of the cupboard when not in use. Since then we've fitted a T.V. amplifier, infra-red alarm, oscillating fan, fly screens, safe box and, last of all I've fitted a mains hook-up for £45 including a 20 metre lead. (Can anyone tell me if the R.C.B. unit gives the same protection when used on the continent bearing in mind the lower voltage?)

We've now attended five rallies (and just booked No. 6) and they've all been a great success. On September 1st 'Bertha' is taking us to Brittany so when I get back I'll tell you about it.

The only thing we need now is a cycle rack to fit the rear of the Transit and we can't find one due to the twin rear doors. Can anyone help, please?

#### *June & Paul Knight - Horsham"*

The ways in which we choose our A/S seem to be so varied. Sheila & I can sympathize with June and Paul - we think that we went to every dealer in the South-East too! And travelling down to Bolney and Peacehaven in Sussex we found ourselves enmeshed in what must have been a big rally for Minis - there seemed to be thousands of them about.

Now a word from Rita Daley about the 'Easy Wash' mentioned in Issues Nos. 8 & 10. Having just returned from the North Cape holiday (of which a write up will follow shortly) she has a new respect for the gadget which she bought about four years ago after getting irritated with bucket dab-washing needed on a two month touring holiday.

The washer works on the principle that hot water, plus washing liquid or powder, will clean clothes quickly in a sealed drum. The polypropylene drum is on a stand and a handle is provided to tumble it slowly for about two minutes. The pressure created by the hot water forces the cleaning liquid through the fibres, removing even collar and cuff dirt.

The drum will hold up to 4 lb of washing (equal to two double sheets) and for that you need 12 pints of fairly hot water. The washer fitted under the bunk seat in the CX 1000 and is now in the Talisman. It is also useful at home for cotton tee shirts and hand-wash clothes. Rinsing is still a problem - plenty of water and SQUEEZE!

Rita said she took the washer into the site laundry using their hot water and whilst she was rinsing the clothes another camper arrived and started rubbing her laundry with a block of soap, and rubbing, and rubbing! (The soapy water is usually run into the empty waste tank and helps to clean this during the following day's journey.

The "Easy Pressure Wash" which Rita (and at least one other ASOC member) has was obtained from Blowspeed Industrial Mouldings Ltd., Sandwich Industrial Estate, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9LN (Tel: 0304 612222 - Fax No: 0304 611763) who seem to be the manufacturers and spare parts suppliers. Their price is £26.50 including p&p. Sartor, Glen View Road, Eldwick, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 3EF are presently offering this at £31.99 plus 95p for p&p. They call it a "Table Top Pressure Washer", ref YB6 AND you will get catalogues and lucky numbers for ever after! J.D.Williams catalogue have it at £29.99.

Two mods which the Daleys have done. The first is the tap which was inserted in the shower waste has proved quite successful. It did not seize up although it was a bit stiff and the water flowed away quite well. The second is the fitting of twin horns (as Peter Fisher has done). The Talbot horn sounds exactly like a Mini and is not very reassuring in narrow country lanes. Peter chose the Fiamma horn and found it simple to fit so the Daleys followed suit.

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### FOR SALE

1988 Ford Legend - Petrol - Automatic - Cruise Control - Captains Chairs - Double Glazing - Awning - 14,000 miles - Many Other Extras. Price £16,000. John & Maureen Edden, 4, Nursery Lane, Tamworth, Staffs, B78 3AS - Tel: 0827 65850 have this van for sale because they have just ordered a replacement!

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Insulated Silver Screen to suit a Renault. £25 seems a fair price, say Joyce and Pat Finch, of 85, Green Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 5LE (Tel: 021 358 3377)

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Talbot Express CX1000 GTL - D Reg (1987) - Petrol model - 13,153 miles only - complete with Cassette/Radio with 4 speakers, Fly Screens, Awning and even a C.B.Radio. £10,000 o.n.o. from Mrs. Rita James, 13, Well Lane, Harden, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 1JL (Tel: 0922 407583)

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Raleigh Motovilla de luxe motor annexe, rear fitting model with ground sheet, very little used - £175 o.n.o Size 10' x 7' x 7' high at centre. Any demonstration in my back garden which is accessible to small motor vans. Contact Eric Harden at 36, Biddenham Turn, Bedford, MK40 4AZ (Tel: 0234 267141) for further details.

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### WANTED

Peter Sedgley, of 4a, Burnett Road, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 3EJ (Tel: 021 353 1175) wants to buy a VW for about £5,000 as he feels that he cannot commit himself to a greater sum at present. He would prefer an elevating roof model but would consider a fixed roof version. Can anybody help, please?

