

AUTO - SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB



NEWSLETTER 28

JANUARY 1991

Hello.

And a Happy New Year, perhaps a little bit late, to you all.

My first question is "Who stole 1990?" There I was, just getting used to the date ending either in '90' or '1990' and now I've got to change it. Is it me, or are 'THEY' making the calendars smaller - especially the thinner block calendars?

I hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. Did Father Christmas bring you everything you asked for? If not, you may recall that our Chairman, John Normandale, was acting as that gentleman in Bromley again this year and you know where he lives!

#### NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

1. To try to keep up the standard of the Newsletter.
2. To get to as many rallies as reasonably possible.
3. To enjoy 1991 to the full.
4. Not to make any more resolutions.

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The answer(s) to the crossword puzzle last month. Every word across was "PUNCH". I'll leave you to sort out the rest for yourselves!

Did anybody spot the mistake on page 8 of issue number 25, October? It was towards the end of Chairman's Chat when John Normandale referred to the Moreton Rally which I said was organised by Jeff and Barbara Woolley. It should have been Jeff & Barbara WORLEY of course. Sorry about that. I didn't spot it until I started to do the index for that issue and I got myself thoroughly confused between Eileen & Gerry Woolley and the Worleys. So I had to refresh my memory and make sure I got the right people.

All I did was type it faithfully from what I was given without actually reading it. I just typed letter for letter and space for space - or so I thought! There isn't that much difference between 'Woolley' and 'Worley' after all. Anyway, I've put the record straight now - must try to remember to do a bit of reading in future.

You may remember, back in November, I mentioned that the Daleys had managed to prepare something for the Auto-Sleeper Magazine. As things turned out their offering wasn't used so I can now include it for your enjoyment.

### "Why the North Cape?"

We find we need a goal when we go on holiday, otherwise apathy sets in. We chose this goal because we realised we hadn't taken any photographs of the van in the North Cape Car Park the last time we were there and there can't be a much more lunatic reason for travelling six thousand miles!

Sweden and Finland are very different from the rest of Europe. If you look at a map you will find place names thin out just north of Stockholm; the roads are less crowded and parking outside the small supermarkets is no problem. Shopping is easy but the variety of fresh food is limited. They grow a lot in their own back gardens.

The countryside could be called monotonous as it consists of pines or firs and silver birches. The ground beneath is covered with small plants and there are moss covered rocks. Every now and then there is a river or lake to enliven the view. Traffic is fairly light and the main roads are quite good if a little uneven. There are few mountains and the further north you go, the fewer the trees. You can see what appears to be untouched land for miles.

Occasionally, to the north of the Arctic Circle, small groups of reindeer amble about the road. As with most deer, in summer the herds are either all female with young or all male. Birds are mainly pied wagtails, magpies, hooded crows and fieldfares. But the most noticeable thing is silence.

Wild camping is accepted in Scandinavia, although there are sites everywhere, and to spend the night at the edge of a wood where even birdsong is absent is quite an experience.

To offset this there are a lot of people about towing caravans or driving large motor-caravans, the majority from France, but Germany and Holland were well represented and so were Italy and Switzerland. But not Great Britain. We only saw two G.B. motor-caravans, one Auto-Sleeper fairly early in our journey, and another make (Motorhome - shhh!) in a car park.

We went into Finland to cross the Arctic Circle. They have a large tourist shop there, with a post office and a huge sign. I wanted the latter as J & M Designs have a competition for the most interesting picture of a motor caravan wearing its Silver Screens. I thought that the Talisman "leaning against" an Arctic Circle sign just has to be a winner! (Another goal.)

A secondary reason for going into Finland was to investigate the coast along the north of Norway which curls round Finland. We followed the river Tana to its outlet. I don't know about you, but I find it odd to see men scattered about rivers standing up to their middles in water. Is this why they call it "fly fishing"?

The coastline was very Scottish in appearance and the small fishing villages scattered along the edge of the fjords must have a very bleak time in winter. Remember, Iceland is mostly below the Arctic Circle, and this is approximately 5° latitude further north. It is dark and cold for some months. There was no shortage of seagulls here or eider ducks with their young. (Usually two or three families stay together for safety.)

