

**AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 40
JANUARY 1992**

Hello.

I hope that you all enjoyed Christmas and the (now) the New Year without too much over-eating or over-anything-else-ing! Time to look forward to 1992 and whatever our travels may bring. May I say that I hope you all enjoy yourselves all the way.

At the last committee meeting Pitch Markers were mentioned. Cotswold Motor Caravans produce such things (with their name on them for advertising of course) and they would apparently be prepared to supply them direct to members at a cost of £25.00 for each plate. Various other methods were discussed, such as using Jaguar sized plates with motor-cycle letters and numbers, the whole being velcro-ed to a suitable peg. Several members of the committee have made some sort of marker with costs between £3 and £8. Has anybody out there got any ideas, or do you possibly know of suppliers? Send any suggestions to me, please, with drawings if you think they will help.

Also mentioned was that one of our members, who wished to remain anonymous, had provided *Peter Fisher* (our Secretary) with a copy of the Peugeot-Talbot manual. So the Club can now offer a photo-copy of the odd page or two. We are NOT allowed to copy the entire manual for you, naturally. Any pages you need will cost you 10p each plus either a suitable stamped addressed envelope or the post and packing costs. Talk to *Peter* for more information.

Jeff Worley (and later on *Tony Jones*) will be looking for "Assistant Marshals" for rallies. The general idea is for people who have not yet marshalled a rally on their own to volunteer to help in general running of one which is already arranged. Doing this would help the Marshals considerably; they could even have time to get their meals without (too much) interruption. And it would give you the chance to find out what it is all about, and how easy it is, so that you could run your own rally in the future. Send your offers to *Jeff* please.

It was agreed that Temporary Membership of the A.S.O.C. could be given to people who own an A/S van and who would like to try a rally before they join fully. Temporary Membership would cost 50p and would be for the one rally only (plus the normal £1.50 rally fee and, of course, the site fees). Suitable Temporary Membership Cards are being produced (on our nice new machine) for use in 1992. Temporary Membership will NOT cover people

with other makes of caravan or motor caravan who might wish to come along, even with friends who are members of the Club. We must still restrict attendance at rallies to "Owners of A/S vans only".

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"I was surprised, pleasantly, to receive a letter and cheque from Auto-Sleepers saying I had won the photographic competition in the Company magazine. I said to myself 'What competition?' as I hadn't realised that it was intended to be such. It just goes to show, submit a photograph - you never know your luck!

Having visited the show at Earls Court I feel that the A/S staff should be complimented on their display and the general presentation of their models.

Tony Jones'.

I fully agree with the compliments to the "Orchard Gang" whose work and display must have caused many raids on piggy banks throughout the kingdom (queendom?).

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FOR
SALE

FOR SALE



'H' Reg. (August) Talbot Harmony, one owner, 2,400 miles. Fitted 2nd Battery, Radio/cassette, Alarm, Life-time rustproofing, Cassette toilet. 2/4 berth. Regret sale - too small for present owner. Used three weeks. As new. £16,000. Telephone, evenings only please, *Douglas Shearer*, 0383 732842 (Fife).

Another donation received - for which many thanks.

'H' Reg. (Feb.91) Rambler, 5,000 miles; Radio/cassette; free-standing awning. Immaculate "As New" condition - oven never used. Unable to make full and proper use of the van at present therefore regretfully selling at £14,950.00. *Robert Graham*, The Pool House, Naunton, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcs., WR8 0PZ; tel: 0684 592387.

'E' Reg. Legend - Petrol. 22,000 miles only. Stereo/cassette four speaker system; Omnimax aerial; Omnistor awning. Spare wheel transferred from under the body to a fitting on the rear ladder for convenience. £13,500. Norman Marshal, 2, Trellogan Road, Newquay, Cornwall, PL7 2JQ, or telephone 0637 872386.

'G' Reg. Talisman GL - Diesel. 3,500 miles only. Stainless Steel Rear Bumper. Side awning. Little used. Non-smokers. £19,750.00 o.n.o. *Michael Bowker*, 17 Bramble Ridge, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4SQ. Telephone : Day - 0746 4529; Evening - 0746 764637.

1990 'G' Reg. Talbot Express Rambler; 2.5 litre Diesel currently 13,000 miles. Many extras including Auxillary Battery with electric hook-up; 3-speed roof ventilator; 4-speaker Pioneer radio/cassette. Manufacturers warranty complete with A.A. Recovery applicable until February 1993. £16,500 o.n.o.

