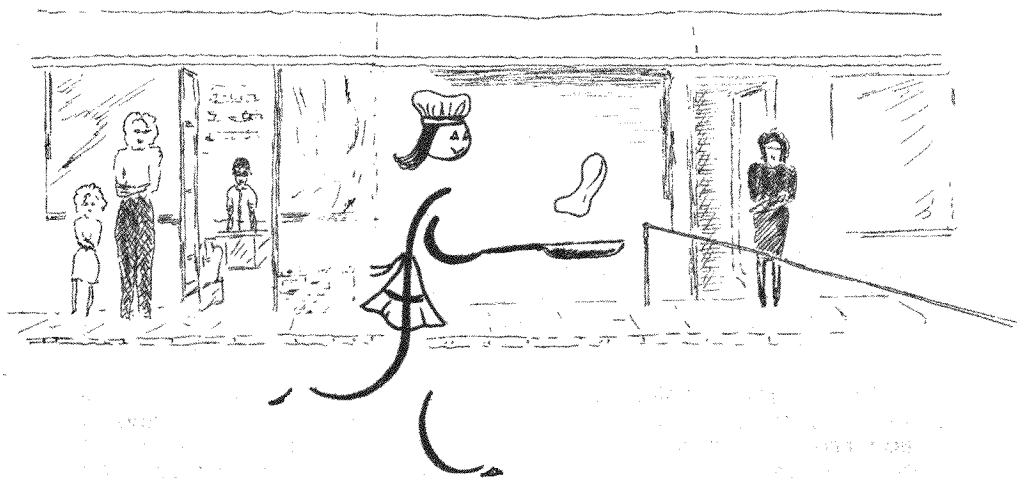


**AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 41
FEBRUARY 1992**

Hello.

If this issue seems a bit disjointed please accept my apologies. As you will have read in last month's Newsletter (you DID read it, didn't you?) I have been (and still am) busy moving things from the South side of London to the North side. Although there are only 21 miles between the two addresses moving bits and pieces in the van does take time! Of course I have had to move the computer and, more importantly, the various discs which contain the Newsletter and attendant chunks of information. Naturally, the bit I need at any moment is the one which I have put away 'safely' - and you know what that means! Never mind, things are moving along.

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Our previous Chairman has spent an exciting time abroad and sends this report:

"SPRINGBOK II

Several members are, I know, also members of the International Caravanning Association (ICA) which celebrated its 21st birthday in 1990. I don't know much about its history but I believe that it was started to give caravanners experience of taking their vans abroad - much like our Wagon Train to France. Most of their rallies are in Europe when members use their own vans but a number are in more remote places and involve the use of hired vehicles. Such an expedition was Springbok II - a six week tour of South Africa which took place during September and October 1991. Daphne & I joined 15 other couples, 12 from the U.K and one each from Australia, New Zealand and Belgium for the trip. The tour leaders, who did all the organisation from the European end, were Betty and Arthur Barcroft who had also been responsible for the first ICA caravan to South Africa some years ago. Route planning and local arrangements were in the hands of the Foreign Touring Committee of the Caravan Club of Southern Africa (CCSA) and in particular of Mashah and Boris Berman who accompanied us throughout. Originally it was planned to hire cars and trailer caravans but luckily this was changed and 16 C.I. Explorer motor caravans were used instead. These are coach-built models, built in South Africa, on Mitsubishi 2 litre chassis. The design and finish were not anywhere near A/S standards but they proved to be sturdy and fairly reliable vehicles. Microwave ovens were fitted in place of ordinary ones. In my ignorance I had always imagined these to be rather delicate pieces of electronic

equipment but the fact that all sixteen survived six weeks with much hammering over dirt roads proved otherwise. In fact most of the main roads had good surfaces and were well signposted but we used dirt roads to visit more remote places, particularly in the Kruger National Park where we spent six days.

We flew British Airways 747 - 400 series direct to Johannesburg in just over 11 hours. We collected our vehicles and spent the first weekend at Pretoria where we were met by members of the local CCSA group who entertained us and showed us round their city. This was to be the pattern throughout the tour and we met local caravanners in most of the places we visited. During the six weeks we covered just over 7,000 kilometres and if any criticism was to be levelled at the organisation it would be that we tried to cover too much ground in the time available. Of the 26 sites we visited 18 were 'one night stands' and there were several occasions when we would very much have liked to stay longer. In general the sites were of a lower standard than we had expected. The weather too was not as consistently fine as we would have hoped. During the first couple of weeks in particular we had some wet and very windy weather.