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This letter also comes under the heading of items wanted and Michael has been referred to Eric Harden!

"Our 1988 VW High Top suits our present needs very well. We tend to tour on our "long" holidays, spending only a night or two at each site, so the ability to move off at a moment's notice (remembering only to unhook the electricity of course!) is a boon.

However with the advent of a grandchild, we feel that an awning would be useful - not only for us but for our son and daughter-in-law (who sometimes borrow the van) as well. The problem is that we have yet to see a suitable awning to fit the van - indeed it is difficult to see how an awning could be securely attached.

We realise that it would be necessary to take the awning down each time we wanted to go out in the van,

but this nuisance may well be outweighed by the convenience of the extra room (we suppose we would be asking too much for an awning which is rigid enough to stand on its own and which has a spare fourth side ready to zip up when being left behind!).

Has anyone any ideas about how we might solve our problem?

*Michael and Joan Badcock*

Knowing our members, Michael & Joan, you are about to be inundated with replies! Not least from our Vice-Chairman whose awning has been pressed into use on occasion as our committee room at a rally! Michael's address, if you can give him some help, is: 9, Quinton Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 OAX.

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Now for something to make you smile (just a little bit!) While Sheila and I were away in early September we went into a shop in Weston-super-Mare. The proprietor read the slogan on the tee-shirt (A.S.O.C.) and suggested it was to do with "those caravette things!" We explained that yes it was, but it is a particular make of motor-caravan whereupon he said "I've always wanted an Auto-Sleeper - especially one of the big American jobs!" No further comment!!

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## RALLY REPORTS

"When the list of 1990 rallies arrived in the spring we noticed that Rally No. 13 was to be held at Highfield Farm, Comberton, about three miles from home, so we felt an obligation to offer ourselves as Marshals. But there was one problem - apart from the Inaugural rally and the 1990 National rally we had never even attended one - let alone marshalled one! Not to worry, there would be plenty of time to remedy this by attending others before the fateful '13'. As it happened this was not to be - so No.13 arrived with us still happily ignorant.

Then a telephone call from Dilys Stinchcombe announcing that she and Frank (both highly experienced in rallying) would be coming put our minds at rest. We met D & F on the Thursday evening to discuss final arrangements and by Friday afternoon the rally was under way and the vans began to arrive. By coffee time at 7.30 pm 15 vans had arrived (one more due on Saturday morning) and we enjoyed our first get-together and chat.

Saturday dawned sunny and warm and, after amusing themselves during the day, everyone met up for a buffet supper which we were again able to enjoy sitting outside. All too soon it was Sunday coffee and a raffle then goodbyes until at noon only a few vans remained.

We found that we had thoroughly enjoyed our first experience as Rally Marshals - perhaps helped by the fact that we only had 16 vans (I hate to think what it must be like marshalling and arranging the National Rally!) We now hope to attend some future rallies so that we can get experience from the other side!

*Jean and Matthew Boyd"*

(Editorial note - refer to issue number 24 - I TOLD you it was easy!)

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### "WAGON TRAIN - PIONEER GROUP

The 16 vans of the First Wagon Train gathered in a circle at Ashurst on 2nd September to receive their orders and to celebrate Doris Mitchell's birthday! Next morning, after a photocall, we set off in convoy to board the ferry in Portsmouth with special treatment for Mary C. who was "handicapée". After an uneventful crossing we left Cherbourg for our first resting-place at L'Anse du Brick at Maupertus-sur-Mer along the coast. For some who had not been abroad before this was the first taste of unisex loos - the 'ladies' was locked up.

Day 2 and the larger section set off at the crack of dawn (even earlier in fact!) with Reg (Roy) Rogers and Doris heading to the Deep South. John (Wayne) Normandale with Daphne set off quite a bit later for the foothills of Normandy with the Pioneers consisting of Mary (Hopalong) Colling (plus two trusty assistants Meg Andrew and Angela Green) the Grays, Geoff & Helen and the Corrigans, David & Pat.

Coffee at Barfleur then "Wagons Ho!" for Bayeux as the first stop for the group. The site was on the edge of town and the only pitches were right next to the ring road. John & Mary decided to stay put while Geoff & David went ahead to try the site at Chateau Martragny where their evening meal was delivered to the vans! The Bayeux section headed for town with Mary in wheelchair. The meal at La Rapiere was so good that she was propelled back up the hill much faster than on the journey downhill!! The following day was spent by all in Bayeux visiting the Tapestry Museum, the Cathedral

and the shops including the supermarket for the essentials - cheese and wine.