Also New (still in supplier's box!) continental headlights to fit pre face lift Talbot Express. Retail price £90 for set - available at only £75.

For either of the above contact *Richard Osborne* at "Windrush", Chapter Rikse, Tilshead, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 4SD or telephone 0980 620646.

[*Richard* tells me that his wife, *Prudence* had an artificial hip fitted 18 months ago and now feels almost able to share the driving. They 'made the mistake' of going to the Show where they ordered a new van with power assisted steering so we shall look forward to hearing of their experiences. We know the problems of going to the show - we went with a very similar result. We've ordered a new van - with power assisted steering too Ed.]

Silver Screen, faced in Corfu White, Suitable for Talbot Rhapsody/Rambler. Only used a few times. £50 - please ring *Doug Vaughan* on 0495 223325 or write to 8 Parklands, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1HU.

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WANTED

Low mileage Talisman or Legend, 1987 or later. Must be in very good condition. Telephone John Mitchell on 0962 72563 (between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m. please) or you can write to Tudor Cottage, Crawley, Winchester, Hants., SO21 2PR.

"I fancy *Bob Measom* may be interested in the following.

On our latest trip to France, in our Flair, the recorded distance from Yorkshire via Portsmouth and back was 2307 miles; the petrol consumed (full/full at the same local pump) was 372.54 litres. MPG was therefore 28.18 over the most flattering mileage I do. In England we travelled at 55-70 mph whilst abroad it would be around 50 mph. Unleaded petrol was used wherever possible, a small amount of Super (leaded) being second choice in France. We were pretty heavily laden for most of the time and I am now in the process of recording everyday figures of consumption.

Although I bought the Flair from a Ford Dealer and it had been serviced locally by another since February 1990 after careful modern running-in I became progressively more dissatisfied with the performance, which was noisy, rough and laboured. For a brand new vehicle it was poor.

Before our latest trip therefore, I got a local specialist tuner of rally cars to put it on to his rolling road complete with electronic equipment etc. He found the Transit to be producing almost five times the proper amount of carbon monoxide and, after checking the timing as correct, he tuned the carburettor to emit the right amount at 55 mph. He then suggested fitting a manual choke which tied in with my half-suspicions that the automatic choke was operating for too long. This was fitted and the result has startled me.

Still on unleaded, after only a short distance she now pulls happily without the choke - even this month (November) - and compared with a similar trip to France in May almost 3 mpg (10 %) has been gained along with the quiet sweetness, liveliness and willingness which previously was lacking.

The cost was most reasonable and is well on the way to being recovered. The tuner is Mr. David Bogg, The Garage, East Lutton, Malton, North Yorkshire and his phone number is 0944 3234. Anyone wishing to fix an appointment should allow plenty of notice, especially during the Rally Season, when he is heavily booked by regulars. I'm just a very satisfied customer!

Michael Mawer.

This seems like a very good idea indeed, especially with the new MOT exhaust checks coming along. Anything we can do to reduce the muck being pumped into that which we breathe will be

a great asset. And if, in cleaning up this way, we can also save some of our hard won pennies (or pounds) , so much the better. Search parties must now be arranged to find similar facilities in all parts of the UK for both petrol, diesel and any other form of power found in A/S vehicles.

Michael has been a busy writer this month. He sent in another item which I've held over for the moment and then I received the following:

"I'm not sure that *Michael Badcock* (Sept.) is entirely on the right lines over his trip to France. French electricity on Municipal sites has coped adequately with our refrigerator, 60W light, 19W fan, shaver and kettle; the last mentioned is a 600W Travellers Kettle costing about £14 some 3 - 4 years ago. It is smaller, takes longer to boil, but is the cure for blowing fuses. Last August/September electricity costs varied from 6.3FF to 13FF per night in excess of 15 hours; over 17 nights the average was 8.56FF, say, 86 pence. We used less than one 907 Gaz cylinder, mainly over lunch-times and one night at Cherbourg; we don't like a flame (or no flame) about when we are sleeping and Gaz is dearer there. I feel sure that *Michael* would find a saving with electricity.