Our route took us from Johannesburg to Kimberley and across the Karoo to Cape Town via Oudtshoorn with its ostrich farms. Then on to Cape Agulhas, the most southerly point in Africa, where we each received a certificate to compare with that awarded to those visiting the North Cape. The strangely named Garden Route was very beautiful and so was Graaff Reinet, one of South Africa's oldest towns, which I had never even heard of before! The Drakensburg mountains are as spectacular as we had expected but Durban was a disappointment particularly the camp site although Pietermaritzburg more than compensated. The Kruger Park was fantastic and the vans made excellent viewing vehicles. South Africa, like many parts of the world it seems, has been short of water for several years and so the Kruger was exceptionally dry and the undergrowth sparse which made viewing the game much easier. We saw a vast number of wild animals and also were surprised and delighted by the variety and beauty of the birds. [Feathered variety I hope! Ed.]

Meeting and getting to know quite a number of local caravanners made the trip particularly interesting. South Africa,

because of its long isolation from the rest of the world through sanctions etc., is in many ways years behind Europe and I do not think that they will ever catch up. They have enormous mineral wealth but their racial and inter-tribal problems are far from over.

Caravanning in South Africa is very different from what we are used to, or so it seemed to us. The rallies organised by the CCSA usually consist of a vehicle convoy - all communicating by C.B. radio - covering quite substantial distances. One of their favourite pranks is apparently to arrive at a camp site in the middle of the night, silently to encircle those already there and then wake everybody up by sounding their horns and turning on their headlights. This, hardly surprisingly, they call a "raid"! Ah, well, it takes all sorts..... "Chairman's Tea" on Sunday morning is quite a protracted affair with lots of speeches, awarding of badges and collecting of fines for minor misdemeanours - this seems to replace our raffle as a means of fund raising. Their Regalia Officer has a large trailer full of Club goodies for sale but goes under the title of "Pedlar" - how would you like that, *Wendy?*

John Normandale."

With the *Conways* in North America, the *Normandales* in South Africa and others writing about Europe, North Africa and Scandinavia all we need now is someone to tour Australia or Russia and we shall have quite a lot of stories to tell. Any volunteers?

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"Fired by a desire to return to North Africa and the sun, we obtained our green card and set off; one of the tremendous advantages of our Auto-Sleeper is that we never have to plan ahead since time is no object and we are happy to wait, if necessary, until there is a ferry space. We planned to be away 12 months - in the event 13 - and for 78 hours it rained. A tractor obligingly pulled us out of an overnight layby and we found a garage in Luxembourg that dealt with an obscure fuse at 5 pm on a wet Friday but it was only in Salzburg that we reached the sun, a fortunate circumstance that relieved the depression caused by our visit to Berchtesgaden. The remains of the bunker were closed, most is in a dangerous condition in any case, and Hitler's and Himmler's houses have been destroyed and cleared since John's last visit in 1945.

In Villach I lost my memory and spent three interesting days in a

beautiful hospital in Klagenfurt where John (and the van) lived in the grounds. Assured that it was only a minor matter we continued via the Loebel Pass to Yugoslavia where a mad driver overtook us on a 1:6 right-hand bend, bounced off our bumper and dented his door. The cherry harvest and a little fishing kept us in the area for ten days and my husband, idly timing the dive of a cormorant, was more than amazed to see a mini submarine surface instead! Armed with a wartime phrase-book of 14 languages (including Esperanto) we coped with a loose screw which made it impossible to change gear. We were put over a pit that had to be drained of water and the job was completed quickly, efficiently and cheaply in a mixture of Serbo-Croat, Italian and German. In Trieste we had a new battery switch fitted but these were the only problems we encountered for the next twelve months, apart from a recurrence of the gear-lever-screw difficulty.

We seldom use camp sites but must comment on Pinta Sablone in Venice; convenient, clean, well laid out and reasonable. Here we met another A/S and they were in fact the last Britons we spoke to till just before we left Tunisia six months later. After an exhausting week in Venice (the art and the fish market both superb) we went south to Rimini with its Roman bridge still in use and up past San Marino to stay in a small village for a week where we attended the local horse show and the school fete and ate fresh trout from the trout farm. We returned to Florence via Forlò (Where John was wounded in 1944) then down the backbone of Italy to Assisi, Spello with fields of sunflowers and Monte Cassino. While looking for a quiet place to stop we were 'adopted' by an elderly farmer and his wife who insisted that we parked in their garden. We had no common language but we enjoyed two hilarious evenings; they fed us with local sausage and their own wines; we communicated in a series of drawings. When we left they filled the van with vegetables, fruit and flowers. Sadly, a day later, we were mugged at 1 pm on a Sunday in the centre of Naples by moped riders. Apart from a broken window the only loss was my husband's elderly camera with pictures of the Italian farmers and his former Mess in the Caserta Palace which we had been allowed to see. It was our one fault as the vibration had dislodged the cushion covering the bag holding the camera; the golden rule is NEVER to have anything visible. After a plastic pane was fitted in Battipaglia we visited Pompeii and the marvellous temple of Paestum then thankfully headed south.