And so to the last stage of the journey. A road which follows the edge of the Porsangen Fjord to the ferry at Katfjord which would take us to Honningsvag on Mageroya Island. The road is narrow and two vehicles pass carefully, particularly a motor-caravan and the local orange and red buses or a tourist bus with a tight schedule. We spent the night before crossing on a site just off the main road. During the evening a number of trailer caravans were towed in, unhitched and left whilst the owners made the crossing more cheaply by car.

The crossing takes 40 minutes in a brand new ferry. We arrived just as it was filling up and went straight on. We stayed in or near the van since it was not on an enclosed deck and the time passed quite quickly.

The road from Honningsvag to the North Cape is about 21 miles, narrow and quite tricky in places. Some road repairs were going on which made the road surface rough and dusty. The scenery is open moorland with not many trees and with snow patches when we were there, although the temperature was quite mild despite patchy mist and low clouds. Groups of reindeer were quite difficult to see as they blended into the background, but some had chosen to sit on the snow, probably to avoid insects.

Great alterations were taking place at the Cape, particularly in the cost of parking. We were charged 85

N.Kr. each (£8.50 but who is going to argue after all that trouble to get there?). We were assured that it would allow us entry into the tourist hall (where we could buy presents) and we could see the exhibition of North Cape history (a few tableaux with small models of people who might have visited the Cape behaving as they might have behaved) and a rather good 20 minute video showing transport of the area and some local scenery with the snow on it. This was shown on a wide screen and began with a ride "in" a helicopter which took off and then went into a steep turn causing gasps from those of us who knew the seats had almost thrown us off. We then travelled "on" a fishing vessel, a dog sled, skis and "in" a car. We saw spring flowers, reindeer musters and the coast and valleys.

After this we wandered down to the North Cape Club Bar and Lounge. The single storey building with the large white globe on top is merely the tip of the complex. They have gone down into the rock since we were there last and the cinema is about two stories down, a sloping ramp takes you past the tableaux to the Club where the bar is at the entrance and "terraces" with tables and chairs lead down to windows with a panoramic view of the sea which looks much the same as it looks from ground level - wet and grey. The cost of becoming a member is 125 N. Kr. (£12.50) and then you can buy Club Ties and Badges (sounds familiar).

We took some photographs, but the light was not good and the car park had been altered so that it lacked the character of the old one which was very sloping. I wanted to get some shots of the Talisman next to the North Cape buildings but they had a barrier to prevent the hoi-polloi from reaching it. However, I spoke to one of the young men at the entrance and told him I "wished to get some publicity shots showing the Auto-Sleeper at the North Cape" and he gave permission. We put those Silver Screens on again but the only notice I could find said "night toilet this way" so, if you don't know about the white glass ball on the top of the building, you wouldn't know it was the North Cape. A bit disappointing really but I don't think we'll go again even when they have finished. I'm sure they'll have a big notice on it then and they'll probably charge you to photograph it.....

*The Daleys."*

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Knowing what happens when I type quickly I ran this article through the spelling check on my word processor.

According to its dictionary the correct spelling is FIORD, not fjord. But whenever I see the word written as part of a place name it seems to have the 'j' in it, not the 'i'. Anyway I think fjord looks better. Is there a 'correct' English version, I wonder?

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### FOR SALE

1. Front Glass-Fibre Spoiler, as fitted to Talisman GL, complete, but with small amount of repairable damage to offside corner - colour grey. £30.00.

1 Rose Pink Sleeping Bag - about 72" x 30" - £7.00

Both items are available from *Pauline & David Lepper* who can be reached - AFTER 5 P.M. - on Brookwood (04867) 80413 - that's in Surrey.

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2. Safari Room for Omnistor 4000 blind - excellent condition - £100.00. (We have changed our Talisman II for a Talisman GL so the Safari Room is the wrong colour!)

A Silver Screen for the Talbot Express cab - £40.00. (We now have 2!!)

These are available from *Jackie & Arthur Claxton* of Flat 13, Albany Mansions, Upper Maze Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TW38 0YD or telephone 0424 714915.

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3. Dinette Window Fly Screens for 1989/90 Rambler, Sportsman or Rhapsody. £30.00

Ring *Les Davey* for these - AFTER 15th January 1991 - telephone: 0823 442659.

