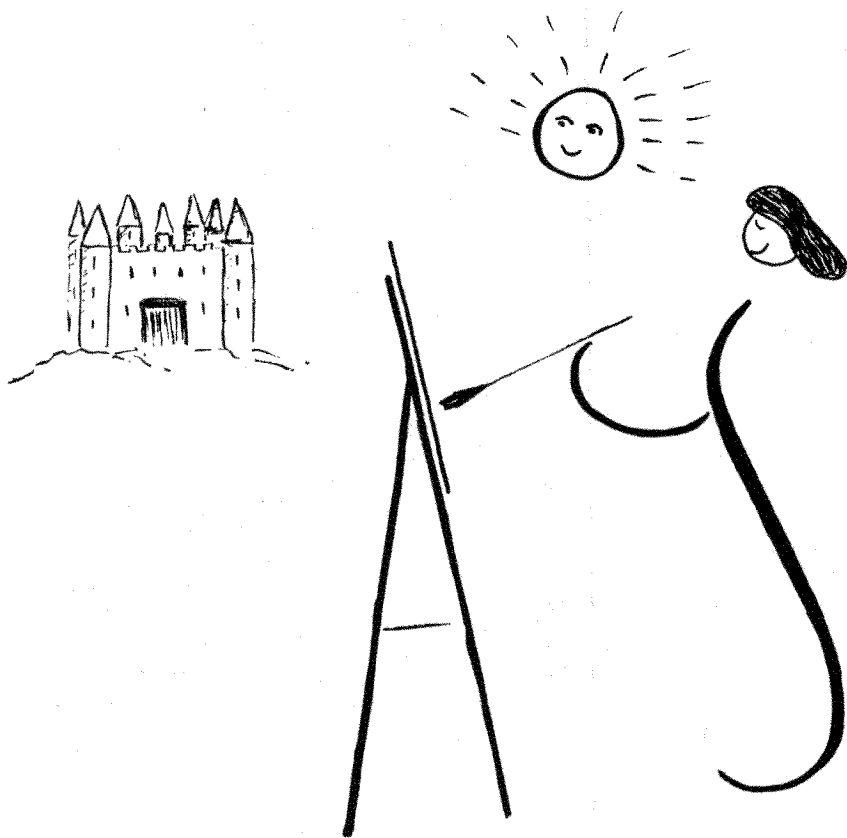


**A U T O - S L E E P E R
O W N E R S ' C L U B**



NEWSLETTER 35

AUGUST 1991

Hello.

Having just finished our holiday up in the Yorkshire Moors and Dales (and other places around too - you know what wanderers we all are) the time has come to put all that aside and start on the August issue. Our Treasurer and current print arranging genius *John Tidbury* needs the material well before he and his family take a well earned holiday. So here goes.

CHAIRMAN ' S CHAT

There are times, and this is one of them, when I find I have to stop and think about what I am trying to do and how I can set about doing it. I have decided there is no point in trying to contribute separate items under the heading of "Chairman's chat" and "Phil's Rabbit", etc., because what I want to say all comes under the same heading anyway; Phil just happens to be Chairman for the time being. I hope I haven't rabbited on too much this time just because *Harry's* on holiday!

Last month *Harry* stepped in and put a "filler" into the Newsletter, in place of "Chairman's Chat", about the possible form future National Rallies might take. His source was a letter I had sent to all committee members following a meeting I had had at the Orchard. The letter was really intended to have limited circulation prior to discussion by the Committee. Is this a "leak" I ask myself? And if it is, what should be done about it? The short answers are, "No" and "Nothing". I say that because it is important that you be kept informed about what is going on within the Club, not only because you are entitled (horrible word) to know but because we, on the Committee, need to learn from you what you would like us to do on your behalf.

Please don't think that if we get just one letter saying "Scrap the National Rally" there won't be any more of them. Nor, if you ask us to organise it in your local park every year, will we undertake to do that, but at the moment we have a different kind of decision to make; whether a National without the display of new vehicles and the Spares Shop, plus the stands of specialist suppliers, would still BE the National and would be as well supported. I know there are those who say there is so much to do in the relatively short time available at the National

that a visit to the "Show Tent" comes some way down the list of priorities. I go along with that and would like to see a separate major meeting later in the year, somewhere near Willersey, at which the Company would be well represented. As I see it, and I haven't had much chance to consider the ins and outs of it let alone discuss it with Auto-Sleepers themselves, it would be a large rally with little or no catering laid on to keep the organisation and costs to a minimum. I will investigate possibilities and let you know what develops.

On to less weighty matters. Harry wonders if silica gel would help to reduce condensation in double glazed windows made from acrylic sheet. I think the answer has to be "Yes, but only up to a point". Silica gel has an affinity for water, it just loves to slurp those little wet molecules but there comes a time, as with you and I, when a limit is reached. If you can then place the silica gel in a warmish oven for a few hours it will dry out and be ready to absorb more moisture. How you could dry it out after putting it into the middle of a double glazed window I don't quite see....

George Wane wonders about labour charges where servicing of Talbots is concerned. On 22nd April I had the current Talisman serviced by a Peugeot Talbot main dealer and the labour charge was £33 per hour, plus VAT. Since I favour a diesel engine, and this is just to tease George, the 20,000 mile service took only 0.75 hours (three quarters of an hour before we went decimal!). Despite that, they had the thing from eight o'clock until almost noon... I am now saving up for the full, 25,000 miles service!

I don't know about you but some things bug me more than enough. For instance, on the vehicle service referred to above, they put 6 litres of oil into the sump despite the handbook stating the engine capacity to be 4.9 litres but that's not the point - they charged 5 litres at £8.85 and 1 litre at £2 both plus VAT, of course, and I know darned well they have lubricating oil delivered to them in bulk, into a storage tank. Obviously it all costs them the same price per litre and a hell of a lot less than they charge me. It's just so mean and petty to boost charges this way.