In Messina we found the offices of the ferry company closed

(10.30 am) but we were put in the picture by a nearby workman who said, succinctly, "Bar"! After a further wait we were able to book for two days ahead and a delightful crossing of the Straits was followed by the length of the Sicilian motorway with its long tunnels - one of 2 1/4 miles - finally reaching the narrow and winding coast road for the last miles to Trapani. Here we spent a fascinating afternoon in the ancient hill-top town of Erice where Aeneas is said to be buried. After a night on the quayside, the ferry arrived at 6.30 am amid scenes of indescribable chaos. Cars, sometimes piled to three times their original height were taking expatriate Tunisian workers home on leave. Surprisingly, we left at 10.30 am having believed it almost impossible to load everyone and everything. The 8 hours ahead were miserable for most since public rooms were kept locked and the cooler gangways blocked by sleeping Tunisians. We left Italy with some relief!

Clare Somerville."

What was that I was saying about people going abroad? The Somervilles have certainly sent in some stories - most enjoyable! They all go to show the benefits of motor-caravanning generally and in an A/S in particular.

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FOR SALE

'H' Reg. (Feb 91) Talbot Rambler, 4855 miles. Blue trim; Removable Radio Cassette; Fitted Second Battery; Silver Screen; Waste Water Tank; Porta Potti. Immaculate condition. Genuine reason for sale. £14,950. Telephone (Evenings ONLY please) *Mrs. P.M.Jackson* on 061 430 7280 (Cheshire).

Nearly new VW T4 'J' Reg. Front engine Trooper (Elevating Roof). 5 speed Petrol 1968 cc. Specification fittings as new, i.e. Cassette Blinds, 2 tables, crockery, Porta Potti etc., Plus Extras:- Propex Blown-air Heating, Stereo Radio/Cassette, Gemini Alarm system; Auxiliary Battery, Two 6lb Camping Gaz bottles plus fitted Regulator; Upholstered Storage/Porta Potti Box; Fitted Awning Rails and Free-standing Awning. Vehicle not yet used for camping, smokers or pets. Under 800 miles. Taxed to 31st October 1992. £19,550 (including all extras which total over £1,000). *Penny Ogle*, tel. 0202 624034 (Dorset).

Twin Cycle Rack for Talbot Express (Rambler, Harmony or similar).

Simple bolt-on rear step fitting - no body holes required. Tailboard attached including fully electrified Lucas rear lights, reflectors, indicator lights and British Standard Jack plug to van. Tailboard includes space for number plate. £150.

Optimas Mini 601 Catalytic Butane Heater, as new. Cost £92 - will accept £50.

Porta-Potti 145 including box surround for passenger seat, as new (ex V.W. "Moonraker") - £25

Tom Nunn has these at 16 Greenwich Drive North, Kingsway, Derby, DE3 4AB; telephone 0332 46992.

[Another donation received - thanks very much. Ed.]

1985 CX1000 GTL 2 litre petrol, 5 speed gearbox, 36,500 miles, excellent condition. Equipment includes Toilet/Shower, Water heater, Space heater, Twin battery and charger, Double bed, Alarm, Security locks, TV, Side awning and more. £8,250. *David Read*, 50 Gomer Lane, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hants., PO12 2SA. Telephone 0705 528446.

Ford Flair, 1988, 'E' Reg, 2.0 litre petrol, 16,500 miles, immaculate condition. 2/4 berth, Mains Hook-up, 2nd battery, H & C water, 3-way fridge, Propex heating, stereo radio/cassette, Alarm FSH. £14,000. Telephone *(Mrs) Suzanne Steddy* on 0222 598084 (EVENINGS ONLY please) or write to her at 1, Springfield Close, Wenvoe, Cardiff, CF5 6DA.

[Yet another donation - many thanks. Ed.]

- 1) Awning, free-standing, "Sombbrero", new & unused.
- 2) Dahon folding bike, Red, new & unused (still wrapped).
- 3) Nikkal colour T.V. 10 inch, remote control, new & unused.

Miss E.M. Lund of 1 Nevill Court, Town Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 6HZ says that she is unable to use them because of an injury and will accept any sensible offer. I have no telephone number as she is a relatively new member and, so far, I haven't "caught up". Also I apologise for the formality of "Miss Lund" but again, I have no indication of another name. Sorry!

