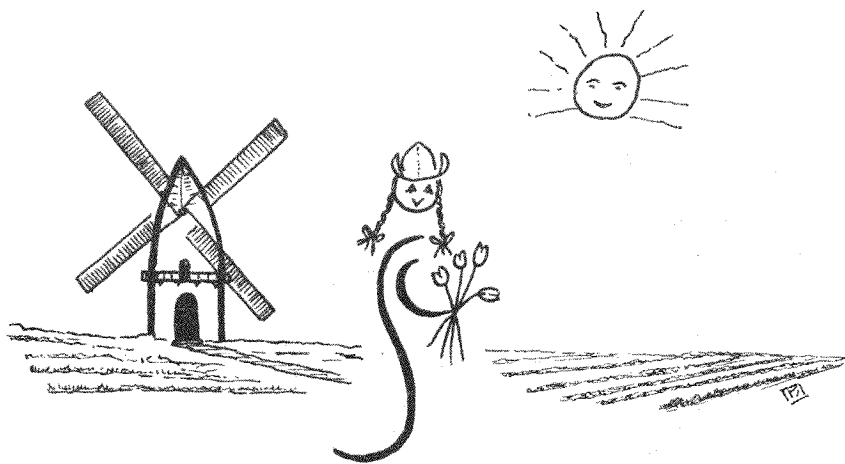


**AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB**



NEWSLETTER 44

MAY 1992

Hello.

First of all let me get the "sorry" out. Sorry about the mess-up I made about the Ice Show. Of course it is in connection with the rally up near Blackpool. It would be much too far for a coach trip from Cambridge! The problem was (excuses, excuses!) that I got the message just as I was printing the master copy of the Newsletter so had to work fast to amend the details. And of course, I got the date right but got the wrong rally. You can understand why I have to say that the 16th of each month WILL be the last day on which I can accept anything to appear in the following month's Newsletter. That will give me enough time to sort my brain out before the fingers hit the keyboard!

Reminder

Whilst on the subject of items for the Newsletter don't forget that anything for the JULY 1992 Newsletter MUST be sent to *Phil Daley* at 46 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands. B92 8BQ because he is going to produce that issue. I shall be otherwise occupied around the press time - I've got an appointment on June 18th - now, let me see, what have I got to do? I know I've got to meet *Sheila* somewhere, but where was it? Never mind, I'm sure I shall remember in time!!

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Memories

A very recently joined Member, *John Read*, sent an accompanying letter which made mention of his interest in how the Club had grown in such a short time. He went on to say that he is now the proud owner of a new Harmony but "I must admit that I parted with our trusty VW with a certain sense of sadness, though! Strange, isn't it, how we motorcaravanners get so attached to our vans? I suppose unlike a car we have such happy memories of weekends and holidays here and abroad when we spend so much time living in our vans that this becomes inevitable."

I agree, *John*, that it is strange in some ways. Over the years I have had, and parted with, a number of vans and have felt the same pangs each time and we are just going through the problem yet again. It is the loss of a faithful friend and servant which hurts although each time the change has been for the better. But if you come along to some of the Club rallies you will meet Members who have not parted with their friends, indeed some of the older vans are in excellent, well-loved condition and it is a treat to see them.

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Older Vans

We had a committee meeting at The Orchard on March 21st and while enjoying a sandwich lunch afterwards *Charles Trevelyan* and I got talking about the older Auto-Sleepers. As you know the

Company started some 30 years ago so that would make it about 1960. I don't suppose that anyone has got a van as old as that now although I still retain one (another make, I'm afraid) which was built in 1969. But which of our Members owns the oldest A/S? It is difficult to tell from the registration numbers. We can, with some reservations, judge the age by the suffix letter (anything with a single prefix letter is NOO!) but with the rise in popularity of "Cherished Numbers" we can't really tell. So does anybody feel that they may have the oldest vehicle in the Club? Please let me know.