Another bug is the way banks and some travel agents charge for foreign currency. Normal business practice is, as I understand it, for the middleman - butcher, baker, grocer, even a Peugeot Talbot main dealer, etc., - to buy an item at one price and to sell it at another, higher, price thereby making a profit. But this doesn't apply to banks nowadays; certainly they buy foreign currency at one price and sell it at another but then they have the gall to charge a transaction fee as well. A bit like a grocer saying he'll sell you a tin of beans for 29 pence and then charging you 30 pence, to include 1p for his service. I don't think he'd last long. But banks do. And why is it that I can buy a 70cl bottle of Ballantines finest Scotch whisky in a French supermarket for £7.85 (76,95FFr at 9.82 FFr per £1) when a 75cl bottle of the same stuff would cost me over £10 in an English supermarket? Are we being ripped off? (£7.84 for 70cl equates to £8.40 for 75cl).

I have sometimes wondered why I feel unfavourably disposed towards Cruise Controls and even some computerised data providers but I think *Alf Campbell's* letter in the July Newsletter has helped me clarify my thoughts. He comments on the poor fuel consumption obtained at 40/45 mph with a diesel Talbot, especially on hills. The reason for this, I think, is the inability of a cruise control to anticipate - by its very nature it can only react. I always aim to have the engine revs rising when I meet the foot of an upward gradient because this results in making better progress before the revs drop off to the level where a gear change becomes desirable. On computerised data I will just say that an instantaneous readout of fuel flow through a pipe related to mph doesn't really correspond to actual mpg in any meaningful way. I agree entirely with *Bob Measom* when he says the real figure is that obtained from tank full to tank full. At least, I think that's what he says! I've recently sent him some figures covering about 85,000 miles on two Talbot diesels and await his comments. In my experience the fuel consumption when pattering at 40/45 mph is incredibly good.

At the Committee meeting held at *Wendy & Peter's [Fisher - Ed]* rally at Walsall Airport at the end of June the big topic was the 1992 National Rally and AGM. We decided to stick to the weekend after Easter despite the risk of

losing the presence of Auto-Sleepers. (If the Motor Caravan Jamboree at Brand's Hatch is held on the same weekend A-S will be there, not with us). It looks as though the site may well be Trentham Gardens, North Staffordshire but there are still a few little details for the sub-committee to sort out with management there. For your information the sub-committee consists of *John Cox, Tony Jones, Terry Plant* with your Chairman in the chair. Contact your local member with suggestions and offers of help! It is our intention that the National Rally sub-committee shall carry on from year to year, members joining and members standing down but continuity being maintained.

A lot of work has already gone into finding suitable sites and the Committee particularly wished to convey their gratitude to *Nora Venables* for the tremendous efforts she has made to get us in at Himley Hall. In the end the logistics and costs involved in arranging things the way we wanted them defeated *Nora - and Peter -* and we had to call it a day. It would have been very nice if it had come off so Thank You, *Nora* for the idea and the time and energy you expended.

We are now seriously considering Wicksteed Park, Kettering for 1993 (?); a good site, excellent catering but perhaps a touch expensive as far as the food is concerned. More news as things develop; watch this space! We think members in the South and West have had rather generous treatment as far as Nationals are concerned and we are trying to move it around the country from now on. As always, ideas are welcome but please remember that we are looking for sites which can accommodate 350+ vans and cater for 700+ people for meals and the AGM. Preferably in a permanent building as opposed to a marquee.

Wendy, [Fisher - Ed], our Regalia Officer, has been asked by some members if we can offer a Club Badge for vehicles and she has found a source. The badge would be plastic within a chromium-plated surround, rather like the current AA or RAC badges (and many others) and the cost to members would be in the region of £6.50. Can't give a more precise figure than that until we know how much (real) interest there is because the price is related to the number we order at one time - if we can sensibly order 100 the price could be a little less than if we buy 50. The

motif would be the same as the peely plastic windscreen one. Wendy wants a firm indication of interest before ordering and committing club funds to a possible non-seller so please let her know if you want one. (0543 377777).

A request to Rally Marshals:- Please give as much detail as you can when describing the facilities available on the site. I am told one site, described in the rally list as a "green field" site, not only had a toilet block but hot showers were available too. The point here being that some members who would not wish to go to a real Green Field site - which by custom is a field with fresh water available and nothing else - might well have attended if they had known the extra amenities were laid on.

My apologies to *Leo and Dorothy Soble* for not including in my last Chat their wish to hear from members interested in visiting the States next year some time. There is a thought that buying a motor caravan, using it for some months and then selling it is the most economical way to do it and *Leo* thought that a chain of sharers could possibly be arranged to spread the cost. The starting date could be March next year with *Leo and Dorothy* having the job of buying the van and arranging to hand over to the next member at some mutually agreed place and so on. Please give them a ring on 0452 70526.

All for now. *Phil Daley*"

I have some reservations about the comment that Rally Marshals should give more detail of the sites. Sometimes the information is not readily available when one decides to volunteer as a marshal. As an example *Sheila and I* put forward the suggestion for the Midland Railway Trust in mid-July having been told that there was a field available but with no other detail. The reply that *Jeff Worley* got when making the booking indicated that there was such a field and that a buffet could be made available but there was still no mention of toilet facilities. It wasn't until we investigated, as we went northward on holiday, that we found out that there are toilets close to the field. And by the time we got home it was too late to tell people.

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"With regard to Mr Crapp's letter referred to on page 6 of the June N/L I am told that there

are two people besides me with a Talisman which has a cooker set for butane and will need conversion for use with propane. I have a Fiat Talisman (my garage is a Fiat dealer) and the story being put about by Fiat UK Ltd is that I am the only person wanting a workshop manual and as the minimum print run is three hundred the Company cannot run to this at the moment. Initially I was fobbed off with a supplement for a Mark III which as you can imagine only tells you what you would have had with that version. As my garage was dissatisfied with this it was arranged that I would write to somebody rather special at Fiat UK Ltd and he deputed a girl to telephone me to say that I could have a Mark I manual and under examination she let slip that they had done this with others who had not complained. However she said the one she was sending to my garage was the last one owned by Fiat. The garage's workshop foreman when next on a course raised this pointing out that the gearbox section of his manual had disintegrated with use and after initially being assured he would receive one he was then told that the last one had just gone so perhaps the girl was right.