Set of Isovolet quilted internal cab insulation pads for the old style Talbot cab windows. £40 o.n.o. from *Nell C.Rogers* on 0325 374 540 or write to him at Roros, 3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough-St-John, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL11 7TT.

Stainless Steel Rear Bumper for Ford Legend 1990. £40. *Dave Ellis* on 0633 862 558, or 25 Thornhill Road, Upper Cwmbran, Gwent, NP44 5TF.

And now, as they say, for something a little bit different from the normal run of the mill things. Our members are nothing if not original in their needs - as you will see!

WANTED

Original Crockery from early Leyland Auto-Sleeper (1975). This has a green flower and a blue centre and was made by J & G Meakin. There is a "crest" on the back which shows "J (with a smaller G superimposed) STUDIO" and "J & G MEAKIN" underneath. The word "ENGLAND" appears alongside at right angles.

If anyone can help *Richard H. Miller* of 13 Coventry Road, Coleshill, Birmingham, B46 3BB will be very pleased to hear from you. You can also reach him by telephoning 0675 462159.

He and *Joan* already have the original set but would like to obtain a few more cups and plates.

Simon Bocoock of West Lawn, 43 The Moors, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2AH, telephone 08675 4096, has written to ask if anyone has a VW for sale. The required specification is as follows:

VHT or Trident Hi-Top. Must have AUTOMATIC gearbox; 2.1 litre fuel-injection engine preferred; Swivel Seats for driver and passenger; Warm Air heating system; Zig unit; Mains electric hook-up; Flyscreens; Sliding windows in Hi Top; Waste tank; Second battery; Awning or Annexe tent. The vehicle should be low mileage with service records and known history. Careful previous use is more important than the Registration Letter; one of the 'E' reg VHT models would do as well as an 'F' or 'G' Trident.

The current open market price will be offered in February 1992

for the best vehicle on offer - privately or through a Dealer. No part exchange.

In his letter accompanying this request Simon says that he will be happy to join the Club but without an A/S he cannot. So if anyone is thinking of changing up to a T4 or other van and has a suitable model to dispose of this might be the answer.

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*Barbara & I would like to express our gratitude to those who have sent letters and cards thanking us for our efforts during my time in office as Rally Co-ordinator.

We can only say thank you all for your appreciation. It is nice to know that people care. But really it is all those members who have come forward to marshal rallies who have made things possible. The thanks are really due to them.

Jeff Worley.

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You may recall that in Newsletter 39 I mentioned that I was experimenting with a tin alloy catalyst gadget claimed to allow any car to run on unleaded fuel. *David Perry* now advises me that the magazine "Car and Car Conversions" and the MG Owners' Club refuse to accept advertisements for this type of product. In addition it appears that the directors of a firm distributing such a thing are due to appear in court in a case brought by Wolverhampton Trading Standards.

David continues:

"The evidence currently available is as follows:

i) the oil companies, notably Shell and Esso, have stated that the solubility of tin alloys in petrol is so low that an insignificant quantity of these compounds is passed to the engine and that no measurable catalytic effect on the petrol can be found.

ii) tests by the motor manufacturers, notably Rover Group, have led them to issue service bulletins to their dealers warning in no uncertain terms about the apparent lack of benefit from these products.

iii) tests such as that carried out by Oseill Engineering in conjunction with the magazine "Car and Car Conversions"

mentioned above have shown that when the vehicle is driven in a manner where the cushioning effect of lead is needed (i.e. sustained motorway driving or use of high engine speeds) these products do not appear to meet their claims.

Personal experience with my previous A/S, a 1985 Tallman, showed that valve seat wear of approximately 10 thou. occurred in only 6,000 miles use of unleaded petrol. This despite assurances by both Peugeot-Talbot and Esso Research Centre that my vehicle was suitable for use on unleaded petrol. Needless to say I immediately returned to using leaded petrol! My advice to anyone running a Talbot/Fiat A/S on unleaded petrol is to keep a very close note on the tappet rattle which is so characteristic of these 'vans; if the engine should become noticeably quieter then you may have valve seat recession and you should **immediately** have the valve clearances reset and return to leaded petrol. Failure to do so may leave you with a frightening bill for a new cylinder head.'

Thank you, *David*, for passing on this information. I must confess that I am rather surprised that the petrol people and the manufacturers seem to be capable of advising that vehicles can be run on unleaded fuel, and the Government keep harping on the benefits, when it appears from what you have said that this is not necessarily the case. I would also have thought that if lead is harmful and unleaded fuel may damage the engine somebody would have produced a valid method of replacing the lead content with something that will properly take its place, either in the petrol itself or as an additive. As you seem to be following the matter fairly closely, *David*, perhaps you will write again when the result of the court case is known and if there is any other follow-up in the matter.

