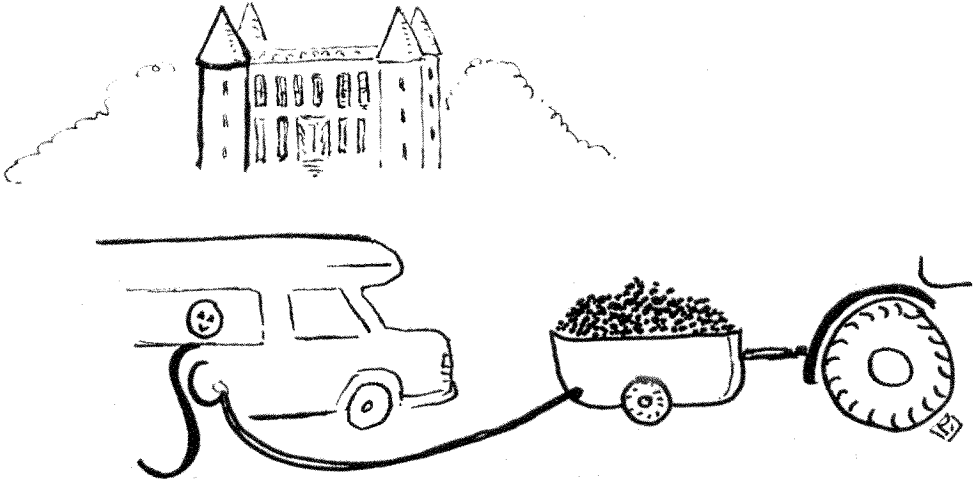


**AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB**



Beajolais Nouveau!

NEWSLETTER 37

OCTOBER 1991

Hello.

October already, and such a lot has happened this year. Before I forget, don't you forget that the NOVEMBER issue of the Newsletter will, as always, be a little later in the month and will be accompanied by the Auto-Sleepers Magazine for 1992.

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Our National Rally Sub-committee has been hard at work making arrangements for the 1992 rally which will be at Wicksteed Park, Kettering over the weekend 24th-26th April. They have also been tentatively discussing sites for the following years. This leads on to a question for you all:

AGM & NATIONAL RALLY
1993/4/5 etc.

It would be very easy to get into an arrangement where we go to Wicksteed for 1991, back to Edithmead for '92, Wicksteed '93, E.94, W.95 and so on. [See Chairman's Chat]. But would this sort of arrangement suit YOU, the members? What your committee would like to do is to move the venue around the country so that ALL members have a chance of a reasonable mileage in some years rather than having to go long distances every time. I know of two places which would suit our needs but unfortunately they are at Maidstone, Kent and at Ardingly, Sussex. Each is the county showground but neither would suit us because of position. So what about in your area? Is there a showground with a hall for the AGM? Would it be available in April? How much would it cost? Could it provide catering? How much and for what? The sub-committee needs YOUR help to find suitable places so please look around and check in your area. Somewhere reasonably central, able to accommodate, say, 350 vans with a venue to take maybe 800 people. And if you find such a place you don't have to be chief marshal for it! Suggestions, please, with prices etc. if possible to the Chairman, to any committee member or to me.

This leads on to another question. Plans are progressing for our National Rally and AGM in April (as per our Constitution and Rules) and a combined rally with the Factory later in the year (and there should soon be something interesting to tell you soon). What else would

you like at either rally? While both rallies have been combined in the past we have had dealers and accessory suppliers attending too. It seems to me that it would be a good idea to invite such attendance but what do YOU think? Most of the suppliers attend the big shows, Shepton, Brands, Peterborough etc. to which many of us go. Would it be superfluous to invite them to come to us?

Please don't be shy. It is YOUR club and we want to supply what YOU want, not what we think you ought to want! Let one of your committee members know your feelings on this matter, please, by letter or telephone call as you wish.

=====xx0000oo=====

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

"Firstly, a report on the proceedings of the committee meeting held on 31st August. Only three members were unable to make it, *Terry Plant* and *Ken Honeyborne* due to prior commitments and *Jeff Worley* due to an unsuccessful trial of strength with the force of gravity resulting in two chipped bones in the wrist of his gearchange arm. So, no driving until further notice. (He may be back to normal by the time of the Shepton Mallet rally but will be there anyway.) All went smoothly, the Treasurer reporting a sound financial position, the Membership Secretary reporting an ever-increasing number of enquiries and new Members (I have Member No.984 on record!), the Newsletter Editor reporting a gratifying supply of correspondence [more always welcome - Ed] and the Regalia Officer asking for, and being given, approval to order 50 Vehicle Badges following a good response to our enquiry. Then the National Rally sub-committee chairman suggested that after holding the event at Kettering in 1992 we would return to Edithmead in 1993 and back to Kettering in 1994. This was strongly resisted by *Pete Fisher* who pointed out that we had yet to hold a National Rally and AGM north of Birmingham. He felt that this was not fair to many of our members and this view was supported by the committee. All we need now is a suitable site. Can you help?