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4. Talbot Talisman 1986. 4 berth. Many extras including double glazing, blown air heating, rear seat belts, radio, T.V.Omnimax aerial, alarm, awning, wedges, etc. Excellent condition. £13,500.

Also shed clearout. Free-standing rear annex tent for van conversions; small Porta-Potti (single piece type) - fits into wardrobe of Bedford CF van conversions: frame for mounting child's safety seat - fixes to floor of van conversions, can be used as a free-standing high chair and folds flat for storage; wheel trims - aluminium rings for older Auto-Sleepers and silver plastic "Rondo" covers - all for 14" wheels. All these items are going cheap to a good "home".

So says *John Tidbury* and you can talk to him (or to *Heather*) on 0235 525730 which is in Abingdon down (or up or across) Oxford way.

On the same day that I typed this advert. for John, *Rita Daley* telephoned. She had received an enquiry from a non-member who is looking for a second-hand Talisman. I've advised John and will await developments.

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This For Sale column seems to work. I had a letter from *Eric Harden* who put an advert in the October Newsletter. He tells me that his copy of the N/L and the first enquiry arrived on Monday and he had sold the tent by the Wednesday. His letter concludes "Thought you might like to know what an efficient organisation you preside over!"

Thanks for your letter, *Eric*, it does help to know that the entries are not wasted.

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## RALLY NEWS

### National Rally and A.G.M. - 1991

"Enclosed with this edition of the Newsletter is the Booking Form for the 1991 'National' to be held at Home Farm, Edithmead, Burnham-on-Sea from 5th - 7th April. We have reserved 350 pitches so early booking will guarantee your place. The site is excellent with lots of electric hook-ups, good toilets and a large, warm and comfortable hall. Auto-Sleepers Limited will provide an Advice Desk in addition to its new vehicle display and will be supported by various dealers and accessory suppliers. There will be lots to do from the Cheese and Wine Reception on the Friday, through the Lunch and A.G.M. on Saturday to the final coffee on Sunday.

On Saturday evening we will have an informal 'do' and on Sunday morning we hope to repeat last year's success

with the Salvation Army. The Club 'Office and Shop' will be open for as long as we can find the strength and the volunteers. We look forward to seeing you all in even greater numbers than last year. Negotiations regarding the weather begin now.

*Clive Jenkins."*

As we have just welcomed member number 800 into our Club may I echo what Clive has said about booking early. With 350 pitches and something like 650 possible attending vans it could get a bit crowded.

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In his letter enclosing his advertisement, Les Davey made a suggestion. The site of the National Rally at Edithmead is not too far from the Hinkley Point Power Station. He has therefore offered to arrange a trip to the power station with a hired coach if it would fit in with the programme for the rally and if there is sufficient interest. I'm not quite sure when it would take place. Saturday afternoon and evening will be taken up with the A.G.M. and the entertainment and Sunday morning will probably have the service, the coffee and preparations for departure.

But if anybody is interested please let me know - and tell me when you would like the trip to be arranged. No promises, of course, but it is a kind offer. I must say that I found the exhibition at Dounreay and the exhibition and tour at Sellafield were most interesting. We probably won't have time to join such an excursion but if you are available I would recommend such a trip.

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"Dear Harry,

I would like, if possible, a little thank you to be put into the Newsletter to the people who took a chance on the elements to attend our rally at the Squirrel P.H. near Bridgnorth. As far as I know everyone enjoyed themselves but that is for others to confirm (or otherwise). [See below - Ed]. I would also like to thank Millie and Bob Thompson for attending, albeit at midday on Sunday due to prior commitments.

We were, on the whole, very lucky with the weather with only a little slipperiness on the rally field to spoil things.