Municipal sites are indeed good value and good fun. There are snags, however; on occasion one finds that the Gardien does not arrive until 8 p.m. to hook-up the juice and to sell Jetons for showers - and then you discover the need for an adaptor for reverse polarity or even that the supply is not earthed! This always happens on a blistering hot day. The plusses are the often delightful people we meet - the British, the Dutch who speak such excellent English and are so very friendly and the French with whom we have shared many a laugh over our school French - vintage 1938 and 1946! If you can imagine an elderly Frenchwoman at the tap trying very hard indeed to explain to my wife the intricacies of cooking artichokes (whilst obviously being aided/reviled/contradicted by her husband) then you will see what I mean! We were truly grateful.

I can't understand the *Wheeler*s (Oct.) actually preferring the Wellie-washer loos, but clearly neither of them is 70, nor sufferers from the occasional bad back; no, I haven't fallen in - yet! However, middle-class French homes seem to have dispensed with these things so perhaps they are learning. If you fancy a superb Sanitaire try Issigny-sur-Mer, on the Channel coast, among others.

Can anyone tell me whether, in the absence of an earthed supply, a ground-pin wired to the Flair would provided safety in excess of our E.L.C.B.?

I fancy that all the expenses of which *Michael* speaks would be covered by taking one extra meal in the van instead of going out. In addition, if he is to go often, the purchase of 5% P&O Preferred Stock would save a minimum of 20% on fares, except Club Class. Travelling P&O would also help British people to keep their jobs.

Michael Mawer.

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Now here is something of a novelty - but it is a word of caution.

"Last May, at mother-in-law's house near Salzburg, I was topping up the VX50 with water ready for a trip to Czechoslovakia when I heard a leak underneath. The hard plastic pipe connecting the flexible input hoses was torn. Back home I fitted a metal connection and while underneath doing this I noticed a dangling rubber-bushed stay for the hand-brake cable.

In summer we heard that pine martens had had to be chased out of mum's roof space and the local paper spoke of much damage to cables under cars in that area.

Barbara & David Rogers.

Well I said it was a novelty, didn't I? Our members certainly seem to find the oddities of problems!

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"I refer to the article by *Gerry Woolley* which appeared in N/L 36. He wrote about the problem with the Talisman GL which was traced to a fouled fuel system due to the metal filler tube breaking down and that Peugeot-Talbot had fitted a new tube f.o.c.

I spoke to *Gerry* because I had experienced the same symptoms. Unfortunately my local dealer had already investigated the problem before I read the article. Peugeot agreed to making the modification for me, also f.o.c. but, as I had incurred a rather hefty bill of £173 from the dealer who had spent 2 - 3 days looking at the problem, I considered that Peugeot should also pay

that bill (or a good part of it) since the vehicle had only done 6,000 miles and was only 3 months out of warranty. To date I have been unsuccessful but I'm continuing the fight! Peugeot are just simply claiming that my vehicle was out of warranty. Talk about customer relations - what customer relations?

I would suggest that all members who have Peugeot-Talbot based vehicle should check the filler tube to ascertain whether it is metal or plastic and if metal and coated on the inside get it replaced [My underlining - Ed.] It seems to take a little while for the fuel system to clog sufficiently to cause bad running and severe juddering.

Arthur Claxton.

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"The Renault Rapport was registered in June 87 and it was in summer 89 when we noticed signs of sun deterioration on the corners of the two roof lights which we rectified with glass fibre. Weekending in the Cotswolds in February 90 the pressure wave from HGV's took off the front rooflight and deposited it way behind us - "Grandad, I think we have lost part of the roof". However a helpful pub campsite owner, a ladder, a dustbin lid and a few weighty logs kept us dry that night and an unscheduled detour and visit to Willersey soon had it replaced. In April it was obvious that the rear ventilator was disintegrating and it too was replaced after a visit to Willersey by appointment. A further visit in October replaced a broken push up arm with a couple of spare arms and a new inner cover later replaced by myself as DIY items.

In August 91 in Brittany we found broken arms on both ventilators so, being within range of Montoir sur Loire and the factory of the makers Sonablat Chantal we made a visit. Having found the correct part of the complex and the appropriate receptionist we were given a fistful of the arms "Gratuit" with a charming smile but the lack of facilities to fix them. The warden on the excellent campsite at Savenay produced a rather battered pair of steps for "les Anglais" and over a few sunny hours all eight push arms were replaced and the spares stored away.

November 91 and the Fell End, Cumbria, rally followed by a couple of nights in the Windermere area when there was ominous banging and rattling from the roof lights in high, gusting winds. More high winds on the M6 south, speed restricted to 40 mph and the front light snatching open twice. Off the motorway a caravan

sales park provided a pair of steps and a large roll of office sellotape, with their compliments, which fortunately I got fixed before the storm started.