Once again I find I have been guilty of thinking that because I know about something everyone knows. Not so! At the Midland Railway Trust rally in July *Harry [Henthorne]* proudly told us that *Sheila [Hammell]* had agreed to marry

him. He has been much too modest to mention this in the Newsletter and I confess I haven't done anything about it, beyond congratulating the pair of them, but I was somewhat shaken to find, at the committee meeting, that several people didn't know. Sorry! The wedding is scheduled for June 1992 and at that time our Membership Secretary will become *Sheila Henthorne* and somewhere near that time our Newsletter Editor will change his address from Addiscombe to Tottenham. *Harry* is already negotiating for a replacement Editor for one month - well, its the least I can do, isn't it?

Our best wishes go to *Daisy Ware* who was taken ill at Ballater. She and *George* are home again now and expect to resume rallying soon. The Fell End rally in November is still on.

Phil Daley."

====ooOooOoo====

Marshals. A plaintive call from *Wendy Fisher*. Will the marshals responsible for rallies please telephone her AT LEAST 14 DAYS BEFORE THE RALLY to agree a design for the rally plaque and again AT LEAST 7 DAYS BEFORE to confirm the number. To the marshal it is just 2 phone calls, to *Wendy* it is two more to remember!

And another question to you all. At present our plaques are rectangular with the words and design on a plain white background. A suggestion has been received that we should consider other shapes and colours. I know that many of you stick the plaques to surfaces in the van and might find some difficulty if the shapes were different every time. But again, what do YOU want?

====ooOooOoo====

Wendy has discovered a supplier of nameplates for your van. These take the form of adhesive strips which can be made in many different scripts, sizes and colours to match your needs. Many of our vans are named, we know of "Capuccino", "Trade Winds" and "Sweet Pea" among many. The price for the name, up to a reasonable length of about 12 to 15 letters and spaces, is about £6.00. If you would like more details, please contact *Wendy*.

She can supply Name Plaques which bear the words "Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club" together with your own names. These are of similar material to

the small name badges which many of us wear and are in the club colours of blue on white and are about 6" wide by 4" deep. They can be hung from the mirror to advertise your presence. Talk to her for details and prices.

=====ooOoo=====

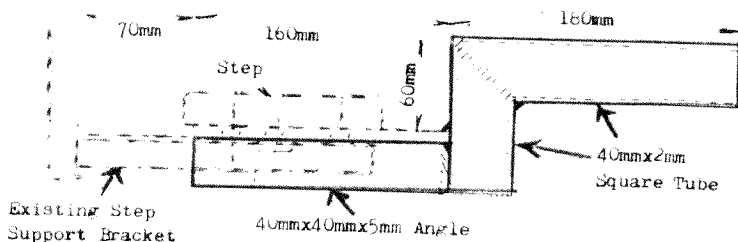
"After months of searching, I have at last found the ideal pressure gauge for tyres on my falisman - and it is pocket size too! It reads from 10 lbs to 120 lbs p.s.i. and if any member is interested it can be obtained from Mr. F. Feeney, Powerfit, Unit 6, Harbour Close (off Copse Road), Fleetwood, Lancs, FY7 7UB (telephone 0253 770270) price £9.50 including VAT, postage and packing. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery"

This item arrived from *Richard Melville* of Watford and it goes to prove two things (a) our members are always on the lookout for 'goodies' and (b) there IS life north of Watford!

=====ooOoo=====

"I successfully carried my full size bicycle on the rear of my Rambler during the last three seasons and thought the details of the arrangement may be of interest to other members with Talbot/Peugeot conversions

A conventional cycle rack, designed to be mounted on the cross members of a car roof rack, has been successfully fitted across the rear of the Rambler. Extension pieces are attached to the rear step support brackets using the existing fixing bolts. The drawing shows the right-hand extension piece made from one length of angle and two lengths of square tube welded together. The 'dog leg' feature is required to raise the bicycle sufficiently to give clearance over the rear step for the brake levers on the handlebars. The left-hand unit is identical except that the angle piece is, of course, reversed.