*Peter Fisher"*

## "An Extra Rally

Wendy and Peter Fisher thought that there might be sufficient interest in a rally in the Midlands on the same weekend as the London Shopping rally for those who either hate London or didn't want to travel so far. So they approached Mine Host at the Squirrel Pub just outside Bridgnorth to see if he would play. He would and would also let us have the sole use of his skittle alley for most of the weekend. So the organisation swung into gear and the afternoon of Friday, 30th November 1990 saw vans arriving. I think a total of ten had booked in in time for coffee and biscuits plus a seasonal mince pie (more of that anon) set out in the skittle alley. With the gas fired heater, the hot coffee and the ready availability of other types of refreshment as well as a genuine set of nine pins with three cheeses the inevitable happened - a skittles tournament. Rita and I weren't there but we heard a lot about it later. A good time was had by all, especially by Marion (the Tullett variety that is) who proved very hard to beat! On Saturday many members went off to explore either Bridgnorth or the surrounding countryside. Some found out the hard way that buses included on Friday's time-table didn't run on Saturdays but not a lot of harm was done.

7.30 on Saturday evening found the crews of 15 vans (including Rita and me) in the skittle alley and it was not long before we were all trying to beat Marion at nine pins, with very little success. In no time at all, it seemed, our chicken and chips in a basket arrived, with fragile plastic implements, and peace descended - for a little while. An interlude while we tried to solve the mystery of Wendy's bare Bear (she never did tell us the real answer!), some more exercise on the alley then we began to disperse into the rather gloomy night to find our way to bed.

Sunday morning sort of crept up on us, at least I didn't hear dawn break, if it ever did, but the Bell rang at 10.30 to get us together for coffee, biscuits and another of those delicious mince pies. Congratulations to Wendy's Mum and please, can we have some more next year, please? A successful raffle, a few words from Wendy, a reply from "the body of the hall" and we began saying our farewells preparatory to moving off, except for those who had booked a Sunday lunch at the Squirrel.

Several members pointed out how nice it was to have a small meet like this in the off-season, possibly all the more welcome because it gives us that extra reason to

get out and about in the van when the weather is grey and gloomy. Yvonne Unwin suggested a possibly popular date between now and next March (What! No rallies until next March?) would be during the week of the Boating and Caravan Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Solihull - 16th to 24th February 1991. And why not see if we could use the Camping and Caravanning Club site at Kingsbury Water Park, just a few miles away up the M 42? I was tempted to take a leaf out of *Jeff Worley's* book and suggest that Yvonne and Derek should run it but they do live in Stockport which is rather far away. Since we are going to have a rally on that site in August perhaps we could bear it in mind for 1992 - 1991 is a bit close!

Phil Daley."

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To other matters now. Gerry Woolley has written to Phil with a comment which has caused some concern. If I quote his letter you will see what I mean:

"As an owner of a Talisman GL and previously a Talisman II I have been rather concerned with its handling qualities and may have, at last, solved my problem and in doing so wish to pass on the information to our Club members. I feel that the information should be headed "Is your rear end sagging?"

As you know the rear springs of the Talisman are under considerable deflection before any weight is added to the vehicle. It is a problem which I have been looking at since I had the Talisman II and in fact I still have in my garage a set of spring assisters which have never been used as I felt that there must be a more professional answer. Some time ago there appeared in the Motor Caravan magazines an advertisement aimed particularly at the Talbot chassis vehicle owners and offering a system which could be pumped up to suit many varied conditions. I sent for the information and in fact spoke to Mr. Symons, the owner of Symonspeed Limited, who was offering the equipment. Eventually Mr. Symons visited me when he was in the area to show me the assembly and also give me the telephone number of one of his customers who had already fitted the system to his Talisman. I telephoned the gentleman who sounded well satisfied and eventually I decided to have the system fitted to my Talisman GL. The fitting was carried out, on site, by Mr. Symons and at the same time my wife, Eileen, negotiated a 10% discount for all Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club members who may wish to have the system fitted. The rear end of my vehicle has been lifted by 1½" and the handling, particularly on right-hand bends,

is now much more positive. At £385 the system is expensive but I must say it is well made and uses parts produced by well known companies. For further information members could contact Symonspeed Limited direct at 1, Cleveland Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BD or telephone 0803 214620 or Mobile 0836 779700."

I sent a copy of the letter to Charles Trevelyan at Auto-Sleepers Ltd. for their comments and have had a reply saying "We are, of course, aware of this modification but you may care to advise Club members that this is not approved by the Peugeot Talbot Motor Company and thus that the warranty of the vehicle may therefore be invalidated".