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Chairman's Chat

You will know from the outline Rally List sent out in December just how big a programme we have for 1992, thanks to the untiring efforts of *Jeff Worley* and his band of volunteer Marshals. More details of specific events will be included each month with the Newsletter as the dates draw near and any specific queries relating to those rallies should be addressed to *Jeff* or the Marshal concerned; all very much as usual. What is not quite as much as usual is the form our **TWO** National Rallies are going to take this year (and, if successful, the next few years).

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

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 advise the site of about how many will be coming and to have everything prepared. So the motto is **EARLY BOOKING PLEASE, IF POSSIBLE!**

28th February-1st March. 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.

Marshal: Brenda & Malcolm Edwards, 3f, Pine Grove, Lighthouse Road, Newport, Gwent, NP1 9TA. Tel: 0633 817328.

Directions: 2 miles S.W. of Newport. Follow signs for Tedegar House & Park from M.4 (Jnc.28) or A.48 Cardiff Road.

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

13th-15th March. FELL END Caravan Park, Cumbria. Fees: *TO BE ADVISED*. Rally Fee £1.50.

Electricity and Satellite T.V. prices *TO BE ADVISED* - NOT to be sent with site fees as these are payable direct.

Marshals: Daley & George Wane, 2 Plantation Avenue, Arncliffe, Cumbria, LA5 0HT. Tel: 0524 761657.

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. 0.5 mile past Kings Arms, Hale turn right at International Caravan sign. Follow signs for Fell End C.P.

This site caters for early rallies with hard standings and electricity available for all pitches. There is a hall for social activities. Meals are available, please indicate if fish & chips required on FRIDAY night. Daley & George are planning an outstanding rally to start the season.

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

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

2

Marshals: Sandra & Bernie Wisely, 15, Stoot 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 and early break very welcome. This concession site fee is extended to members for days before and after this weekend. Excellent, reasonably price 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.

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

Full details to follow.

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 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!

.....
BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address.....
.....
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Telephone No:.....

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

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

Address.....
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Telephone No:.....

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

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

Address.....
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Telephone No:.....

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

Name..... Tel.No:.....

The **National Rally and Annual General Meeting** at Wicksteed Park, Kettering over the weekend of 24/26 April will be an exclusively Club affair; there will be no commercial aspect at all, not even the Auto-Sleepers' Stores Shop! (The Shop will be present at the other National Rally - more later!)

At Kettering (Wicksteed Park is on the West side of the A.6 on the Southern outskirts of the town) Friday will be the arrival day as usual with the Welcome Party in the Grand Pavillion. We have decided that since so many members don't drink wine, or alcohol in any form, we will not try to guess what free drinks to offer but to concentrate our resources on a supply of rather nice sandwiches. Hard and soft drinks, including tea and coffee, will be available at two bars. Background music will be provided by the Gordon Meadows Trio, Keyboard, Bass and Drums and the emphasis will be on Background - we want to be able to hear ourselves speak above it!

On Saturday morning the Club Office and Club Shop will be open in rooms leading off the Grand Pavillion (also open) and Committee members will be scattered about ready for button-holing if they don't see you coming! Since the town centre is only a short walk away we expect many people to take a stroll to see what one of the East Midlands leather centres has to offer (info in your rally pack). At lunchtime soup and sandwiches will be available in the G.P. if ordered in advance.

The afternoon will be taken up with the AGM. Of the six Committee members who are due to retire at the end of their two-year term, five have expressed a willingness to stand for re-election. *Peter Fisher*, our current Secretary, has found that, being a member of one of the emergency services, the weekends he has free to attend rallies and meetings are few and far between so he wishes to stand down. Fortunately I have been approached by *Carol Bowler*, one of our younger members, who is keen to join the Committee and would be prepared to take on the Secretary's duties, if elected. The formal business will be followed by the popular Open Forum session. This will conclude the official business and we can go on to enjoy the highlight of the year,

The ANNUAL DINNER

This will be no snack-on-your-lap but a genuine four-course meal with full waitress service and sizzling hot turkey carved

before your very eyes. Bring a healthy appetite 'cos they aim to serve 6 to 8 ounces of meat to each of us! At the special price we have been able to negotiate we think we're on to a bargain, but don't tell the management. The keynote will be "informality"; sit where you like, preferably next to someone you've never met before (if you can find one) so that you can get to know them. After the meal, the Raffle will keep you in your seat (unless you beat the system and win a prize) and then we have a couple of hours of Disco tailored to our wishes and easy on the eardrums. Yes, of course there's a dance floor.