The existing step is held at each side by two square nuts and should be removed. A reinforcing bar of angle iron should also be removed by releasing a 13mm nut and bolt at each end. With these removed, the extension piece should be placed over the step support and positioned 70mm from the vertical face of the support bracket. The position of the three holes are then marked on the extension piece from below and three clearance holes of similar diameter drilled in each extension piece. The original fixings for the step and reinforcement can be re-used but a supplementary packing piece (timber or hardboard) must be fitted on top of the reinforcing angle, of thickness equal to the web of the angle iron used to form the extensions. A small cut-out may be required in the lower edge of the rear of the plastic step to give clearance over the extensions.

My bicycle is of the dropped handlebar sports type. I use some shock cord to prevent the pedals from free wheeling. I put a thick wad of sponge over the pedal to prevent damage to paint on the rear of the van and to stabilize the bicycle. The main advantages of this arrangement are the absence of holes or scars on the van and the ease of removal of the extensions. The proprietary cycle rack can be fitted or removed in seconds. I use an "Automax Universal Safety Cycle Carrier".

Les Davey."

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"I refer to the comments about charges for Travellers' Cheques and Foreign currency in the September Newsletter and to the *Badcock's* comment that they secrete a fairly generous bundle of francs around the van. Doubtless they paid commission on the currency and, of course, they had the security risk.

May I offer a better solution? Make use of a NatWest Access or Visa card. These, unlike others, do not charge a 1.5% commission on cash advances but charge interest on an outstanding advance on a daily basis until it is repaid. So instead of buying foreign currency in this country, pay the money in to the NatWest for the credit of the card account and draw on the card in, say, France in francs. One gets a commercial rate of exchange and does not pay any commission.

It is necessary to tell NatWest that the payment in is to be appropriated to cash advances otherwise it may be taken to pay off any outstanding balance on the account. We avoid any problems by having both a Visa and an Access account (NatWest now charge £12 for one account or both) using one for general purchases and the other only for cash advances. Whilst we are in Spain, in the winter, we keep the "advances" account topped up with standing order transfers from our bank account. If we are short in the "advances" account we send a cheque off to NatWest; if there's a surplus we either make purchases on that account or recover the money in this country by taking an "advance" - of course without cost!

Lorna & Alan Wheeler.

P.S. Why do people denigrate "continental loos"? Given a choice we prefer them any time! Perhaps most British people do not know how to squat properly!.

L & A."

The use of credit cards in this way seems to be a good idea. Some cards are available which still do not charge for holding them but I wonder if they have the commission charge for handling cash. Must have a look at the small print. I don't think I'm qualified to comment on the P.S. as my use of such loos is extremely limited and was many years ago. But I do recall one problem which befell a friend of mine. He did not remove himself from the footprint part before flushing the loo. And the flush was fierce! Result - wet shoes and socks.

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RALLY REPORTS

"Firstly, apologies for the late letter. I had intended to write immediately after the Scottish rally but we've only just dried out from the awful weather we had for almost the whole tour. However, the companionship we encountered with our fellow members more than made up for what the weather lacked. 8 or 9 vans started this long (almost 5 weeks) rally but for various reasons only 4 completed the whole course. We sadly miss the friendship that grew; we ended like a little family (without the arguments) and look forward to meeting again at later rallies. This was our first rally, apart from the

National, and our first time to Scotland. We have come home more knowledgeable (and older) and greatly satisfied with the experience. We do not intend to give a report of the rally; this letter is to say a big "thank you" to *Barbara & Jeff Morley* for organising the show and, although at one stage he let us be "White Leader", without his long experience of getting out of difficult situations (he told us so one night as the last drops of whisky left our bottle) we probably would still be driving around the Highlands now.

We do have a video of the rally to prove we made it and I'm hoping to get copies made for those who "done the trek". We cannot finish without saying "Bukit Stoor" (the only Gaelic words we learned in Scotland) to *Helen & Douglas (Denholm)* for arranging the super duper rally at Alloa. What better way could we have finished a great tour? (Yes, perhaps *Doug* could have paid for the excellent meal on Saturday night!) We're not going to push our luck but do feel that he should have been there to extricate 78 PF from the mud - another story to tell. We learned a lesson - don't take short cuts across Scottish fields! Ah well, we are new to the game and we won't mention that night our awning filled with 50 gallons of water.

And finally thanks to the other Members who joined us on the rally for your friendship and company, you have etched yourselves in our memories.