I must say that I am rather surprised at the comment about handling on right-hand bends. I have never driven a Talbot based vehicle at all so I shall have to leave comments to those who have but I would have thought that we would have heard about the problem before now either through Club members or the road tests in the press. And I am sure that A/S themselves together with Peugeot Talbot would have had other complaints of this nature and would have taken whatever action was necessary. But why only on right-hand bends?

It is always possible that Gerry has been having problems with tyre pressures or even with loading the vehicle. Either of these can make a substantial difference to the handling. An exaggerated example passed me recently - a car with a roof rack containing a large three-seater settee. Heaven alone knows what it must have been like to drive but it certainly swayed as it went along and round a corner or two.

Has anybody else encountered this problem? Please let me know of your experiences.

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If I mention the phrase "Orient Express" what sort of a picture is conjured up in your mind? My idea was of that rather luxurious train journey from London to Venice or, in the old days at least, further East. The following item has been received, written by Margaret and prompted by Arthur (of the Fairburn ilk), and in spite of Margaret's comment at the start I've had to divide it into two parts.

#### "Turkey on the Orient Express"

I am no letter writer, let alone writing an article for the A.S.O.C. magazine, but sitting here with a

broken left arm (2 weeks before the plaster comes off) and a very persuasive husband, I will relate our wonderful trip.

We crossed the Channel on Monday morning, 14th May 1990. We had to be in Venice on Saturday, 19th to check in at 3.00 p.m., so we decided to take a leisurely drive through France into Germany and spend a couple of days at "our" castle - the fairy-tale castle of Neuschwangstein at Schwangau. The weather was lovely and, after having climbed upwards from the castle, we had some fantastic views.

It was cloudy as we made our way towards Venice via the Brenner Pass, the heavens opened and we had thunder as well. We decided to camp as near to Venice as possible without actually going in so found Camping De Oro which looked very pleasant. What we did not realise was that it was situated almost at the end of the Venice airport runway which didn't make for a very quiet night! We paid our 21,000 lire, not cheap, and with cold showers into the bargain! Yesterday's clouds had vanished and it was a beautiful morning as we headed into Venice to find the ship, still pinching ourselves - were we actually sailing on the Orient Express today?

I had better explain a little about the "Orient Express". This one is a luxury car ferry which, from April to October, does a seven day cruise from Venice to Piraeus (for Athens), Istanbul, Kusadasi, Patmos, Katakalon and back to Venice. You can either do the full cruise, taking your vehicle along for the ride as it is cheaper and safer than parking, or you may disembark at any point, take a week or so on holiday, then rejoin the ship and continue for the rest of the cruise back to Venice.

The shipping line is organised so that you can leave your vehicle parked safely near the ship and take the courtesy coach to Piazza Roma. Then you can take the water-bus into Venice and do the tourist trail for 2 or 3 hours. This we did and arrived back at the ship to find that checking in was a long drawn out job but we passed the time away chatting to some of the other passengers. Amongst these were a couple, about our age - also grey-haired, who had apparently crossed on the same ferry from Dover. They had noticed our tandem on the back of our Legend and were surprised to see us there. During the conversation they, Joan & Kenneth, asked if they could share a table with us in the dining room. We were pleased to agree and as we were the first on board we settled in to our cabin and found the head waiter. He, to our delight, allocated us a table by

one of the large windows. Our new friends were the last on board so we didn't meet up with them until dinner.

We sailed exactly on schedule at 6.00 p.m. and what a lovely sight it was sailing past St. Mark's Square on a beautiful warm evening.

Joan & Kenneth had intended to leave at Istanbul and rejoin the ship at Kusadasi but after seeing the horrendous traffic in Athens and reading that it was no better in Istanbul they decided to get off with us at Kusadasi. We are very glad that they did as the four of us had a marvellous time.

Sunday was spent sailing down the Adriatic then, early on Monday morning, through the Corinth Canal. To us this was a magical experience, following in the footsteps of Michael Palin. The morning was spent in Athens with an excursion round the Parthenon. Tuesday saw us arriving in Istanbul at 9.30 a.m. - it was a little cool. Another excursion took us round the Topkapi Palace, the Blue Mosque. The Grand Bazaar was a real education. We managed NOT to buy a Turkish carpet despite the concerted efforts of the salesmen.

The ship sailed at 6.00 p.m. and we ate an excellent dinner and packed in readiness to leave the ship the next morning for our two week trip round the south west part of Turkey.