All this over a period of 21 months, about 10,000 miles with a travelling speed of about 60 mph maximum. Suggested solutions of stretch rubbers from gutter to gutter, aluminium or stainless steel straps across the lights have been rejected at present and external quality sellotape has been fixed to each edge externally and the lights are now considered permanently fixed down. We have found that the need to open the rooflights is comparatively rare in the Rapport and we hope now to save the cost of complete replacements. This problem has been mentioned recently in MMM and must be common to this type of rooflight.

*Norman Cutler**

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RALLY REPORTS

"Welcome to the third Abbey Wood Christmas Rally" read the notice. As newcomers we were immediately welcomed by our hosts *Daphne & John Normandale* with an information pack in which there was sufficient to take us through the rest of the week, but this was one of those weekends where you had a choice of activities. A gathering of 24 members in the local Community Hall in the evening gave us an opportunity to look back on our respective camping experiences during 1991, easily done when supported by either fish and chips or chinese collected locally, not forgetting wine supplied by our hosts.

The following morning saw us heading in different directions, some to central London, others to view the Thames Barrier and a few staying in camp to enjoy the antics of the squirrel population. We went to Harrods to obtain a shopping bag - but spent most of the time looking for the loos! The British Rail/London Transport Travelcard at £2.70 for the day took us from Abbey Wood to Charing Cross and back and included unlimited bus and tube transport; considered by all our party to be a good buy.

In the evening we all joined together at the local hostelry for a buffet supper. There had been some anxiety that, with a change of landlord, the standard of previous years would be lowered but we need not have worried, the food was excellent. *Daphne & John* had arranged a most enjoyable quiz for the evening - my, my, there are some erudite members amongst us!

At the traditional gathering on the final morning for coffee and hot mince pies it was agreed that the weekend had been a great success. To add some quality to the usual raffle Bromley Motor Caravans had supplied some first-class draw prizes for which the Club is most grateful.

Joan & I have already pencilled in 20-22 November for the Christmas Shopping Rally in 1992. thank you, *Daphne & John*, you set a very high standard.

*Tom Childs.**

Tom also told me that a marshal has been found for the 1992 rally. This has now been confirmed but please note that the dates have been changed to 27th-29th November 1992.

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I am well aware of the efforts made by the club to obtain discounts for us on ferries to the continent and the last thing I would want to do is to undermine those efforts. However, there may well be members who are not aware of the very substantial savings which can be made by using the scheme provided by P & O for shareholders. I have not yet used the scheme but have bought shares so that I can benefit next year, because shares must be registered in the owner's name before 1st January in the year of travel. For the registration to be reliably achieved the shares need to be bought before the end of September in the year before travel. Thus I can't pass on any of the fine detail yet but can enclose an outline of the scheme.

The title of the shares is:

P & O 5½% Red, Non-cumulative Preferred Stock £1.

In September 1991 the price per share was 111p. The discounts available are as follow:

No.of shares held	Routes from	
	Dover & Felixstowe	Portsmouth
600	50%	40%
300	25%	20%

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB
RALLY SUPPLEMENT

February, March & April 1992

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 organise the rally if he knows how many people to expect. So the motto is
EARLY BOOKING PLEASE, IF POSSIBLE!

28th Feb.-1st Mar. TREDEGAR HOUSE & PARK, Newport, Gwent. LIMIT 30 VANS.

Fees: £3.50 per night. Electricity £1.50 per night - 12 points only available. Rally Fee £1.50.

Marshals: Brenda and Malcolm Edwards, 31 Pine Grove, Lighthouse Road, Newport, Gwent, NP1 9TA. Tel:0633 817328.

Directions: 2 miles S.W. of Newport. Follow signs for Tredegar House & Park from M.4 (Jnc28) or A 48 Cardiff Road.

Set in 90 Acres of parkland. Guided tours of 17th century mansion.

13th-15th FELL END CARAVAN PARK, Cumbria. Fees: £10.23 w.e.2 people. Rally Fee £1.50 BOOKINGS MUST BE RECEIVED 14 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT AS REQUESTED BY THE SITE. 40 Vans maximum. Late bookings possible but this is a popular rally at a popular site and we may not get more pitches. Electricity & Satellite T.V. Prices to be advised. To be paid to the site owners direct on arrival.

Marshals: Daisy and George Wane, 2 Plantation Avenue, Arnside, Cumbria, LA5 0HT. Tel 0524 761657.