On Wednesday we all set off for Pegasus Bridge captured by the Airborne forces on 5th June 1944. Their accuracy was amazing, landing so close to the canal. We had coffee in the famous café close to the bridge then went on to find a night halt at Deauville or Trouville. Lunch was a picnic on the edge of Houlgate outside a church which actually had loos attached - in France it's all or nothing! We attracted considerable interest from the locals including two children on bikes and, over the road, the workmen working on a fence. One elderly lady wished us 'Bon Appetit' and Angela spoke to the owner of two French Yorkshire Terriers.

In Trouville misleading advice from the Information Office sent us in all directions. John reconnoitred the suggested site and found it was not what we could accept so we set off again for Villerville where we found a site called "La Bruyère" (Geoff thought it sounded like boiled cheese!). It was classed as four star but we think that that was some time ago as the facilities, while adequate, were somewhat dilapidated. We played boules on the rather uneven ground then gathered after supper in "Capuccino" for drinks. The weather had been kind to us but on this night it was very stormy with high winds and heavy rain. It was still cloudy in the morning but the rain had stopped and the ground was dry again.

We thus set off to Le Havre, stopping at Honfleur for coffee. A lovely place and we wandered - or were wheeled - about. At Le Havre the first stop was the Hypermarché to stock up on goodies and we had our lunch in the car park. Daphne then led us to the site in Forêt de Montgeon. a lovely area in the middle of woods with a lake and plenty of opportunities for walking. We thought we had landed in an Indian camp as we were surrounded by a "tribe" of what could be Gypsies with four caravans, three transit-type vans complete with washing machines, fridges, freezers and cookers - not to mention the Peugeot 605, Mercedes, Range-Rover and other 4-wheel drive vehicles. All the tribe gathered round a meal prepared literally from scratch - including killing (?) plucking and drawing the birds. We all went into the town for our meal!

Saturday, and we were up very early to get to the port for the 7.30 am ferry. Luckily the weather had calmed down and we had a very smooth crossing to Portsmouth where we said goodbye to our friends.

We had a lovely time and have nothing but praise for John and Daphne who looked after us very well. I thought "Capuccino" was a bit like a mother hen with her chickens coming along behind, especially when some of us loitered (being caught by red lights) and she had to wait for us to catch up. Thank you both very much from us all.

Meg Andrew"

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### "5 Day Wagon Train

What do I remember? Bayeux was a good experience. John led us to the municipal site but before the day was over two vans had made a dash for freedom, having stocked up with provisions. (I understood that they had only gone for milk but I suspect they bought some firewater too - from the shape of some packages - no doubt to appease any Indians they might come across!) We waved farewell as they set off for the luxury of a chateau site leaving us to the noise and smells of Bayeux, (I must add one very soon got used to these and no longer noticed them), and one of the better evenings of my life.

Dinner at La Rapiere (well worth a visit) - and what a good dinner! How good? Let me put it like this. Downhill to the restaurant we laughed a lot as my wheelchair and I were bumped along at a pretty fair gallop. Some time, and several bottles, later the homeward journey seemed to be taken with more laughter, greater speed and less effort - though being the passenger I may be wrong about the effort needed. The pavements in this part of Bayeux are not really designed for wheelchair traffic becoming very narrow in places with high kerbs. But my charioteers were splendid, surmounting all obstacles and never tipping me out! My abiding memory is of Daphne directing John to stand in the road to prevent traffic coming round corners and running us down as the chair was manoeuvred up and down the kerbs.

Honfleur was nearly as tricky being mainly cobblestoned. But by now Daphne and the team were quite expert and negotiated all hazards with much skill - alarmingly fast on the downward slopes - the Cresta Run next year perhaps?

What else do I remember? The picturesque parts of Barfleur and Honfleur - well worth a visit - though I felt anxious because people seemed keen to push me

uncomfortably close to the water's edge! Our visit to Pegasus Bridge and the Gondee's café with its walls covered by photos and memorabilia. The little museum where the guide very kindly found me a chair and moved people so that I could see the film. That dreadful time in Trouville when we were separated with vans vanishing in different directions. (Were we waving gaily or hysterically as we passed?) John and Meg were to blame for this fiasco, he directing and she driving up a 'No Through Road'. I was sitting in the back seat with my leg up so cannot be held accountable! Then there was the backing up and out into the main street - I can't be certain but I suspect John was again holding up traffic - by this time I had closed my eyes, life was too fraught! In the meantime Daphne and Helen followed by Geoff and Angela (how did she manage to be with Geoff?) swooped up a side road. We, with David and Pat, managed to find a parking spot and there we waited - and waited - it seemed like hours. I began to feel some concern for Geoff and Angela; might they be surrounded by Indians - or worse - by hostile French farmers; and she without even a nightdress or passport! Miraculously they suddenly reappeared and we were able to rejoin Daphne and Helen patiently waiting for us up a hillside, seemingly quite unconcerned.