Wednesday morning dawned and it was hot and sunny when we docked at Kusadasi at 10.00 a.m., exactly on time, which is what we had become accustomed to on the ship. Customs formalities were very casual and we were soon driving out of the dock gates towards the town where we met A.S.O.C. members *Neg & Gordon Rollinson* who had just completed their week-long tour and were about to rejoin the ship for Venice. This was not a chance meeting as we had previously met at the Billing rally. Gordon was very helpful with advice on camp sites and useful information about Turkey. Thanks again, Gordon! While we were talking a young man gave us a leaflet advertising *Camping Onder*, about 1 mile from the docks, which proved to be very well situated. Only 10 minutes from the beach and within walking distance of the town. It had all the amenities - hot showers, electricity - and all for only £3.00 per night.

Kusadasi is one of the touristy places in Turkey and once again the salesmen were trying to sell us carpets - and once again we declined! We spent a couple of days there and found eating out was very reasonable. £10.00

for 4 of us including wine. We had quite a bit of fun showing the waiters themselves on our video camera.

Leaving Kusadasi we headed south towards Marmaris on our way to Camping Sargin recommended by Gordon and needed our first diesel in Turkey which cost only £1.24 per gallon.

Some roads in Turkey are very good but Gordon had explained that we would find dirt roads in Marmaris. When we arrived we found them being replaced by tar and chippings but the main road into town was pure tar - no chippings yet. Arthur refused to drive the Legend along the sticky surface, parked near some flats, and hiked into town to find a bank. Joan, Kenneth and I stayed with the vehicles and it was here we had our first taste of the friendliness and hospitality of the Turkish people. One lady invited us into her house away from the dust and heat whilst another from the flats above where we were parked sent her small daughter of about 3 or 4 years with one of Turkey's national drinks, yoghurt and water. Not to our taste, but we smiled our thanks and pretended to enjoy it.

On our way once again we eventually found Camping Sargin at Hisaronu on the Datca peninsular. It was right on the beach and was indeed a quiet and peaceful site, ideal for anyone wishing to unwind. There were 14 individual pitches, each with its own water supply, drain, electricity and shade (very important). There was always plenty of hot water for the dishes and showers and also a washing machine. All for a price similar to the one at Kusadasi. The sea water swimming pool was always kept clean and the geraniums and oleanders made it a pleasant place to while away the hot sunny afternoons.

Our 4 days soon passed - shame! But we had lots more to see in the remaining eight days. We could have done with 3 weeks in Turkey.

Olu Deniz was our next destination. It is featured in almost all holiday brochures of Turkey with its white sands and turquoise sea.

This was one of the things on "Arthur's List" to see, so off we trundled. How wrong we were! The sea was turquoise, the sand was white and the temperature was 104°F, but western commercialism had got there before us. There were numerous camp sites but not many with trees and as shade was a high priority we had to look around, eventually finding one. What we did not know was that there was a hotel next door with an open-air

disco which started at 10.00 p.m. Luckily business was not very brisk and it closed at midnight. We decided that one night was quite enough, thank you! Another off-putting point was that the camp site was populated by free range chickens which raised one's "standing" in life by about half-an-inch.

We headed north from there on an obviously new wide mountain road. The surface was excellent, the views magnificent and the traffic minimal.

We made an important discovery at our lunch stop. Arthur had emptied the cassette toilet at Olu Deniz (sea level). I "spent a penny" in the mountains and got my own back!!! Lesson learned - leave the slide valve open just a crack. After cleaning up we drove a few miles further on and stopped for fuel. Garages had not been too plentiful in this region so we were pleased to see the pumps. The friendly staff filled us up and gave our Legend and Joan & Kenneth's Volvo & caravan a good wash down. (It is a pity they were not around at the lunch stop.) What we did not know was that ahead of us lay 22 kilometres of the same wide new road minus the tarmac so the two lovely clean outfits were soon covered in thick yellow dust.

*To be continued*

Who isn't a letter writer? No further comment needed.

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More answers for the *Johnsons, Pat & Beryl*, have been received.

"I give three answers or tips which should help.