I do not know the relative sizes of Fiat, Peugeot/Talbot and Citroen (is that the third one?) but if they could get together and push the boat out either for 100 each or pro-rata to their sales it would help purchasers and dealers. I understand that a manual is available in almost any other language except Chinese but it is unlikely to make any reference to the part most likely to go wrong, namely the floor mounted gear change."

So says *David Maddison-Roberts*. These manuals should really be a part of any manufacturers stock list just like the parts which are needed to effect repairs. I wonder why so many leave it to Haynes to produce a volume? Way back when the Mark I Consul was new (Julius Caesar's time perhaps) I managed to obtain a copy of an 'exploded parts list' which I found most useful when trying to carry out repairs. My Consul wasn't new and I had to carry out repairs myself on account of costs. Maybe one day.....

-----ooOooOooOoo-----

Barry Crawshaw has also written to say that at least two books were printed for the Express (Ducato). "(1) obtainable from Motor Books, for the Ducato, originally £10 and (2) published by

Peugeot-Talbot for the Express at about £25. This was a limited edition in a ring binder. Unfortunately neither contains a chapter on routine servicing and minor maintenance which so many of us want to do for ourselves. But they do have wiring diagrams and a fair amount of data. Two or three years ago I enquired of Haynes whether they were likely to publish a manual for these vehicles. The reply was that they were aware of the increasing numbers of motor-caravans based on these chassis and might find the time to do a manual sometime. I guess that if all our members with such vehicles wrote asking for a manual it might tip the scales. How about renewed pressure from MMM too, JH?

Exhaust system for Express.

After 4½ years my Talisman's original exhaust system will soon have to be replaced. Enquiries have produced two bits of information which may be of interest:

1. It is possible to obtain a stainless steel system. J.P Exhausts would make one to order for about £250. I dare say that if the Club could muster a number of orders the price might be reduced. Does anyone know what the life expectancy of such an exhaust is likely to be? Praise was heaped on the firm in a letter in MMM in December '90 because of their excellent service. Their price compares with about £190 for genuine Talbot and £130 from National Tyres, both in mild steel. I did not pursue the stainless option because of a local special offer whereby I obtained a Walkers system for £70.

2. I noticed that my present silencers both have a tiny drain hole at the lowest point. The Walkers one waiting to be fitted do not. I telephoned Walkers and their advice is that if the vehicle does a lot of short runs there should be drain holes. If long runs are the norm then no drains. Condensation will dry out anyway and the possible entry of salt spray inward through the drains is avoided."

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"Capuccino on the Continent

Several members, on hearing that we were off to Spain and Portugal, asked me to let them know how we got on. We have been home just a fortnight now and am hoping the Editor will find room for this rather haphazard summary. First of all I am glad to say that "Capuccino", our

Talisman II who will be three years only on 1st August, behaved absolutely impeccably and never gave us a moment's trouble. The only mishap was the failure of our electronic burglar alarm which decided to take a holiday too! For Bob Measom's records I can say that we covered 4,635 miles and used 968 litres of petrol - mostly lead free. I have worked this out to 21.8 mpg which I consider very satisfactory. As a matter of interest the total cost of the petrol used was £496.

Our thoughts about ferry costs may be a surprise. We considered using Brittany Ferries from Plymouth to Santander but the total cost, including cabins each way, worked out at just over £500. With our P & O stallholder's discount Portsmouth to Cherbourg outward (with cabin) and Calais to Dover inward cost us £107. So the price differential went a long way towards paying for the petrol we used! I suppose if time was critical one could justify the excess costs of the Santander trip but we were in Biarritz on our second night abroad and that was without using autoroutes or and with no undue haste.

On the subject of autoroutes, which we hardly ever used, their price seems to be getting quite exorbitant. We reckoned that 100 miles on a Spanish autopista cost us £10. French autoroutes are just as bad - a report in a recent Le Monde du Camping Car gives a total cost of a motor-caravan from Calais to Nice of 537 francs - about £55! Most of our travelling was on main roads although we used some fairly minor ones from time to time. I was pleased to find Michelin maps covering Spain and Portugal. They are orange ones in the 400 series - 1:400,000 instead of the 1:200,000 of the yellow French series. These maps seem to be available only in the areas which they cover but are well worth looking for. There has been much new road building, particularly in Southern Spain where some enormous civil engineering is being done (apparently with the help of E.C. funds) so that you often find that what is shown as a minor road is now a modern highway.

Spanish road signs are almost the same as the French and generally easy to follow. In Portugal, however, signposting is much more haphazard particularly in and around towns. The French have recently discovered roundabouts and seem to be building them wherever they can - it will be fine when they work out how to use them!

Our trip covered the end of April to mid-June and in the early part we found very few camp sites open. This didn't particularly worry us as we always found one when we wanted it and for quite a number of nights, particularly in quiet rural parts of Northern Spain and Portugal, we camped wild. This seems to be perfectly acceptable if done discreetly and we never had any problems at all. Parts of old roads left behind after road improvements and harbour quays or the ends of seaside promenades were particularly suitable. The price of camp sites in Spain seems to have gone mad. In Santiago de Compostella we paid £9.50 a night and at Roses £9.80 for what was admittedly a super pitch. In Portugal things were very different - at Olhao, our favourite site, a pitch cost £3.20. All these prices include electric hook ups which seem to be almost universally available. Unlike France, where the site operator normally has to unlock a bollard to connect your lead, most bollards in Spain and Portugal are do-it-yourself ones. Many have as many as 30 sockets so you are likely to need a very long lead. A two-pin continental plug seemed to be what is required and this can often be turned round in the socket to get the correct polarity.