Directions: From South - leave M6 at Jnc 35 then N on A6 from jnc 35a for about 4 miles. Shortly after crossing Lancs/Cumbria border turn L at International Caravan sign. Follow signs to Fell End C.P. FROM N. Go S from Milnthorpe on A6. 0.5 miles past Kings Arms, Hale, turn R at International Caravan Sign. Follow signs for Fell End.C.P

Hard standing and electricity to each pitch. A hall for social events. Snacks available on Site. Meal on site planned for Saturday evening.

3rd-5th April. Hidden Valley, West Down, Ilfracombe, North Devon.

Fees: £2.50 per night. Electricity £1.30 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

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Marshals: Sandra & Bernie Wisely, 15, Stoat Park, Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple, Devon, EX32 8PT.

Directions: Site is on A.361 Barnstaple-Ilfracombe, Braunton 4 miles, Ilfracombe 5 miles.

Sandra & Bernie can only be present for the weekend, but Susan and Melvyn Tucker, the site owners, will make everyone wanting an early break very welcome. This concession site fee is extended to members for days before and after this weekend. Excellent, reasonably priced meals are served in the restaurant on site.

10th-12th April. Ranch Caravan Park, HONEYBOURNE. Fees: £4.00 per night. Electricity £1.50 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Barbara & Tony Jones, 49 Wessex Way, Highworth, Swindon, SN6 7NT.

Directions: Site is on the Bidford-on-Avon to Broadway road.

Convenient for visiting Evesham, Broadway and other Cotswold villages.

24th-26th April. NATIONAL RALLY AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Kettering.

Full details to follow.

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!

In December every year the company sends each shareholder the following year's timetables and booking information. Enquiries are dealt with on 0304 223602.

My back-of-an-envelope estimates suggest that the financial return is at least 10% and nearer 15% assuming the following:

- Dividend of 4% after tax
- One short crossing per year for two people and a van on the middle tariff.

If one travelled more often, on an expensive tariff, with a very large van or a large number of people, then the financial return would be correspondingly greater.

*Barry Crawshaw.**

Thanks, *Barry*, for some very interesting information.

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Peter Fisher wrote in reply to the idea of using jacks for levelling the Tallman, as advocated by *Dan Flunder* in November. Having read the article and feeling more than a little uneasy he wrote to Peugeot-Talbot asking the question whether it was safe to use jacks in this way. In their reply they say that they would "strongly advise against using this method as these jacks are for emergency use only and therefore must not be used for the purpose of self levelling".

I presume that it would be in order to use the jack to lift the wheel off the ground so as to put a block of some sort underneath to assist the levelling but NOT to rely on the jack only. I have seen jacks used as steadies for vans, really before steadies were normally fitted to the rear end. I have often thought that I would like to design a van with something like a windscreen wiper motor at each corner turning a screw threaded jack vertically downwards so that I could do all the levelling without getting out of the driving seat. I can see how I could hide the mechanism at the rear end but I'm blown if I can visualise the screw threads being "lost" at the front end. And there would have to be some sort of safety device, the like of which I know not, to ensure (a) that the jacks didn't wind down (or up) of their own volition and (b) that you couldn't drive away with them down! Oh, to be an expert!

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Peter also sent me a copy of the press release from the Department of Transport regarding Fog Signals on Motorways. Some 85% of the matrix signals have now been modified so that the word 'FOG' can be displayed. Use of the signal will enable the more restrictive advisory speed limit and lane closure signals to be kept in reserve to warn motorists of a possible obstruction hidden in the fog. Highlighting the particular dangers arising from driving in fog, principally the extra fatigue caused by driving in difficult conditions and the disorientation and confusion which can arise when suddenly meeting a bank of fog, Mr. Christopher Chope, Minister for Roads and Traffic, urged drivers to heed the following advice.

- keep calm
- slow right down
- switch on headlights and foglights
- drive at a speed which allows you to stop within your range of vision
- check your speedometer regularly
- turn off your radio and open your window so that you can hear what is going on.

Mr. Chope also urged motorists to remember to switch off their foglights when the visibility has improved to avoid dazzling other road users.

I think that this advice is well worth remembering at all times. I learned very early on that if I can see its O.K. to go but if I can't see then don't go. This is from my cycling days but it is sound common sense anyway. Just like brakes - I can get anywhere at two miles per hour but I can get nowhere safely if I cannot stop. Personally, I should like the last two items to be remembered by all drivers at all times. It amazes me just how many people today seem to need to have their "150 watts per channel super stereo thump-bang-radio" turned up fully whenever they drive. And why do so many people need to have all lights blazing, preferably on main beam, even in daylight?