1. Backing the van up to an Awning? When the awning is in place with the van, with 6" galvanised nails fix a white tape on the ground where the wheels touch; also place another marker that lines up with the van. It is easier to line up exactly without any assistance when the driver's door is open.

2. Sink draining. Make sure that as little as possible (e.g. grease, sweetcorn etc.) goes down the hole as it is only a small bore pipe and does not have as much hot water flowing through it as the sink at home. We always 'dry-clean' our plates and utensils with paper from a kitchen roll so that they are about 90% clean before washing up,

3. Oil Filler Cap on a Talbot. It is not easy, but it is easier if a screwdriver is inserted between cover and body it fits into. Twist the screwdriver and when loosened a little, hold the body and pull, twisting the cover to the left and right. It becomes a bit easier still after the first time.

4. And a tip. We always travel with a flask of boiling water (and fill it up for overnight too). It only takes a couple of minutes to bring it back to the boil.

*Geoffrey Mabey.* "

Thanks, Geoff. We have, very occasionally, been caught with a bit too much grease going down the plug. As you imply, a small amount of boiling water (well - very hot then) next time the kettle is working seems to clear it quite well. We did have a small problem with boil-in-the-bag stuff once where the apparently liquid gravy actually contained a larger number of 'bits' than we had thought. Again a flush helped.

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### A REMINDER

Have you filled in and returned your Renewal Form? The Club needs YOUR details so that the records may be kept completely up to date. If you haven't yet sent it to Sheila Hammell, our Membership Secretary, please do so now and make her job that much easier. Thank you.

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A very new member (Number seven hundred and how many?) completed his application form with a plea for assistance. He has a Talisman and is seeking advice from anyone who has taken one, or a similar vehicle, to the Alps in winter. He wants information about using the van in low temperatures (and probably at high altitudes too). The only thing that I can think of is to use Propane rather than Butane because of the difference in gassing temperatures. (How's that for a bit of technical jargon? No obvious comments, please!) If anyone can help please let me have your observations for inclusion in a subsequent N/L.

### CHAIRMAN 'S CHAT

I do hope you all had a Good Christmas and that you will have a Happy, Healthy and Successful New Year!

As most of you will already know I am standing down from the Committee at the 1991 A.G.M. - I think that two years as Chairman is quite long enough and I certainly do not intend, as one famous lady does, to be a "back seat driver"! I have really enjoyed my spell as Chairman and would like to thank all Committee members and also Club members who have made my task such an easy one. I hope no-one thinks that because Clive, Ken, Sybil and I are leaving the Committee this year that there has been any "civil war" going on - nothing could be further from the truth, I assure you. But I do feel that now Daphne has also retired we really want to have more freedom to enjoy the pleasures of using our Talisman to the full - and that will certainly mean being away from home for some quite lengthy periods.

Clive Jenkins report on last year's National Rally at Billing made interesting reading, didn't it? I don't think many people realise how close to disaster we came that weekend - how Clive and his colleagues kept sane throughout that hectic period I shall never know. Let's hope they don't have quite such a hectic experience this year.

Twelve Auto-Sleepers attended the Christmas rally at Abbey Wood which Daphne & I marshalled and I hope that there will be a report on it elsewhere in this Newsletter. [No such luck - Ed] Abbey Wood is far from being an ideal situation for a rally but it is very handy for getting to London and we have now identified suitable places for a Friday evening get-together and Saturday evening buffet. The camp-site itself is well equipped with excellent centrally heated toilet blocks but nearly all the pitches are on quite a severe slope. One might have expected the Caravan Club to have terraced some pitches, certainly for motor-caravans, but I understand that because they only manage the site rather than owning or having a long lease this is not feasible. I also believe that as from 1991 the Caravan Club has abandoned the policy of offering a reduction in site fees for rallies - even those organised by its own local groups! I think that is going to cause quite a lot of annoyance to some people.

One of my recent extravagances was to take out a year's subscription to the French magazine "Le Monde du Camping Car". I wonder how many of you know it? Although my French is far from perfect I find I can understand nearly all of it. Both the production and colour printing are of superb quality and it really is very well presented. It is interesting to see how many 'A' class caravans are available on the Continent and some of them really do look super, if very expensive!

The latest trend seems to be towards the production of "all-weather" camping cars with all tanks within the insulated bodies. There is even an article in the January issue on winter sporting venues and suitable caravan sites.