We had no problems with poor toilet blocks although few provide loo paper. As a slight diversion it is useful to know that there are hardly any public toilets in Spanish towns. Bars and cafes usually have good ones and you don't have to buy a drink before you use them. Another "Spanish custom" that can catch you out is that they don't eat dinner until very late - often restaurants don't open until 9 pm. Tapas and raciones, small snacks, are available almost all day, however, and make an excellent lunch.

Getting back to camp sites, we found a really excellent sites directory published by R.A.C.E. claiming to cover all 1156 sites in Spain and Portugal. It cost 1,050 pesetas (about £6) and included an excellent Michelin map identifying the location of each site. I don't know whether it is available in Britain - I certainly haven't seen it. Camp sites are not usually very well signposted in either country and the addresses given in the directory don't help very much, so don't leave it too late if you are looking for a particular site. Many sites claimed to have swimming pools but very few of these were actually operating when we were there. We got

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB
RALLY SUPPLEMENT

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August & September 1991

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!

2nd-4th August. KINGSBURY Water Park, West Midlands. (Camping & Caravanning Club site.) Fees £4.30 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Maureen & John Edden, 4, Nursery Lane, Hopwas, Tamworth, Staffs, B78 3AS.

Directions: Leave M.42 at Junction 9. North on A.4097. Left at roundabout at Marston. IGNORE MAIN ENTRANCE TO WATER PARK. Follow Camping & Caravanning Club signs. The park covers 600 acres in the valley of the River Tame and has more than 30 lakes. You can, if you wish, bring your own canoe or inflatable.

9th-11th August. Swan House Farm, REDMIRE, North Yorkshire. **GREEN FIELD** site. Fees £1.50 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

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

Directions: Take A.684 Northallerton to Leyburn road. Turn right in Wensley village s.p. Castle Bolton, Redmire. There is a maximum limit of 50 vans for this rally

16th-18th August. Chestnut Farm, NORTON, Gloucestershire. **GREEN FIELD** site. Fees £1.85 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Barbara & Jeff Worley, 26, Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8SQ.

Directions: From Tewkesbury take A.38 towards Gloucester for about 8 miles into Norton. Past Kings Head public house on right. Site on right in 600 yards. From Gloucester take A.38 towards Tewkesbury for about 3 miles. Site on left. Watch for A.S.O.C. signs.

16th-18th August. Detling Steam and Transport Spectacular, Kent County Showground, Detling, Nr. Maidstone, Kent **GREEN FIELD** site, but there will be some food stalls and a beer 'tent' on site. Fees: £8.00 for the weekend plus Rally Fee £1.50.

Marshals: Sheila Hammell & Harry Henthorne. Bookings to Harry, please, at 69, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Surrey, CR0 7EG.

Directions: Leave M20 at jnc 6 onto A.249 sp Sittingbourne. When leaving slip road and joining A.249 make sure you turn RIGHT. Almost at top of hill turn left at sign for Exhibitors. Follow road round to entrance gate on right. Plenty to see and of interest to anybody keen on transport through the years. Attractions for all ages including trade and auto-jumble stands. Steam Engines, tractors, motor-bikes etc. so can be noisy!

6th-8th September. MORTON GLADE, Nr. Dorchester, Dorset. Fees £3.25 per night. Rally fee £1.50. Electricity £1.50 per night.

Marshals: Barbara & Jeff Worley and Margaret & Brent Harrison. Bookings to Jeff, please, at 26, Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8SQ.

Directions: From A.35 take B.3390 south at Tolpuddle. From A.352 take B.3390 north at Warmwell roundabout. Site is by Morton Station.

A hall has been booked for a social on Saturday evening

8th-13th September. Mid-week Follow-on rally at the same site. Fees as above. Please INCLUDE for extra days when booking.

13th-15th September. Tanner Farm Camping & Caravan Park, Marden, Kent. Fees £4.00 per night. Rally fee £1.50. Electric points available.

Marshals: Daphne & John Normandale, 87, Lower Camden, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5JD.

Directions: The Park is well signed, just off the B.2079 Marden to Goudhurst road. Members may stay for extra nights at concession rates.

20th-22nd September. Motor Caravan Show, SHEPTON MALLET.

Book direct with organizers on form to be included in M.C.W. & M.M.M. clearly marking your form A.S.O.C. Fees as shown on form. PLEASE ALSO ADVISE CLUB MARSHALS so that sufficient space is allocated for our needs.

Marshals: Barbara & Jeff Worley, 26, Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8SQ.

Directions will be found in M.C.W. & M.M.M.

27th-29th September. KINGSWOOD, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire. GREEN FIELD site. Fees £1.75 per night. Rally fee £1.50

Marshals: Barbara & Jeff Worley, 26, Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8SQ.

Directions: Leave M.5 at Junction 14. Take B.4509 s.p. Wotton-under-Edge. At second X-roads turn left onto B.4058 (s.p. Wotton-u-E). Through Charfield and about 0.5 mile further on turn right s.p. Kingswood. Next junction turn right and follow A.S.O.C. signs. Leave M.4. at Junction 18. Take A.46 Stroud road to Petty France. Turn left s.p. Hawkesbury Upton. Straight on to Hillesley. Follow signs to Kingswood. Site on left on entering village. Follow A.S.O.C. signs.

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

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 total Site fee plus Rally fee. Please complete BACK of slip IN FULL!

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 total Site fee plus Rally fee. Please complete BACK of slip IN FULL!

the very strong impression that the season for caravanning is just July and August and it all happens then. Camping Gaz is widely available at camp sites and in supermarkets and seems to be about half the U.K. price. Credit cards for petrol purchases are not as generally accepted in Spain as in Portugal and lead-free petrol is fairly scarce too.

We never had any security problems luckily but didn't leave "Capuccino" unattended in large towns. At Oporto, Seville and Granada we were able to find camp sites near bus stops so that we could get into town by public transport for sightseeing.

I seem to have rambled on quite a bit without talking about the places we visited. We had a really wonderful, interesting trip and if the Editor can find me a bit of space in a later issue I will tell you more about our route and the places we liked best.