On Sunday morning we will have the customary Salvation Army service followed by coffee and farewells.

Please note particularly that, because Wicksteed Park is not a caravan site but a leisure complex there are **NO** electric hook-ups. There are, of course, adequate toilet facilities both outside the Grand Pavillion and within it, plus fresh water taps, waste disposal points and a chemical closet emptying point. Hopefully we will be blessed with reasonably warm weather at the end of April. Also we **cannot accept arrivals before Noon on Friday**. If your journey time proves shorter than you anticipated please park up somewhere so that you can retime your arrival; we **MUST NOT** obstruct the busy A.6 by forming a queue of motor caravans up to the park entrance - the local constabulary are very hot on this!

Your Committee feels confident that the idea of an Annual Dinner as the highlight of a social-cum-business weekend will prove to be a great success but only you can make it happen! A booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter and we look forward to seeing you there. Anyone volunteering to do a stint of marshalling, selling raffle tickets or regalia will be welcomed with open arms!

I have been giving some thought to *Ian Ford's* question about preparing a van for use throughout the winter and have

decided that the most serious problem to be faced in winter is the lack of traction on soft ground and slushy roads. The tyres fitted as initial equipment are suitable for road use - after all delivery vans are mostly used on roads - but they perform pretty poorly on a wet field. There are many varieties of knobby tyres available. I have used Gislaved M & S (Mud & Slush?) tyres on the driving wheels and found them a great help. I am now looking at others and thinking of doing what many Scandinavians do, buy two new wheels to have them fitted so that I just change wheels with a change of use or season. Expensive initially, a pair of 5J wheels for a Talbot setting you back £90.60 or thereabouts, plus tyres, plus valves, plus balancing, plus VAT! Why consider the extra expense? Well, tyres built to give maximum traction sacrifice the higher mileage given by road tyres; they can also be a little noisy and make the steering slightly heavier on front wheel drive vehicles. Having improved the traction to get you there and, hopefully, back again, improve the interior comfort on site by fitting a fully insulated Silver Screen over the windscreen and cab windows. The difference it makes is worth every penny it'll cost you.

Time presses, *Harry* wants this yesterday and he has all the rest of the news so I'll sign off and get on with the six other things I promised to do at the last Committee meeting!

Phil Daley."

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PITCH MARKERS

"The January N/L referred to these costing £25. Strewth! Mine has been in use for several years and I made it from a piece of thin-ish ply about 12" x 4" and two pieces of 1/4" dowel fixed to the back with tacks and glue so that they project about 3" from the bottom. These are for sticking it in the ground. Paint the whole thing with white gloss (top coat and undercoat). When dry, draw your letters onto black

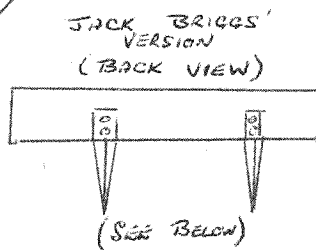
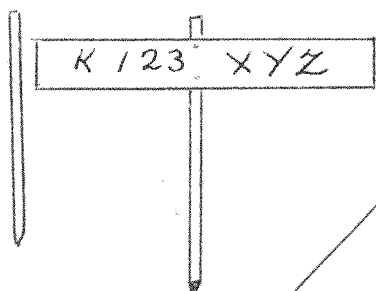
Fablon, cut them out and stick onto your sign. Cutting them from Fablon is easier than it sounds because the pencil marks show up a treat. Use a model knife, razor blade or even scissors to cut them out and PRESTO! One sign costing less than a pint of beer. Have any wording you like on it, mine just says "RESERVED" but you could have your name, or "KEEP OFF OR ILL THUMP YOU" etc.

Pat Johnson'.

And following that:

"My wife and I are relatively new members (as you will gather from our membership number). I was surprised to see mention of markers at £25. I enclose a sketch [reproduced below, Ed.] of our own marker which has been used for years and can be made from odd bits off the scrap heap! If you change your van you just repaint the number. The extra steel rod is very desirable when you need to make a hole in hard ground - even partial hard-standing.

Tom Nunn'.



As *Tom's* number has four figures in it he is a very recent joiner but is welcome to the fold, especially when he brings bright ideas like that.

Still on the same subject:

"As a very recent convert to motorcaravanning after years of towing I solved the problem in what I thought was a very simple manner. Before parting with the last tourer in part exchange for the "Harmony" I detached the number plate from the rear. It was

a simple yellow reflective plate from Halfords with black self-adhesive letters and numbers which were readily removable. The plate itself cleaned up easily with white sprit and new letters and numbers cost about 20p each.