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"There have been comments in the Newsletter about the lack

of U.K. holiday reports, so with the new season nearly upon us have you thought about the Scottish Islands? Last year we went to Orkney and Shetland. Orkney Mainland is green and pleasant and principally pastureland for raising beef cattle and you are never more than 14 miles from the sea. It has marvellous rocky coastlines with cliff walks as long or as short as you wish to make them. Shetland is more rocky; here they breed the sheep for those innumerable Shetland jumpers and again you are never far from the sea. The long days make the magnificent scenery even more beautiful. Birdlife is prolific and, because of the long hours of daylight, the flowers are superb. The Council camp sites are excellent but wild camping is not easy, especially on Shetland where all the land is divided into crofts and is therefore fenced off. The ferries to these islands are operated by P & O and Thomas Cook efficiently dealt with our requirements.

Three years ago we went to the Outer Hebrides, staying on 8 islands. Each one is different but there are many long sandy beaches and much rocky coastline. There are no trees and consequently nothing to stop the wind! Camp sites are few and far between but who wants them when wild camping is no real problem and all "sites" are so perfect. During 5 weeks on the islands we only stayed on recognised sites for 2 nights. Water could be a problem but it is usually obtainable at ferry terminals and the 'locals' are very helpful. The ferries are operated by Caledonian MacBrayne and are bookable only through their offices.

We found shopping on all the islands comparatively easy as the shops are usually small, well stocked, supermarkets where parking is no problem as you just stop outside. The weather is variable. Although there can be many hours of sunshine there is almost always a cold wind blowing making temperatures lower than we had anticipated. Lerwick, in Shetland, is as far from London as Milan - the difference being that it is to the north, so don't forget your winter woollies! The roads in the Hebrides are mostly single track but on Orkney and Shetland are excellent. We have been out in gale force winds but provided that we faced into the wind we were stable apart from a slight rocking. It is one way of finding out where the draughts come in! There is no entertainment and often not even a pub but if you like peace and quiet with only your own company and enjoy the real beauty of magnificent countryside together with all its wild life then this might be somewhere for you to visit.

Apologies to *Audrey & Syd (Crouch)* and hope that their particular paradise island is not invaded this year.

Doris & George Mitchell

I haven't made the outer islands (yet) but I can vouch for the long sunny days as seen from Skye when there isn't a cloud around and it seems that the Hebrides could be touched if my arms were about 18 inches longer! I did hear, from a completely different source, of a coach trip which included Orkney but the result was apparently disappointing. Mainly, I suspect, because of the ferry between John o' Groats and the island which was small and therefore inclined to rock and roll on the way across. And because timing was over important. I'm not surprised at the Shetland jumpers if the wind is always blowing!

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The next item comes from the professional world, from somebody who takes an interest in what our members send into the Newsletter. In fact I know that Bob reads our N/L every month.

"Dear Harry,

We'd like to publish a few 'user' features on A/S models and wondered if you could ask your readers if they would like to write 1,000 or so words, with pictures, about their favourite Auto-Sleeper.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Griffiths,
Editor."

If you can help, please write to Bob at Motor Caravan World, The Stone Leisure Group, 'Andrew House', 2a Granville Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 8BN.

Bob also reminded me of the MCW show dates for 1992 which are Stratford Racecourse 5-6-7 June and Bath 'n' West Show, Shepton Mallet, 18-19-20 September.

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A plaintive cry added to one of the renewal forms received by *Sheila Hammell*.

"I regret that due to heavy commitments as a student teacher

(mature variety) we are fairly passive members but we do sympathise with your aims and are admirers of the A/S total service to their customers. (We have had some rectification done to our van soon after its 'birth' and they really do care for their customers.) As it is now winter I would have liked to see some tips on how to use (NOT store) my Harmony in cold weather. I'm a mountain walker!"

This came from *Ian Ford* and I'm sure that there are people out there who can help him with any ideas about winter usage. I haven't tried using the van in the depths of winter as somewhere to stay but merely as the means of transport. I can only suggest that *Ian* uses Propane for its lower gassing temperature; stocks up with plenty of soup and other warm foods (and perhaps "human anti-freeze liquids") and carries snow chains. Any more experienced messages, please? (And what is a mountain walker - is it like a puppy walker for the Guide Dogs?)