John Normandale

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Of course I shall find some space sometime, *John*. You well know that this is the type of input that any Editor needs to keep the Newsletter going. So send it along and I'll see what I can do. But you may have been preempted on your journey report because I have received the following:

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"With a Coche-Cama in the Picos

If two Auto-Sleeper Motor Caravans park next to each other high in the mountains of Northern Spain where the tarmac ends and the donkey track begins is this a rally? We were over 3,500 feet up in the Picos de Europa above Fuente De among the massive mountains. The door of the Legend, next to which we had parked, opened and a voice called "We've just made a pot of tea - would you like to join us?" That sounds like a rally, doesn't it?

We had sailed from Plymouth to Santander across a calm and peaceful Bay of Biscay with a warm sun beating down on deck. We had driven westward along Spain's north coast and visited Santillana dal Mar, a medieval village with a 12th century Romanesque church and cloisters

which should not be missed. And there is a good camp site a kilometre or so to the west.

The road to the Picos twists and turns through the narrow Defile of Hermedo climbing up and up beside the river Davas to Potes and the excellent site of Isla Camping, quiet in May but probably horribly crowded in July and August. The high peaks of the Picos are all around you and the scenery is magnificent. For those who are fascinated by birds of prey these mountains are home to many and for those who love the wild flowers of spring the hillsides in May are covered in cowslips, gentians and hellebores, bugloss and orchids, and great swaths of wild daffodils.

We planned a route south-west through the Picos with a long and steady climb to 6,000 feet where snow lay in the deeper gullies. The air was warm by day but on the site at Sanabria lake, at a height of 3,320 feet beside a peacefully flowing river teeming with fish, it was a cold night in spite of extra rugs over the sleeping bags and we awoke to frost on the grass. A beautiful site and well worth a visit. Our route to the west was a scenic one to the south of the Sierra de Cabrera, a narrow twisting road, through small mountain villages that seemed to have changed little over the centuries. At one point piglets on the road brought us to a halt. At another cattle with enormous horns wandering along the verges slowed us down. We saw oxen pulling a cart which had solid wooden wheels and others ploughing a small field. But most of the carts and ploughs were drawn by donkeys, horses or mules.

So we came to Leiro, a quiet site to the west of Orense. It was very hot and the scenery was awe-inspiring with glorious mountain ranges for many, many miles. We reached the west coast at Baiona, on the Costa Verde and turned south to linger for a few days in the hot sunshine on some splendid quiet sandy beaches. To the south of Baiona, at the tiny village of Mougla, we found Camping Glasgow! This was not on our list of sites. It was excellent, with a swimming pool that we enjoyed and a tranquillity from being the only folks on the site. The waves broke on the rocks just a few feet from our van. We were in country where horses roamed wild much as the ponies do in the New Forest or on Dartmoor.

South again on a small coast road we crossed the Rio Minho at Tui and we were in Portugal. There is a camp site at Caminho behind the sand dunes in a pine wood but beware of sinking in the sand. It is a good site with access to a splendid beach. The small town of Caminho was a good place in which to shop with bargains among cotton materials such as towels, bath mats, tea towels, kettle holders, oven gloves, table cloths and serviettes - all so easy to pack into a bedding box without fear of breakage and all useful as small presents to take home.

A little further on is Viano do Castelo where there is another good site. At Vila do Conde we turned east for our journey back to Santander. At Taipas Spa there was a huge outdoor market where we were served by dark skinned, dark haired country people. It was an excellent place for local fruit and vegetables, also for reasonably priced clothing and footwear. One stall sold sickles, scythes, billhooks and other items for the farm including spare coulters and ploughshares. Another had horse harnesses and leather goods while others contained local cheeses, loaves and cakes, live hens, ducklings and tiny, fluffy chickens. It was fascinating to wander round and make a few purchases.

We left, somewhat reluctantly, to reach the Penha site,, at the top of a 3,000 feet volcanic peak, at Guimares before evening. The climb from the river side is an experience, for the narrow road climbs steeply around a multitude of hairpin bends for a journey that lasts about half an hour! The view from the top, in a complete circle, is fabulous. On the highest point is a monument surmounted by a statue of a Pope. This is, almost literally, a heavenly site

There is an easier way down to the east which was our direction next day across the beautiful mountains of northern Portugal. we saw storks nesting in high trees where the road descended into valleys. There were more of the long-horned cattle, the colour of our Devon breed, and extensive areas of vines on the hill sides. We reached Chaves where there is a fine Roman bridge, an old castle and a camp site in the town on the bank of the river. The glorious weather became thundery and our barometer swung round to STORMY as we reached Braganca. The scenery was outstanding, the hill sides covered with bushes having flowers like our wild dog-roses but much

larger. For lunch the 'Menu de die' began with soup. "What kind of soup?" we asked and were told "typical soup". What was it - grass in potato water or seaweed in broth? Soup is always served at the table and the plate filled to overflowing. The fish soups were excellent with langoustines, mussels and clams with the shells included. In the town there is a "Domus Municipalis", a complete Roman building of the 4th century A.D.

That evening, having crossed into Spain at San Martin, we reached an area with no site. The storm was closing in around us so we stopped at a small hotel in Alcanices where we had a comfortable double room with bath and shower, plus a breakfast of coffee and cakes for £20. It had been a night of torrential rain with thunder and lightning which made us glad to have been indoors rather than in the van with the sound like kettle-drums beating on the roof.

Camp sites are few and far between in these mountainous regions as are petrol stations. Many sites do not open before June and the site map from the Spanish Tourist Office is not helpful. Sites are difficult to locate and opening dates are not given. The Michelin maps 1cm:4Km (about 6 miles to 1 inch) show the site positions but it takes patience to locate the small blue triangles and, of course, it doesn't show dates. We reached the coast about 25 miles east of Santander, at Noya. Camping Joyal at Playa de Riz is clean, well run and spacious and it opens onto a glorious sandy beach. It is a good stop to savour this splendid coastline before the journey of an hour or so into Santander to catch the boat back to England.