To turn the plate into a pitch marker I attached two metal awning pegs of the angular variety (which I already had) by means of self-tapping screws (nuts & bolts would do just as well). The result is a plainly visible free-standing marker for under £1.50. It travels very conveniently in the upper storage channel behind the cylindrical table support.

Jack Briggs.

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Bill Stringer has written to propose that the Newsletter should find space for "D.I.Y - Hints and Tips" He says "As the Club now has in excess of 1,000 members throughout the country there must surely be a lot of enthusiastic D.I.Y'ers amongst them, myself included, who enjoy 'tinkering' with their pride and joy and feel that they would like to pass on to other enthusiasts the benefit of their expertise! Through what better channel could this be achieved than the pages of the A.S.O.C. Newsletter? What about sketches, where appropriate? I can think of lots of 'mods' that I have carried out on my V.W.Trident (with due respect to Willersey) many of which have been 'cribbed' during chats at the shows.

To open the proceedings - for the princely sum of (currently) 99p Halfords can provide a thin rubber floor mat approx 21" x 14". For those of us like *Audrey* and me who love to eat 'indoors' these make excellent non-skid surfaces on which to place plates, etc. whilst dining at the table or working at the kitchen sink. When not in use they take up minimal space laid flat in a convenient cupboard. (Those who are used to dining at the Savoy or similar, please ignore this suggestion!)

All I can say, *Bill*, is that you haven't been reading your N/L completely because we have had several items of D.I.Y. previously. And as you can see above I am only too pleased to include any suggestions which come along and which do NOT involve major surgery to the vehicle. You will all have read the disclaimer notice (I hope) because we cannot take any responsibility for suggestions which are printed - we put them into print in the hope that they will be of interest but cannot, of

try them all out. So if there are others who share such tastes and wish to send in details - please do - with sketches too! If I cannot use the sketch as it stands I shall do my best to re-draw it in a suitable way for printing.

Bill mentioned the recipes which have been printed. None have been forthcoming recently so I am beginning to think that you all dine at the Savoy - or the Happy Eater - or maybe just the local hostelry!

Bill included another request. One of our members has done him a favour but *Bill* does not have a surname, address or phone number so cannot say "Thank you". The request is for me to say "Please, Uncle Ben from Yorkshire (?) with a blue V.W. Auto-Sleeper, will you contact *Bill Stringer* on 0441 284924". You will (or should) know who you are!

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Two questions for you. (1) Are you enjoying reading this Newsletter? (2) Have you renewed your Membership of A.S.O.C? If the answer to both is "Yes" then there is nothing further to say.

But if you haven't renewed yet then I'm afraid that this is the last Newsletter you will receive. So please make sure you have renewed. And if you pay by standing order on your bank, have you sent your Renewal Form back to *Sheila Hammell*? These forms do help the Club along, if only to ensure that we have your address correctly recorded as well as your telephone number and van details. As you know, membership is only open to **current** owners of A/S built or converted vehicles and not to other makes. One or two people have sent in application forms before now asking to join although they own other types of vans. So we do need to know what your van is.

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RALLY REPORTS

*Abbey Wood once again was a most enjoyable weekend. *Daphne & John (Normandale)* ran it with the minimum of fuss (or so it seemed) and the maximum of kindness. Guess who from the safety of the back seat as we drove along the M.11 announced that she had forgotten the electric hook-up lead! There we were, no lead, but a super new fan heater, kettle, etc., - the other two didn't say too much and I sat in distress so great that I didn't even enjoy the Dartford road bridge. But, joy of joy, dear, kind,

efficient *John* had a spare lead to lend us so I was forgiven.

The weekend followed the usual pattern. Get-togethers on Friday and Saturday evenings with a quiz (3 girls + *Jean & Matthew Boyd* did quite well - thanks to *Matthew* I am told). I expect you have heard that *Jackie & Arthur (Claxton)* have been "sweet-talked" (bullied? or possibly bribed?) into running the rally next year which is excellent news.

Mary Colling."

Mary added that she likes the new style of print in the Newsletter (and several others have commented favourably too) and said she was encouraged to find that *Jenny and Peter Berry* took a day or two off from camping to sleep indoors. With three in the van she thinks it is a good idea - especially in wet weather!

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"I am sorry that my natural lethargy has prevented me from writing sooner than this to give my strong support to some of the views expressed in *Pat Johnson's* letter. I too am heartily sick of the tedious and irrelevant details given in some correspondents accounts of their touring exploits. Unlike *Pat* however I welcome useful comments on foreign as well as U.K. travelling.