Val & Pete Fullick

"We had a successful rally at the Detling Steam & Transport spectacular although only 6 vans arrived. We shared a large field with members of the M.C.C., A.C.C and R.V.C. and the weather was very good indeed. We were able to welcome a new member (Janet) into the fold who had appeared on the field with the M.C.C. but joined us for coffee and for Saturday evening too. Everybody seemed to have enjoyed wandering around and looking at the various old vehicles, craft stalls and auto- (and other) jumble to such a degree that they kept returning to their vans for a rest before exploring further. The food available on the stalls was pronounced good and it saved cooking! Everybody gathered round our van for wine & cheese with a baked potato on Saturday. When it began to turn a little chilly in the wind groups went to various vans to

continue the chatting. I was asked if we would be running it again next year so it seems to have gone down well. For those present I can also add that the famous motor-bike was still there, at the same price, when we left on Sunday!

Harry Henthorne."

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Rally Finance

The following notes are for the guidance of rally marshals, whether experienced or novice, and will be of interest to other members.

The aim of all rallies is for members to enjoy themselves and for the total costs to be covered by the fees received from members attending. The major cost is the fees paid to the site and these will have been received from the members when booking (or on attending). The Club does not expect the marshal to pay the fee but it will have to be paid out of the rally fees unless the site waives the charge. Next is the cost of the plaques, about 50p for each one ordered. (As these need to be produced in advance you can see why you are asked for early booking if possible.) This comes out of the rally fee as do the expenses for tea, coffee, biscuits, milk, sugar etc., for the gathering on Friday evening and Sunday morning. The rally fee also has to cover any postage, telephone calls, duplicating etc., incurred. Many marshals arrange a raffle for which prizes have to be purchased (or donated!) and these costs, not forgetting the raffle tickets, must be taken from the sale of the tickets.

The raffle profits and anything left over from the rally fees may be used, at the discretion of the marshal, to provide something extra for those attending or to boost Club funds. You can see that the marshal has a balancing job to do. If only a few members attend an expensive site it may be difficult to cover costs. At the other end of the scale, a large turnout at a less expensive site may leave the marshal with a fair balance in hand. If you should need to cancel the earlier you advise to the marshal the greater your chance of a refund!

Finally, the Club can stand an occasional loss from a rally so marshals can sleep easily even if

theirs does not meet their forecast!

Our Treasurer, *John Tidbury*, asked for that item to be included because he thought that it might encourage people to volunteer for marshalling duties at a rally of their choosing or arranging. As you can see, and as I have often said, it isn't difficult, really.

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FOR SALE

H Reg. Harmony, One owner, only 4,200 miles. Factory fitted extras include Second Battery and Charger unit, Waste tank, Three-speed cooler fan, Cassette/radio, two headrests and fitment for double bed. First class condition - £16,950.

Please telephone *Harry Jeffs* on 081 462 7454 or write to 2, Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Bromley, Kent, BR4 9DJ.

[*Harry* kindly enclosed a donation towards Newsletter costs which, although not a requirement, is much appreciated - Ed.]

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"We have a cycle rack for sale which fits onto a Rambler (or any Talbot). It involves no damage or screw holes to the body of the van as it is bolted to the chassis. It can easily be removed or folded flat for the rear doors to open. It was custom-made by Hornchurch Caravans, Essex, for £230. It is very sturdy and holds two push bikes or a small motor-cycle." This advertisement attracted *Clare & John Somerville* who went to some lengths to collect it. Unfortunately it will not fit their Talbot due to the water tank. It is therefore available for £105 and they can give full fitting dimensions to anyone who telephones 0935 813310.

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Sheila Hammell received a letter from Mr. Thomas Mitchell who recently won a 'J' reg. Talisman Petrol GL which he collected from Willersey and drove home to Ballyclare in Co. Antrim. He said that he is unable to keep the vehicle because of his wife's state of health and the expense of keeping it on the road so has advertised it in the October issue of the Motor Caravan Magazine at a price of £19,750. He goes on to say "As it is such a beautiful, well-built

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

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October & November 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!

4th-6th October. Stanmore Hall Motor Museum, Stourbridge Road, BRIDGNORTH, Shropshire. Fees £4.50 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Barbara & John Cox, 73, Westmead Road, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs., DE13 8JR.

Directions: Site is on right of A.458 Bridgnorth to Stourbridge road. See page 205 in Caravan Club sites book.

The Motor Museum is adjacent to the site.

11th-13th October. CURRY POOL MILLS, Bridgwater, Somerset. Fees £2.00 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

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

Directions: 5.75 miles west of Bridgwater on A.39, approximately 2 miles west of Cannington turn South into unclassified road s.p. Spaxton/Asholt. Site entrance 500 yards on left.

11th-13th October. Chester Southerley Caravan Park, Balderton Lane, Marlston-cum-Lacae, Nr. Chester. Fees £5.00 per night. electricity £1.20 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Jean & Duncan Ellis, 6, Tudor Close, Shotton, Deeside, Clwyd, CH5 1NY.