We had travelled 1,250 miles on a route that avoided all very large towns with much of the journey on category C roads. Road surfaces and conditions varied greatly and average speed at times must have been under 25 mph. We saw so much to please, met so many delightful, kindly country folk and ate delicious food at most reasonable prices in small town and village restaurants. The route would not be advisable for towed caravans. Our Rapport was an excellent vehicle in all conditions that we encountered. We recommend this route to you and hope you have as good a time as we did in our "Coche-Cama".

Did I hear someone ask the cost? The return fare for two people and van was about £550 - before the high season rates. Rather expensive but another motor caravaner who had crossed at Dover and driven down reckoned his return trip would cost about £450. Incidentally credit cards are seldom accepted off the tourist routes and never at the Campsa petrol stations. Travellers cheques are not required - we found on arrival in Spain that ours were safely locked away at home! A Eurocheque book and card is accepted at banks which are in every small town.

We chose restaurants in quiet areas and found that a good three course meal with a bottle of wine and cup of coffee cost £5 or £5 each. Unleaded petrol is rare but ask for "Super" and you will pay about the same as 4-star here. The "Supermercados" - village mini-markets - seemed to have bread, milk, biscuits and cakes at fair prices. Fish was interesting and varied. There were some good cheeses made from ewes' milk and others smoked with ham. Good wine, tinto (red) blanco and rosado, could be bought for £2 a bottle, with even cheaper wine if you wished.

Oh, yes, the country folk. Quite delightful. Do try to learn a few words of Spanish to help things along for they don't speak any English. In Portugal, French is a useful common language if they don't speak English. Even the police, with guns on their belts, are helpful if approached. I went to Spain terrified by all I read in the guide books and returned to tear them up for it was all a load of nonsense. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the country folk of the north are very different from the city folk in the south.

Ian Mackichan

I found it interesting to see two differing views about the Plymouth - Santander crossing. It does rather seem that the costs, when fully detailed, are about the same whether one drives across France or cruises across Biscay. I suppose it depends on how good a sailor you are and how rough Biscay is at the time!

-----oooOOOooo-----

FOR SALE

Talisman, Petrol, June 1990, only 1800 miles.
Stored under cover. Roller blinds & fly screens,

Stainless steel rear bumper, cassette/radio. All in immaculate condition - £18,950. Telephone Noel Nichols on 0492 540981 if you are interested or write to him at 16 Dinertn Close in Colwyn Bay, Clwyd, LL28 4HQ.

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'G' Reg Talisman GL, One Owner, 13,000 miles. Fitted with ultrasonic alarm system, radio cassette and many extras. Immaculate condition. £17,250. Telephone 0392 877573 - George Carman, or write to 4, Sleepy Hollow, Newport Park, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7DJ.

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Absolutely Brand New and Unused de luxe insulated Silver Screen cab window cover to fit "new" Ford Transit. Only £65. Telephone Doris Rogers on 0784 454400.

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I've received, via John Tidbury, a letter which speaks for itself:

"A year ago I bought a 10 year old Auto-Sleeper VW LT28, subscribed to MMMM and joined ASOC. Since then I have noticed amongst motor caravan owners a quest for electrical knowledge and a desire to fix/install things themselves. Having spent my working life in electronics and automobile trading/servicing I feel qualified, and motivated, to write a book on caravan/motor caravan electrics. I would be interested to hear from anyone who either wants an aspect dealt with or who has had a particularly knotty problem to face."

If you have any ideas/needs/suggestions in this area please write to Andrew Harcourt at 7, Hatch Warren, Farleigh Wallop, Basingstoke, Hants., RG22 4DB and I'm sure he will be delighted to hear from you. One item immediately springs to my mind and that is the conversion of our Clubman to a double-battery job with all the necessary gubbins for charging the second battery from the mains on site. I'll bet it isn't as terrifying as it seems but... Andrew goes on to say that he is currently working on some fairly unusual things including a 12v alarm clock/radio similar to those which many of us have at home. He has apparently found a mains operated version which fits the bill and is presently occupied with the cheapest way to convert it to run off 12 volts - and NOT to lose the time if the auxiliary

battery goes flat! No doubt more anon.

-----oooOOOooo-----

I've only had one response (so far) to the suggestions of a foreign trip in the company of others perhaps more experienced. *Derek Egleton* tells me that although he and his wife have been abroad by air before they have never tried to take the van across. Well, they've only had the van for six months or so! He is writing to *Rita Daley* for a copy of the Club's "First Timers" booklet (very sensible - good value at 50p) but would like to have someone else along so that he could gain confidence.

-----oooOOOooo-----

RALLY NEWS

"The South Cave rally attracted only three vans, although apparently six bookings had been made. The site owners and rally marshals, *Vera & Don Waudby* must have been very disappointed. Nevertheless the losers were indisputably those who stayed away for despite the somewhat unfriendly weather conditions the weekend had a great deal to offer. *Vera & Don* proved to be exceptionally capable and hospitable hosts, arranging coffee on arrival and departure and using their *Talisman* to take all of us for a fascinating and informative tour of the locality on Saturday afternoon and to a local pub for an excellent dinner in the evening.

The site is pleasantly situated in an unspoiled and relatively little known corner of North Humberside and facilities included an impressively well stocked shop with every accessory for camper or caravanner. *Don* is a relaxed, jovial yet conscientious site owner and any member touring this area would be well advised to take advantage of the services provided by an enthusiastic fellow-member.

Tony Elwell

-----oooOOOooo-----

"The rally at Walsall Airport (a misnomer if ever there was one) was a great success. The sun came out on Friday morning for the first time, it seemed, that month and shone from dawn till dusk each day. *Peter [Fisher]* collected a battery driven tug for us to drive round a special type of slalom course on Saturday afternoon, there was a new VW van on the grass for test driving and on

top of all that we were entertained by a display of parascending. (Peter said he didn't organise that). At eight o'clock we convoyed the five minute drive to the Firemen's Social Club where the bar proved popular but took second place to Wendy's turkey supper. A slide down the firemen's pole concluded an enjoyable evening.