Better pens than mine, as they say, must describe the site at La Eruyère, suffice it to say that the loos were the windiest I have ever visited - in climatic terms I mean. Then there were the Travellers at Forêt de Mongeon who we thought might break into our vans until we realised how very much better equipped they were for the roaming life. The restaurants in Bayeux, the mobile "Capuccino", the mind-blowing selection of wines in the hypermarché and the indescribable smell whenever we opened our fridge after stocking up with cheese!

But above all I remember the people we were with, the calmness of John and Daphne as they shepherded their flock along. The kindness, help and friendliness of all our group meant such a lot. To all of them I send my thanks with a special thank you to my two minders. And to Reg and Doris who made it all happen and put so much work in beforehand another thank you.

*Mary C."*

Reading those two reports, coupled with John's notes earlier, it seems that the shorter trip was a success. Hopefully a report on the longer trip will be available for the next issue of the Newsletter. A telephone call from Doris Mitchell assures me that it will - it would have been in this issue but I didn't have enough room!

Wendy Fisher has just advised me that Doreen Beckley of Prestbury, Cheltenham passed away recently. Our sympathy goes to her husband, Alan, in his sad loss.

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Peter Fisher tells me that National Nudge Bars, Unit 001, Solent Business Centre, Millbrook Road, Southampton, SO1 0HW (Tel: 0703 785848) are prepared, on proof of current membership, to give a 10% discount. A very generous offer direct from the manufacturers.

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Our Newsletter certainly gets around. Motor Caravan Magazine (October) have given us about 17 column/cms (I think that's the right term!) containing information taken from our September issue. And they have included in the diary section details of four of our rallies. Thank you, M.C.M., perhaps some other A/S Owners will see it and join us.

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This has been my third attempt at preparing the Newsletter and I must say a big thank you to everybody who has taken the trouble to send me items for inclusion. It certainly helps to fill the spaces and I hope that you keep it going when Phil takes over again - NEXT MONTH! He has already made a plea: "Hints, tips, articles, letters etc., URGENTLY WANTED for a deserving Editor who is trying to recover from (yet another) holiday! ALL contributions gratefully received!"

Have you any stories suitable for our Christmas edition in December, please? Anything with a Christmassy flavour is sought - when the Robin landed on the bonnet - How the A/S was used instead of Santa's Sledge - How we found out that Santa's real name is Frank S. (or John N.) You know the type of thing. Send them to Phil, please.

**DON'T FORGET** that your November Newsletter will be published later in the month. It will have the Auto-Sleeper Magazine with it and, as you probably know, that is published just before the Earls Court Show. The Show is on 10th-18th November 1990 so I shall leave you to estimate when you can again relax with your favourite read!

Also remember that winter is just round the corner. I know it doesn't feel like it yet and that the last couple of winters have been fairly mild BUT you cannot

rely on it. So DO, please, DRAIN OFF YOUR WATER SYSTEM - particularly the water heater. There may be a drain plug at the bottom of the heater. Or you can open both taps, with the electric pump OFF, and when the water slows to a trickle press the lever on the shower head (opening those taps too, of course!) and blow hard down the head to drain the last drop. In the Clubman I've got a convenient drain tap on the water tank itself. The outlet pipe has been cut, a 'Y' junction inserted, one arm of the 'Y' leading to the system and the other arm through a piece of pipe to a tap at a convenient spot. So all I tend to do is to make sure the van is level, drain the tank, open all taps and BLOW as above! It seems to work, too! If you can't find the drain tap on the water heater, carefully unscrew the panel behind it (in the shower room) and have a look then. It may be a bit difficult to reach but, unless you want a messy problem.....

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Well that's it, folks! The end of my shift (for the time being at least). I've enjoyed these last three months, and I hope that you have been able to enjoy the Newsletter more or less as usual. I shall hand you over to (I hope) a much refreshed Phil to continue his good work. I will leave you with the signature tune of Henry Hall, a gentleman who shared the same initials as myself (ask Grand-dad to explain!), so:-

"Here's to the next time!"

Your Assistant Editor,

*Harry Henthorne*

*69, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Surrey, CR0 7EG.*

*(081 654 4216)*

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### DISCLAIMER

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