Directions: Turn off A.55 Chester Bypass at roundabout onto A.483 s.p. Wrexham. In about 300 yards turn right into Balderton Lane. Site on right in ¼ mile.

Hard standing will be available to all if the weather is inclement.

8th/10th November.. FELL END Caravan Park, Cumbria. Fees: £7.95 covering TWO nights for TWO people; 30p for two nights per extra person - children under 3 years free - NO reduction for 1 night. Rally Fee £1.50.

Electricity £1.45 per night. Satellite T.V. 65p per night - DO NOT INCLUDE WITH BOOKING FEES, PLEASE, AS BOTH OF THESE ARE PAYABLE DIRECT TO SITE OWNER.

Marshals: Daisy & George Wane, 2, Plantation Avenue, Arnside, Cumbria, LA5 0HT.

Directions: From South - leave M.6 at Jnc 35 then North on A.6 from jnc 35A for about 4 miles. Shortly after crossing Lancashire/Cumbria border turn left at International Caravan sign. Follow signs to Fell End C.P. From North go south from Milnthorpe on A.6. 1/2 mile past Kings Arms, Hale turn right at International Caravan sign. Follow signs for Fell End C.P.

This site has hard standings and electricity available for all pitches. There is a hall for social activities. Fish & Chips will be available for 7.30 pm on FRIDAY night, please indicate if you are interested.

This rally is LIMITED TO 40 VANS ONLY.

29th November - 1st December. London Christmas Shopping Weekend. Abbey Wood Caravan Club Site.

Fees: £20.00 for the weekend to include pitch, electric hook-up and rally fee. (Sorry about the price increase but the Caravan Club no longer make reductions for rallies.)

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

Directions: see Caravan Club handbook. More detailed instructions will be sent to those requesting them when booking.

The programme will follow the pattern set up last year. The community hall has been booked for Friday evening when you can bring your own food (perhaps from the local chippy or chinese) and a buffet supper is planned at the "Jolly Marshman" for Saturday evening. Those who attended the last one all pronounced it good so get your bookings in early.

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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 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 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 fee. Please complete
BACK of slip IN FULL!

vehicle, I would like to think that it might end up with a real enthusiast such as one of your members. I would be prepared to lower my asking price by £500 plus arrange transport of the vehicle to the UK mainland for any of your members. The lalisman is in immaculate, as new, condition with all facilities unused. There are 700 miles on the clock which are the result of the drive back to N.Ireland."

If anyone is interested, a telephone call to Ireland, 0266 83 384 will find him at "Mountview", 51 Upper Ballyboley Road, Ballyclare, Co.Antrim, N.Ireland, BT39 9ST and it sounds like a real bargain.

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"We sailed from Harwich to Gothenburg on 30th May 1990, leaving at 14.45 and arriving some 24 hours later. We were away from the port area very quickly and on our way towards Stockholm, staying the first night on a small campsite about 15 miles away. Like many sites in Sweden this was not officially open so early in June but all the facilities were available except that there was no Warden or the like in attendance and no one to pay!

Next morning we went on to Örebro and, as it was Whitsun weekend, we stayed there for 3 nights. Everyone appeared to be on holiday and the roads were getting rather crowded. Örebro is the sixth largest city in Sweden and has many areas that are well worth exploring; additionally there are some fine walks in the nearby forest areas. Our next stop was Stockholm, staying at Brednang Camping, south of the city, but very close to the underground railway system. BUY a Stockholm Card which gives unlimited travel on the buses, ferries, underground and suburban trains and cost, for us pensioners, 42 S.Kr (about £4.00) and we reckon to have saved about 400 S.Kr whilst looking around the sights. In addition we had free entrance to 3 or 4 of the main tourist attractions.

We left Stockholm for Finland following the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia on a not particularly attractive road, driving for the most part through spruce and birch forests and by-passing the towns on the coast. We did some 900 miles in three days before crossing into Finland at Tornio. It was quite strange to find that the clocks in Finland are one hour ahead of

Sweden but as the sun hardly set this made little difference - except that the shops closed that bit earlier!

Next we moved on to Rovaniemi, which is just south of the Arctic Circle, and camped at the edge of a river along which flowed a constant, vast quantity of logs going down into Sweden for pulping. Next day we visited Santa Claus's workshop which straddles the Arctic Circle and, after looking at all the craft shops and the Santa Claus Post Office, we met the great man himself - in the middle of summer!

Crossing back into Sweden we stayed north of the Arctic Circle travelling through some marvellous scenery, with the temperature in the middle 70's except for Jokkmokk where it dropped to 37°F. Here we spent a lot of time in the recently opened Lapp Museum which showed many aspects of their life and culture. We went on the north road into Norway, with the sun shining for nearly all of the 24 hours of the day, arriving in Narvik to stay for a few days.