Phil [Daley]"

Peter Fisher tells me that he was handed a black and gold necklace which had apparently been left at the fire station on Saturday night. If the owner will contact him it will be returned. He also tells me that the site is available to any individual traveller from March to October at a cost of £2.50 per night. Fresh water is available as is a chemical closet/waste water disposal point and a portaloos. The drill is to contact the groundsman on arrival. There is a club on the site and a small admission fee may be charged. The entrance is in Bosty Lane, Aldridge - see the directions previously published in the Rally Supplement!

-----oooOOOooo-----

"Just a note re the 'Enflite' cycle rack a la *John Normandale* who gave us details at the AGM. The only dealers are Cycleland in Kent who import them. We looked at alternatives including one at TMA (Walsgrave, Coventry) which was mentioned in MMM's recent review of racks. Apparently they were inundated with calls from other A/S owners hoping it might be the 'Enflite' type rack but it was not suitable for fixing to the ladder.

The YHA shop in Birmingham does sell them so I would presume other YHA shops could also get one. It cost £72 and holds two cycles firmly by the front forks. We've done 2175 miles around France with only one mishap and I think that was due to tampering rather than faulty design. But do CHECK THE FIXINGS before driving away especially if parked somewhere vulnerable!

The bikes sit firmly on the rack even over rough terrain and it is quick and easy to get them on and off. The rack doesn't have to be sold with the van and is advantageously priced when compared with others. An excellent choice - thanks very much, *John!*

Carol Bowler"

I have just received a list of the addresses of the filling plants/depots for the Supergas people covering England, Wales and Southern Scotland. They supply propane in 6Kg cylinders so if you would like more details please telephone me for the address of your nearest depot who in turn can give you details of some of the 600 Supergas dealers/stockists. Or send me a S.A.E. and I'll send you a copy of the complete list.

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I hear that a new version of the sweat shirt is available from *Wendy Fisher* with the motif of 'Rita's Little Man' surrounded by the words "Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club" if you so wish. Colours are Royal Blue, Jade, Yellow and Red with pretty well your own choice of motif colour! The price is £10.50, inclusive of VAT, plus p&p. It is hoped that Head Squares for the ladies will be available soon. These are 100% polyester, 27" square, in a choice of colours and will have a scene with 'Rita's Little Man' in one corner. The cost should be about £3.00 but more of that later.

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Another discount offer! If you quote your ASOC Membership Number you will be able to subscribe to Motor Caravan World for a full year for only £15.00. That can't be bad, can it?

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The final item is *Barry Crawshaw's* letter referred to the use of CB radio in vans. He says that he is interested but ignorant! He wants to know, for example, over what range can the van mounted radio be expected to work and what are the regulations regarding the use of CB in Europe? He also suggested that *Steve [Bowler]* might like to write an article for the N/L for a future issue. [Yes, please - Ed]. He rather likes the idea of two (or maybe more) vans travelling in company but in a loose arrangement using the radios to keep in contact. The benefits are obvious in terms of back up in case of breakdown, accident, illness etc., as well as the more positive aspects of company, pooling of skills and so on.

I've actually had a CB in two previous vans, *Barry* but I've found that the range is a severely limiting factor. Without illegal aids it is sometimes impossible to reach more than half a mile if the airwaves are crowded (as around

London). But against that I have had contact at about 35 miles with a base station at the Severn Bridge when I was on the hill at Bridgend. Several friends have travelled with me to and from the various steam rallies in the south of England and we have, indeed, found the radio very useful when on the journey in a loose convoy or if one member arrives later than the others. But I'm not entirely sure what the regulations are for use of our FM radio on the Continent where they use AM radios. So over to Steve or other knowledgeable members!

That's about it for this month, folks. Enjoy the summer when/if it comes!

Your Editor

Harry Henthorne

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Tel: 081 654 4216

DISCLAIMER

All contributions from Members which appear in the Newsletter are published in good faith in the hope that they will prove useful or interesting. All reasonable care has been taken to ensure accuracy but none of the modifications has been tested by us therefore neither the Editor, the Club nor the Company will accept any responsibility for the consequences if you try them out.

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Ken Honeyborne,	Tel: 0827 896871.
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Terry Plant,	Tel: 0676 32513.
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Charles Trevelyan,	Tel: 0386 853338.
Ron Wilson,	Tel: 0933 55658.
Jeff Worley,	Tel: 0935 24049.
John Cox.	Tel: 0283 712394.

NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT - AUGUST 1991.

Dear Newsletter Reader,

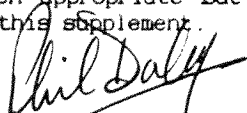
In order to meet the printing deadline, brought forward due to holidays, the "Chairman's Chat" which appears in the August copy of the Newsletter was written in early July. Since then, apparently as a result of comments attributed to me in the July issue, there have been some remarks about the Club and the Company drifting apart. This is not true and I am very sorry that this misunderstanding has occurred.

Far from drifting apart we are developing better working arrangements which we hope will prove to be of benefit to us all. With this end in view I had a meeting at Willersey with our President, Charles Trevelyan to sort out what the Company had done in the past towards organising the Club's National Rally, what the Club had done and how to arrange things better for the future. I was quite staggered to discover just how much correspondence Charles had raised, dealing with the Site, the marquee hirers, the Dealers, the Accessory suppliers, etc. It occupied quite a large part of one drawer of a filing cabinet! And that was just for the 1991 event. I hate to think how much time this must have involved.

So we agreed that in future the Club would organise its own National Rally. That seems to me to be a perfectly sensible thing to do. Perhaps I should give a bit of background here to explain just how the Company had become so involved in Club affairs. At the very beginning, when the original seven of us were struggling to organise the Inaugural Meeting, the Company suggested it would be a good idea to have a marquee in which some new models could be displayed and they arranged for one; having a marquee it seemed to us a pity not use it for entertainment as well so a Wine & Cheese party was put on on Friday evening; a party without music lacked something so a small Group was booked; and so it went on and we were only too happy to let it! Having done it once it was easy to do it again (and again!) but the Club is certainly big enough now to take responsibility for organising it's own major event. You can be sure we will consult Auto-Sleepers as we go along.