For a long time Daphne & I have been looking for a suitable cycle carrier to fix on the back of "Capuccino". Although the Fiamma and other similar racks are very neat and efficient I wanted to avoid, if at all possible, having to fix into the glass fibre body of the Talisman. We had almost decided to go for the Danish made Engskor carrier which we first saw fitted to Roland Trulock's Legend and is now also on the back of Ralph Dulson's Talisman. This is supported from the rear chassis members so that no weight is on the body but even then some holes have to be bored at the base of the body. In a cycle shop in Bromley (Kent) a few weeks ago I came across another cycle carrier which I have now bought. This is an American product called "Enflite" which actually straps to "Capuccino's" ladder and carries our two bikes very securely. It cost just under £70.00 and one of its attractions is that it can be removed in a couple of minutes when not required.

I hope to see many of you at the "Early Birds Meet" in Cumbria being organised by George and Daisy Wane in early March - it sounds a brave and exciting idea.

Happy motor-caravanning to you all in 1991!

*John Normandale.*

[Cher Monsieur L'Homme du Fauteuil. S'il vous plait, traduisez-vous quelques chose interessant du livre francais pour les pauvre Anglais wot don't speak like them over there. Ta, ever so! Ed.]

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Peter Fisher has kindly sent on details of dealer at Durrington, Salisbury, Wiltshire, who have written to him. This dealer, Rangers Garage of Bulford Road, are now fully equipped with all the special tools necessary to carry out work on all kinds of conversions on the Talbot chassis. The workshop, run by Mr Stuart Honaker, is open from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays, and until 12.30 pm on Saturdays. The main reason for including this item is that there is a free car loan service available to customers for the duration of their own vehicle's servicing.

We don't normally include advertisements from outside bodies in the Newsletter but both Peter and I thought that this item might be of interest to members around the Salisbury area - particularly the bit about the free loan car!

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"Dear Harry,

This time last week we were with Wendy and Peter Fisher et al. outside Bridgnorth; now as I write the Rapport sits outside considerably increased in height by the snow, which has brought all outdoor activity to zero.

At least it gives me no excuse for not writing to ask for indices for the ASOC Newsletters - from the start if you have them please, for writing is another of those things to be done later!

I note the comment regarding Rita (Daley) and the bubble plastic at the local garden centre, which I also had examined. I think it might work with the aid of the ubiquitous velcro tape and being like the sea-weed we pop (bladderwrack?) it should have insulating properties. I have experimented at Bridgnorth with 9<sub>mm</sub> camping mat cut to shape and fitted in the rear door windows of the Rapport. Looking for something which would be self-supporting in the windows and not being bulky for storage. At present I have fitted it with partial success to the metalwork of the window: it could be better if cut to the rubber trim and less likely to bulge outwards. The camping mats are only 550<sub>mm</sub> wide and are not deep enough for the windscreens, so the bubble plastic used there will be an alternative to the external Silver Screens, which I fear must be an awful nuisance in wet weather.

I will report any future success (or failure), but the problem with this retirement life is that it takes up so much time!

*Norman Cutler.*"

I am sure many members will agree with Norman's comment about retirement. How often have I heard a comment that the individual cannot think how he or she ever found time to go to work. I think that the real explanation is that now we have time to do things which interest us more and thus spend more time doing them. (Does that make sense?)

We use our Silver Screen on the Clubman and have found that it appears to give more space inside the van. This is because there is no need to draw the windscreen curtains - unless you want to. I've found that the only real difficulty when it is wet is the initial rolling up to store back in the bag. Once it is safely away there is no more trouble until the next evening when I have usually forgotten that it is still wet and haul it out of the bag and get somewhat dampened.

We shall look forward, Norman, to your future revelations - now that the snow has, hopefully, subsided and you can get out and experiment again. (Thinks - does snow subside or have I used the wrong word again? Oh. well)

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i see that page 20 has crept up on me again. So this is my cue to shut up for another month before I go over the page and run out of paper. So cheerio for the moment, I don't suppose many of us will be overnighing in the vans at present, in this country at least. So keep reading, booking for the National and generally getting ready for 'The Season'.

Your Editor

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