It is a marvellous area and one must go up the mountain, in the cable car, for the scenery is superb and one can see for many miles overlooking other snow-capped mountains. The museum of the battles for Narvik, in the early part of the last war, was also a very interesting place to visit.

We made our way south towards Trondheim using the coastal route, keeping off the busy (and boring) E6, travelling on many ferries and visiting some towns by road, whereas last time we had seen them it was from the deck of the Express Coastal Steamer. The ferries are not too expensive but one must be prepared to wait as the service is not very frequent. It does give one a different view of the country from the fjord rather than from the road.

We stayed at Mo-i-Rana just south of the Arctic Circle for a few days and visited Svartisen Glacier, Norway's second largest glacier. We travelled some 30 kms from Mo to Svartisen Lake, crossed the lake in a small boat, and walked along a very rocky path to the glacier - a wonderful sight and well worth the walk. Sitting in the sunshine on the upper lake's edge (bearing in mind the warning on glaciers) - hearing the rumbling and then to see the glacier 'calving', causing great waves on the lake, was a

most moving experience and one we must see again sometime soon. (A glacier is said to 'calve' when it suddenly breaks and throws off a huge separate mass of ice.)

The local Tourist Offices, shopkeepers, garages and other people will tell you of a good camp site, or a place to camp, and we have always found the Norwegians to be so kind and helpful. This is a great thing and makes for peace of mind.

From Trondheim we decided to go inland avoiding, again, the E6 and passed to the east of Oslo, travelling through more superb scenery. After crossing into Sweden we again took to the coast southwards to Gothenburg for the ferry back to Newcastle.

It helps, when planning, to write to the National Tourist Offices in the U.K. as they can supply excellent literature on the areas you request and they have very good publications on camp sites in their countries. We found the Caravan Club's Continental Sites Guide and Handbook Volume 2 (1990) to be most useful as well as 'Drive around Sweden' by Robert Spark. Also 'Motoring in Norway' published by the Norwegian Travel Association which gives routes, distances and details of the various internal ferries.

COSTS

When reading the Caravan Club's Travel Service 1990 brochure we saw that 'Sweden - Free to Roam' charged £710.00 for an outfit and two persons. BUI (this caught our eyes particularly) "if travelling by Motor-caravan, not exceeding 6 metres, DEDUCT £200.00". This appealed to us! The price quoted included return ferry crossing from Newcastle or Harwich to Gothenburg in cabins with private facilities; Standard Red Pennant insurance for up to 31 consecutive days; 7 Swedish camping cheques; map of Sweden and a list of Swedish camp sites.

In addition we ordered a further 10 Swedish camping cheques at £7.50 each (refundable if not used); a two-berth cabin with shower/W.C.; insurance for a further 31 days and, after receiving a total discount of £212.00, paid out a total of £713.00

Camp sites in Norway were often about £9.00 per night plus up to £1.00 for a shower. Those in Sweden and Finland were somewhat cheaper. Norway was by far the most expensive except for diesel (less than £1.00 per gallon in the pre Gulf Crisis days) but bread cost in the region of £1.50 per loaf. Drinking out is prohibitively expensive but beer is reasonable when bought in a supermarket. We took tinned or dehydrated meats and the like, sufficient for up to 35 days; we ate out sometimes and bought fish which was generally reasonably priced, so our eating costs were not too much.

Other costs - approximately:

Camping in Finland and Norway	£	85.00
Internal Ferries		25.00
Entrance fees, excursions, etc.		150.00
Diesel (5,500 miles @ 30 m.p.g.)		250.00
Ferry, camping cheques, insurance		713.00 *
		<u>£1,223.00 #</u>

We were away for 34 days and thoroughly enjoyed the whole holiday and will go back again in a couple of years.

* Includes Camping Carnet, essential in Sweden and Finland, otherwise costing anything up to £3.00 depending on source of supply.

To this charge must be added the cost of a 'Green Card'. In our case the first 31 days were free and a charge of £5.00 was made for each additional period of 31 days.

Note: Meal costs are not included in the ferry crossing charges.

Winifred & Arthur Irving.

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"Almost the tale of a Tool Box

We arrived at Portsmouth in good time for the ferry after finding yet another way round the back lanes to avoid the road-works for the M.3 extension. Having booked in it was time to get the tool box out for the black tape to mask the head-lamps to convert from left-hand dip. A smooth crossing and we were soon heading south from Cherbourg. After an hour or so we made a tea stop with everything running smoothly. A further stint of driving and it was time for the

children's supper and bed on the lower double of our lalisman. We noticed that the new water pump ran quieter and had cured the continual 'blipping'. I drove into the night and Heather joined the children on the bed and tried to sleep.