I also find the Rally Reports something of a waste of space. Those who attend the rally already know all about it; very few of those who did not attend have, I suspect, little interest in reading how some managed to find the site and what went on once they had arrived! In fact I wonder if the Newsletter (and the Club?) does not give too much prominence to rallies. There are some members out here who are not particularly rally minded - but, more to the point, how many Auto Sleeper owners are discouraged from joining the Club because of the apparent emphasis the Newsletter gives to rallying?

To my mind the Newsletter should be primarily a source of information and advice; the most useful features, not necessarily in order of importance are:

- 1 News from the factory (new models, modifications etc.).
- 2 experience with different A/S models (fuel consumption, engine performance, tyre pressures etc.),

- 3 problems encountered (and solutions if possible).
- 4 D.I.Y. modifications
- 5 touring information (routes, ferry crossings, sites good and bad, eating places, etc.).
- 6 Items for sale and wanted.

In spite of what might seem a lot of criticism I am happily renewing my membership for 1992!

Jack Dawson.

P.S. The January Newsletter, just received, seems to have anticipated some of my comments - although I could have managed without the report of the Christmas Rally."

Many thanks, *Jack*, for your comments and criticism without which the Newsletter could not develop into what the Members want. As you will appreciate, I hope, I don't write the thing but merely edit it. I can only insert what is sent in for publication and if this includes quite a lot of rally news and reports then so be it. As a Club we can hardly expect the Orchard to let us in on the latest details of their new models before the general release. And the technical stuff - engine performance, tyre pressures etc. - would bore many people. *Bob Measom* is doing something on fuel consumption but with limited response as you will have read. You refer to your natural lethargy - perhaps this extends to many other Members too - which is why only the people who tour abroad and/or rally are the ones who write in! But if you, or anyone else, have any items which will interest others please bestir yourselves and let me have them.

-----ooOoo-----

Thanks, as ever, to our indefatigable Packers and Folders: the team of *Marjorie Hulme and Eileen Matthews with Sylvia and Don Gale* again did their stuff which is why you are reading this!

-----ooOoo-----

We have heard that *Doris Mitchell* had a serious operation last year and sincerely hope that she is now feeling much better.

-----ooOoo-----

Following our entry into "Naming the Vans" I have been asked

if a Turbo-Diesel Talbot should be known as a "Turbot"?

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Whilst at the Orchard recently the *Phil Daley* was handed a walking stick which someone had left a while ago. [No, it isn't mine! Ed.] The stick has an animal head handle which is well worn. The owner can recover it by telephoning *Phil* on 021 706 1816 or write to him at 46 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 8BO.

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It just goes to show how varied are our members' interests. We now have had two letters which complain a bit about the touring and rally reports which have taken up the space over recent times. Then, just as I was getting this lot to bed, a note arrived at the foot of the renewal form which *Margaret & Bob Cleaver* sent in to *Shella* which said that they "are unable to attend rallies as we work for the National Trust and the weekends are our busiest times, but we look forward to the arrival of the Newsletter every month and enjoy reading about other peoples experiences." As I've said before (and as *Phil* said before that too) the Newsletter can only contain what YOU send in. And the more varied that it is, the better I like it! So if you have any thoughts, ideas, suggestions etc. about the contents please drop me a line or write an article about whatever it is that "turns you on" (or "gets your goat")

Just a bit of space now to insert a last-minute item which should have appeared in the "For Sale" section earlier on.

FOR SALE

Silver Screen, faced in Corfu White. Suitable for Rhapsody/Rambler. Only used a few times. £50. Please ring *Doug Vaughan* on 0495 223 325 or write to him at 8 Parklands, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1HU.

The reason for this insertion is because he was away from home since Christmas and any enquiry could have been missed. Thanks, *Doug* for your contribution which is, of course, gratefully received although not required. And NO, that isn't the reason why this got into the Newsletter on the last-but-one page. The real reason is because things got a bit out of hand with my removal exercise and this is being done at the very last minute.

And a further item of "Stop Press" for for the more pedantic among you "Stop tapping at the keyboard for a moment and listen to these words of wisdom.7

In this dynamic Club of ours, where everything is happening all the time, there has been a change of duties. As from NOW (this very moment indeed) will all Rally Marshals please note that the Rally Plaques should be ordered from

Mrs. Heather Tidbury
26, Ferry Close,
Radley,
Abingdon,
Oxon., OX14 3AN.

Her telephone number is 0235 525 730 and she will be pleased to discuss the designs of the plaques with you.

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And that's that, at last, for this month. See you!

Your Editor

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