The problem of the clash of dates has probably been resolved - we're working on it, together!

In the hope that it will help explain things further I have obtained permission from Charles to reproduce overleaf his recent letter to me and my reply. Discussions continue and progress will be reported when appropriate but the time has come to post the Newsletter and this supplement.


Phil Daley, Chairman.
25th July 1991



AUTO-SLEEPERS LIMITED

TEL : BROADWAY 0386 863338
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ORCHARD WORKS · WILLERSEY NH BROADWAY · WORCS WR12 7PT · ENGLAND

Phil Daley Esq
46 Ulverley Green Road
Solihull
West Midlands B92 8BQ

Our ref: CT/MS

(Please quote the above when replying)

Your ref:

16 July 1991

Dear Phil

I was concerned to read in the introduction to the July Club Newsletter that our Company "feels that it has become too involved in the detailed organisation of the National Rally to a point where it is interfering with the Company's business". I am concerned that this might be incorrectly interpreted by some Members that we at Willersey are intentionally distancing ourselves from the Club, its activities, and particularly forthcoming National Rallies which, I can assure you, is not the case.

My concern was that with the possible clash of dates between the 1992 Rally and the Bromley Jamboree, we would be unable to support both activities. Clearly this would not be possible and our efforts quite obviously must be directed towards supporting the Jamboree, both for sound commercial reasons and not least because Bromley Motor Caravans are one of our larger dealers and, furthermore, that our major competitors are also present at this event.

Should the Club, therefore, be unable to change its proposed date for the 1992 Rally from 25/26 April, we quite clearly as a Company would be unable to support the National Rally with our normal input, namely a new vehicle display, Stores Shop etc. I would, therefore, suggest that the Club may care to consider changing the proposed 1992 National Rally date to avoid a clash with the Jamboree whereupon we will be more than happy to give similar support as we have done in the past.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

A C Trevelyan
Director



AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

46 Ulverley Green Road, SOLIHULL, West Midlands. B92 8BQ
021 706 1816

Major A C Trevelyan,
Auto-Sleepers Limited
Orchard Works
Willersey.

23rd July 1991.

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your letter of 16th July. It was indeed unfortunate that some serious mis-understanding appears to have arisen over comments I made to Committee Members which subsequently appeared in the Newsletter rather out of context. I will try to put things right.

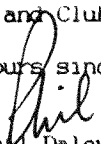
In the meantime I would like to suggest a way to avoid a clash of dates, facilitate Company involvement, and provide a better opportunity for people from the Orchard to make contact with Club members, and vice versa.

At present the Company is trying to support two events in April and the dates will inevitably clash from time to time. Furthermore, there is now such a full social and official programme at the National Rally that there is not enough time left for members to give the contents of the "Company Tent" and surrounding displays the attention they deserve. Neither Club nor Company get maximum advantage from the labour and expense involved.

The Club constitution compels us to hold the AGM in April, but we can chose any date we like for our National Rally/ies. We could arrange things so that Company joins the Club at an entirely separate event at some other time in the year. We could have a National Rally and AGM in April with lots of social activity, but no Company involvement, and a "Company Rally" in, say, July with emphasis on the new and "nearly new" vehicles, accessories, spares, etc. and a question-and-answer session enabling Club members and their friends from the Orchard to swap ideas.

Since it will obviously take time to consider and discuss these ideas - let alone put them into effect - I am quite happy to ask the Committee to reconsider its decision on the date of the 1992 National Rally and AGM. It may still be possible to find a site which can accommodate us before Easter and I can assure you we will do our best to ensure the continuation of the excellent relations existing between Company and Club.

Yours sincerely,


Phil Daley,
Chairman.

NEWS EXTRA.

Extra Rally, 20th - 22nd September, 1991.

Harry has asked me to include in this supplement details of the Blackpool Lights Rally which is being run by Kathleen and Norman Benyon.

The site is:
Lion's Club, Ballam Road, Lytham, Lancs
Site fee:- £3.25 per night.
Rally fee:- £4.50

I understand the rally fee covers the cost of the coach trip for two people to see the lights on Friday evening. For fuller information please contact Kathleen or Norman at:-

Holmfield Cottage,
Bannister Street,
Lytham, Lancs.
FY8 5HQ

Telephone:- 0253 736245

If you intend to go please let them know very soon so that the coach can be booked. Booking form and payment direct to them.

Directions to Site:-

Leave M55 at junction 3 for Lytham St Annes. At first set of traffic lights turn right then immediately left, sign post BALLAM. At T-junction turn Right. Two miles down this road take the Right Fork at Green Drive Golf Club. Lions Club 50 yards, on Left.

Auto-Sleepers Photographic Competition.

The Company reserve a page of their Magazine for the Club and for this they welcome PHOTOGRAPHS submitted by members. The subject this year is an Auto-Sleeper with an unusual background. This is open to interpretation by you BUT the photographs must be clear with plenty of contrast and in colour. PRINTS AND TRANSPARENCIES ARE ACCEPTABLE. Prizes are:- £40.00 to the winner and £10.00 to each of five runners up for the best photographs received - but the CLOSING DATE is the 20th AUGUST so HURRY! Send entries to Rita Daley, 46 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 5BQ who will collect them and take them all to The Orchard for judging.

ERRATA.

On page 19 of the August Newsletter Wendy's new Sweatshirts are quoted at £10.50 inc. VAT. This price is for Sports Shirts, the Sweatshirts are £12.50 inc VAT. A more complete price list is being prepared for next month, as Tee Shirts and Pullovers are soon to be available. Wendy is at the moment eagerly awaiting the Ladies' Headscarves and hopes to have them available for the Kingsbury Water Park Rally.

STOP PRESS

NEW! RAMBLER GL RELEASED - SEE YOUR AUTO-SLEEPER DEALER TO-DAY!