At about 2 a.m. I found a layby and pulled in for the rest of the night - but there was trouble as the interior lights were very dim and the water pump hardly worked! The control panel showed the auxiliary battery low even after 6 hours driving. Restarting the engine showed that there was no charge being fed to this battery and obviously the fridge had drained it. We made do with torches and the $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of water we always carry in a can (we've been caught with no water pump before!). In the morning I soon discovered a blown fuse and the tool box provided a spare. Odd that no spares are provided although it is common practice on cars. The engine was left running during breakfast and the problems seemed cured.

During our journey two squeaks had started from the back of the van and investigation showed that one came from the water heater and the other from the room heater. So, during the mid-morning stop, the tool box came out again and the room heater cover was removed. A smear of oil over the control knob stopped that squeak but I couldn't find any cause for the squeak in the water heater - any suggestions will be gratefully received.

By mid-afternoon we reached a beach near Arcachon, having used the free section of motorway round the north-west edge of Bordeaux, and spent a pleasant couple of hours relaxing after the long, hot drive. Later in the evening we drove through traffic jams in Arcachon and other resorts finally stopping in the car park for the Dune du Pilat which charges £5 for overnight parking or £3 during the day. Again the second battery was flat; this time the control panel registered nothing at all but a small bulb across the battery confirmed that it was totally drained again.

Next morning investigation showed that the fuse was O.K. but one of the terminals looked a bit burnt. Closer inspection revealed that the spade connector had never been fitted properly - going instead between the insulation and the

terminal rather than into the terminal - an easy mistake as the coloured insulation prevents readily checking that it has been properly inserted. Correcting this fault has completely cured all the battery problems.

After exploring the sand dunes (the highest in Europe at 400-odd metres), *Heather* persuaded the car park attendant that we had arrived early in the morning so we only payed the day parking fee. A short drive later we came across the village of Gastes which has a small beach on lake Etaing de Biscarrosse et de Parentis behind which is an area of flat grass set aside for motor caravans to stay free for one night. Nearby there were toilets and water taps - France is definitely different from England!

That night one of the roller blinds refused to retract and the spring mechanism had obviously failed. So next morning out came the tool box again to dismantle the blinds. It took a long time to find out how to take them apart but the fault was easily cured and it now works better than ever. While I was doing this the children tried their canoe in the lake but found that the new seat I had fitted made it unstable. Lowering the seat meant sawing chunks of wood off the mountings and this was beyond the scope of the tool box. Having spent our free night we left and looked around Mimizan and its beach. A local supermarket was selling a cheap set of padsaws which were adequate to modify the canoe. We spent the night at Mimizan giving the battery a full charge from the mains and catching a glimpse of Father Christmas doing a tour of the area - in July! After this rest we continued to tour down the Atlantic coast though the weather had turned cloudy and windy. This coast is one long sandy beach reached by little spur roads (about 3 km long) from the coastal road. Each spur ends in a car park perhaps with some tourist development but usually displaying lots of signs saying no camping or overnight parking for motor caravans. We asked some French lads in a motor caravan and they said Yes, it is illegal but as the police never check there is no problem. I think that about 10 motor caravans and a coach spent the night there.

The next day was still cold and windy so we continued south towards Spain, almost getting stuck in several narrow busy roads near Biarritz. The traffic to Spain looked like on long jam so

we turned back and headed inland along the Pyrenees foothills until we drove up the mountain pass into Andorra (two days later). The weather had now turned hot and only a T shirt was needed at the top of the pass (about 8,000 ft). [ONLY a T-shirt? Ed.] Our petrol talisman had little difficulty with the climb except that the engine spluttered twice during the last 1,000 ft - I think this may be due to the fuel vaporising before it reaches the carburettor.

The run down the other side was taken very slowly using engine braking to save the brakes. However I still did not use the truck drivers' rule of using one gear lower to descend than is needed to climb. We spent two nights at Camping International at Encamp enjoying swims in their surprisingly cold pool. Traffic in the town of Andorra is heavy and chaotic (there is only one road through) but we managed to find a car park and spent the day shopping. Beware of the many car parks attached to large shops that are only free for a short time if you spent more than £20. Also in Andorra they do not accept credit cards at fuel stations and the larger shops will only accept them if spending over £17.