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MODEL VANS

The first suggestions have materialised in an amusing and helpful letter from *Melvyn Crapp*. He suggests station names, for example:-

- The Waterloo - don't forget to fill up and empty!
- The Westminster - for MP's who want an A/S
- The Victoria - the Queen of all vans?
- The Paddington - can you bear to use this?

and for the Welsh caravanner with a fairly long van —

The Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll-llantysillogogoch!

Yes, I have checked the spelling! *Melvyn* also went on to suggest that the Newsletter should show some sort of titles (as at the head of his letter above) so that various items could easily be recognised. I'm not sure that I entirely agree with him because I believe that readers want to browse right through rather than skip to an individual item, but what do you think? He was also kind enough to enclose some "portraits" of the various Club Officials. Perhaps I shall be able to include some in a later N/L.

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"In August 1991 we purchased our first motor caravan (a Trident) and joined the Club. The fitted set of crockery is made by Biltons and recently, while visiting the local Texas DIY store we were delighted to find that they stocked the same crockery together with other matching items, e.g. saucepans, dishes, table mats, trays, oven gloves, etc. The set which came with the van is called "Spring Bouquet" and I presume that other vans will have the same. It may be that some other member has reported this in the past but if not perhaps a small entry in the Newsletter may assist other members in replacing crockery or adding further matching items.

Raymond Wood."

Surprisingly, *Ray*, nobody has advised me of this before so your contribution is very welcome. When we bought our current van, second-hand, there was no crockery on board so we have done the best we can with another make which was obtainable at the A.G.M. this year - and very good it is too. But now perhaps others will investigate their local Texas and check whether they have the same range.

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Chairman's Chat

"We seem to have spent quite a bit of time at the Factory recently, what with one thing and another. By far the most important occasion was on Thursday 26th November when *Mr & Mrs R E Goodread*, Membership No. 1000, were made welcome at the Orchard. After a chat over coffee, promptly produced by Pam, [A/S Receptionist] they were given a conducted tour by the Works Manager, *Neville Jelfs*. This started in the Panel Van factory where new equipment installed over the past year was seen in use and the new working practices, introduced as a result of a thorough review of production methods, were patently improving working conditions as well as the quality of the finished product. That Auto-Sleepers' already high quality of finish could be improved upon came as a surprise to some of us but the evidence was there to be seen.

This was followed by a break for lunch at the Collin Arms Hotel, very generously provided by the Company. The party there consisted of our President, *Charles Trevelyan* and his wife *Angela* (Piers too, of course), Membership Secretary *Shella Hammell*, Newsletter Editor *Harry Henthorne*, Vice-President *Rita Daley* and

Chairman *Phil Daley*. After a very convivial meal *Meg & Ted* were transported to the Coachbuilt factory for a tour of the Paint Shop and final assembly line before being presented with some items of Club regalia, including an engraved plaque (just to make sure they never forget their membership number), and a new grille badge. Altogether a day to remember.

You will have heard that Auto-Sleepers won the Caravan Industry Award for Motor Caravans, presented at the Earl's Court Show, with their new Talbot Executive. The story behind the design and production of that particular conversion is very interesting but will probably never be told and I can't tell you why!

One little gem from the Orchard concerned the Founder Member who wasn't. I'm told that, one day recently, one of the Dealers telephoned the Managing Director to break a bit of bad news. Anthony Trevelyan has been known to comment on the success of the Owners' Club and what a strong feeling of Brand Loyalty it fosters; it is in fact, a GOOD THING. This Dealer felt he had to mention that a Club Member, a Founder Member in fact, had just placed an order with him for a Compass on a Mercedes base. How about that? On being asked for further information such as name (Founder Members are quite rare) the dealer told him it was "John Cox". As you know, *John Cox* started the whole thing and is now a Vice-President. This looked like a potential disaster; just thinking about the way it would look if it ever got to the ears of the Press produced hot and cold shivers. *Charles Trevelyan*, Club President, was asked what he knew about it and what he intended to do in the way of damage limitation, etc.? This was news to *Charles* who found the whole thing too incredible for words. Consultation with *Neville Jelfs*, who has known *John Cox* longer than most of us, produced the decision to check again with the Dealer because something had to be wrong, somewhere. So they did that. Yes, it was definitely John Cox, no doubt about it. What, *John Cox* from Barton-under-Needwood? Oh no, this John Cox lived in Fareham! Perhaps I should say that when I told this story at the Fell End rally "our" *John Cox* nearly fell about laughing!