We took the easy way out of Andorra - into Spain. Then hugging the Pyrenees we headed east and crossed back into France at the next pass, much lower than that into Andorra. That night we found a naturist camp site in the foothills again but only about a dozen miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Again the tool box was needed as the electrical supply point we chose was wired wrongly and we had to change the wires in our lead. A few minutes after arrival another British motor caravan came and camped next to us. He was worried that the rear axle on his Falbot Express (not an A/S) appeared to be bending due, we thought, to the air spring assisters fitted to his van (their support beam was also bending in the opposite direction).

This was a pleasant site with all amenities, a large swimming pool, a stream with large rock pools and extensive areas of untouched woodland. Walking along the stream or through the woods was pleasant on a hot day but as there were no fences we were always a bit unsure whether we were still within the naturist site or outside it!

After a few days we moved on to visit the fortified medieval city of Carcassonne. Parking

just outside the main city gate is free if you arrive in the evening or before 9.00 am when the attendant comes on duty and only charges the cars as they enter. Stopping overnight in the car park seemed to be tolerated. Monday morning was spent looking round the beautifully preserved/restored city leaving us hot and tired - its quite a long way to walk right round between the outer and inner walls.

Moving on again we headed for our favourite site on the Mediterranean at Cap d'Agde. There we were surprised to discover that not only was the site full but many were camping in a car park outside and still more were camped even further away waiting to get on to the car park! We found an English couple who said they had spent nearly a week on the car park and knew of others who had been there longer. In some ways this was a good idea - the car park charge was £4.00 for as long as you wanted (with multiple entry) whereas the camp site for us would have been about £10 per night. The reasons for the waiting became obvious - the local council had reduced the size of the camp site to give a green (?) area behind the beach - also the situation in Yugoslavia had sent many Germans westwards and this is probably the nearest naturist camp site on the Mediterranean coast.

A thick sea mist came in and looked as if it was going to stay so we headed north to a riverside camp site of which we had heard. Luckily there was room and, finding the river water calm and warm, we unloaded the canoes and settled in. Robert tried his canoe again and almost immediately fell in twice - even the lowered seat made it unstable so that evening out came the tool box again to remove the seat completely. Next day was cool and wet with thunderstorms all around so we decided to visit the nearby cave, Grotte de Clamouse, and the unusual gorge of the Hérault river. The cave was spectacular although the guide could only speak French but English translations were handed out at the start.

Friday, our last full day, was spent on (or in) the river and repacking the talisman ready for the journey home; food ready to hand; wines and spirits where the Customs could inspect them and light items no longer required in the canoe on the roof. We left the camp site after lunch and made good progress north along the N.9. This road, as far as Clermont Ferrand, is being

upgraded to motorway standard (though there is no sign of tolls - yet!) and will include some impressive features; we came down one hill which was 5% or 6% gradient continuous for 11 km. Hills like this would be tedious when heading south with the petrol engined Talbot probably in 3rd gear doing 30 mph for nearly 15 minutes!

Sunday afternoon saw us in Caen and we got lost again, that's twice in a row. Each time we finished at the same junction which has no sign posts even though we were trying a different route through the town. We had a leisurely meal at the Normandy beaches before heading to Cherbourg and were surprised how busy this coast was with many camp sites full. We arrived at the free overnight waiting area at the docks at about 11 pm to find it nearly full even though it has been extended recently. Mobile toilets and wash rooms have also been added.

Next morning we were woken early by the alarm clock and were one of the first vehicles on to the ferry parking up to the off loading doors. Even so, *Heather and Robert* had taken the precaution of walking on to the ferry to get some seats because motor caravans (high ones) are either first or very last on to the boat. We were first off the boat and drove through the Customs while they were still standing chatting - what a pity we weren't over our duty free limit! And so back home having covered almost 2,000 miles at 20 mpg.

John Tidbury."

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John Hunt, of M.M.M., wrote to our Secretary, *Peter Fisher,* asking for articles, of not more than 250 words, with photographs. No subject or fee was mentioned in the letter. So if you don't feel like sending your item to me, send it to *John.* Who knows, he might even pay for it!

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WINTER SAFETY

Around this time last year I said this and I must repeat it this year. Remember that winter is just round the corner and DO, please, **DRAIN OFF YOUR WATER SYSTEM** - particularly the water heater. There may be a drain plug at the bottom of the heater. Or you can open both taps, with

the electric pump OFF, and when the water slows to a trickle press the lever on the shower head (opening those taps too, of course!) and blow hard down the head to drain the last drop. If you can't find the drain tap on the water heater, carefully unscrew the panel behind it (in the shower room) and have a look there. It may be a bit difficult to reach but, unless you want a messy problem with burst pipes etc

And another issue goes to bed. See you at Earls Court?

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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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