Just room to wish you the Happiest of New Years.

Phil Daley*.

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Phil has passed me a copy of a letter from *Charles Trevelyan* which says:

"Dear Phil,

A Legend owner, Mr. Harry Harman, (not a Club Member) recently passed away through cancer. You may be aware, through MMM and other motor caravan publications that, in his retirement, Harry manufactured wooden models and toys for the Cheltenham General Hospital Cancer Cobalt Unit. In this venture, he raised over £10,000.

I recently had a long talk with his widow, Lillian, who is most anxious that this good work continues. In our turn, we will be more than happy to provide any off-cuts as we did before for this very worthwhile cause and I, therefore, write to ask whether through the Newsletter, you can determine whether any Club Member would be willing to continue this task.

Ideally, it should be someone relatively close to our Factory who would, of course, have regular access to off-cuts and any other items that he/she may require.

Needless to say, we would give this venture our full support as we did with Harry.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Charles

A.C.Trevelyan
Director"

I don't think there is anything to add to that except that if anybody would like to help, please contact *Charles* direct at the Factory.

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Rita Daley has asked me to include thanks to the members of the "December Newsletter Folding Party" who did yeoman work. The party consisted of *Marjorie Hulme and Eileen Matthews* together with *Sylvia and Don Gale*. This I do gladly because folding about 900 5-page Newsletters, together with the Rally List, Membership Renewal form and the letter from the Factory is

some job. And our Club thanks also to *Rita & Phil Daley* who put in quite a bit of quiet work to produce the Newsletter on our new printing machine. It is MUCH quicker than on a photo-copier but it still takes time. So thank you all very much indeed. Volunteers for the January party??? (I think that they are already arranged.)

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The item about Propane supplies in N/L 39 prompted *Brian Harrison* and *Roy Williams* to write to Supergas. *Brian* has received a reply which says that there will be a once only hire charge of £8.00 plus VAT for each 6kg cylinder (a reduction of 50% on their standard rate) and the present refill price is £6.18. If the cylinder(s) is/are obtained from a dealer the charge may be greater than that shown above but if Supergas Sales & Marketing Department is contacted at Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxford, OX8 5RD and evidence is produced of the amount paid **they will refund the difference** (My emphasis. Ed.) They cannot, of course, take other companies cylinders in part exchange. But Propane fittings are apparently standard so if you are already using it you should not need to change your regulator.

Brian also sent in the list of depots and filling plants from which you can obtain details of local dealers (600 nationwide). I haven't room to publish the list but if you want a copy I can easily provide one. Supergas apologise that they "do not adequately cover whole of the country" but they are trying to establish new outlets.

Roy's contribution is to advise of another manufacturer, "FloGas" of Merrylees, Leicester, who supply 6.3kg containers of Propane and Butane which measure 15" high and 29½" circumference. These apparently have a fixed tap with a screw thread to receive a male head. He has written to the "Gaslow" people to suggest that if they could provide a suitable adaptor it would widen the availability of these to customers. He too has written to Supergas for information and also to Gaslow for details of their switching system to use both gases

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Our indefatigable *John Cox* has spoken to RYD Design Ltd (as mentioned by *John Hunt* in the December MMM) about their Polarity Reversal Switch. He has arranged a 10% discount for Club Members. RYD are at 48 Poplar Road, Wittersham, Kent, TN30 7NT or telephone 0797 270427. Well done, *John* and thank you.

Change of Address

Will you all please take note of my new address. With effect from 1st February 1992 I shall no longer be at 69, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Surrey, CR0 7EG although post will be forwarded to me without too much difficulty. But I shall be moving to:



144, Devonshire Hill Lane,
London, N17 7NH.

My new telephone number will be:



081 - 808 9112.

And if you think that these look a little familiar I'll leave you to work out why!

Several people have been kind enough to say that they prefer the new style of printing so I think that it will be worthwhile to keep it as it now is. We are hoping to progress to a better computer in the reasonably near future so we may be able to do things even better.

Keep watching (and reading) these pages!

That's about it for this month, *dear readers*, so till next time.

Your Editor,

Harry Henthorne.



We offer our deepest sympathy to Bruce Cunningham on the death of Muriel earlier this month. Those of us who knew the Cunninghams will regret, but understand, Bruce's decision to sell their Talisman. We hope he will be back with us some time in the future.

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.