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While we were at the factory *Sheila and I* had a peep at our new Clubman GL which had just about started its journey along the production sequence. I didn't use "production line" deliberately because the works is unlike any of the big car makers where a "bit" starts at one end of the line and a car comes off the other end. The work at Willersey is rather more, what shall I call it, personalised. The vehicle stays still for a longer period and the builders move to, round, into, out of, under and over it with the bits and pieces to be added. "Our" van looked a bit barren at that moment - just a body added to the chassis/cab - not even the back of the cab cut out! And holes everywhere - in the roof (for rooflights) the sides (for all the bits which go in the sides) - it really would be draughty. But in about 196 hours time (that's the time it takes to build one, I understand) a beautiful, new, shiny, van will be sent to the dealers and we shall then have to raid the piggy bank for the ackers! So if you hear me singing in your street please don't throw water - cash, cheques or credit cards accepted! I'm singing my heart out now because we've been told that the van is almost ready for collection so on 11th April 1992 we shall be off to get it. See how early I have to get the Newsletter ready?

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Help!

A letter arrived from *Roy Raeburn* with a plea which I hope someone can answer.

"Can any Member please advise me of a tyre pressure gauge which is compatible with the valve extensions found on the Auto-Sleeper Trident (T4)? The gauge I have at present has an insufficiently long probe to activate the valve."

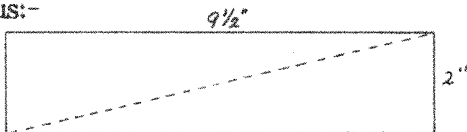
I've never come across this problem but I might with the new van. Generally, if I haven't been able to use the gauge on the extensions I've taken the easy way out, removed the wheel trims and the extensions and tried it from there. But somebody must know better!

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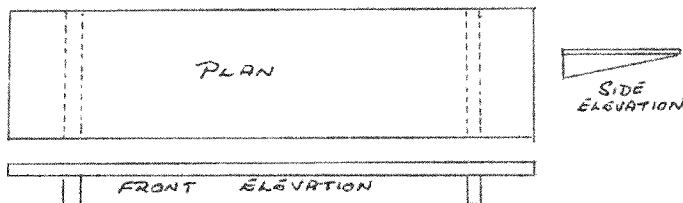
Talbot Floors

"Reference *Reg Stanley's* problem on page 16 of the April N/L, the answer is to make a platform to level up the sloping floor on the driver's side as follows:

- (1) Obtain a piece of planed timber $9\frac{1}{2}$ " long; 2" wide and 1" thick and saw it into two wedges, corner to corner, as shown by the dotted line, thus:-



- (2) A piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick plywood 17 " long by $9\frac{1}{2}$ " wide to be glued or screwed to the two wedges which should be located about one inch from each end of the underside of the plywood:-



- (3) A strip of similar plywood 17 " by $2\frac{1}{4}$ " glued or screwed across the front of the wedge ends and edge of footboard will ensure rigidity.
- (4) Affix to underside of each wedge a length of self-adhesive Hook Velcro and also tack each end for added security.

Finally, cover footboard and front strip with a remnant of carpet which can be tacked on, or secured with small screws and screwcups in each corner for a better looking finish.

Position the platform on the carpeted slope of the van floor immediately in front of the pedals, ensuring that none of them foul the front edge of the platform when fully depressed. With the Velcro making contact on the van carpet the platform should stay firmly positioned in use, whilst it can also be lifted and removed if and when required.

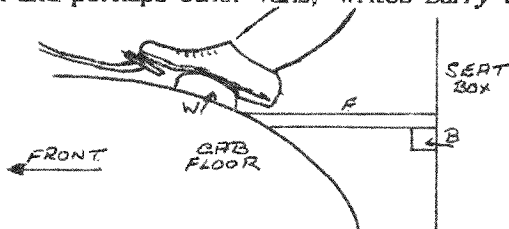
By levelling the floor in this manner I am now able to drive my 1989 Talbot Rambler like a car and the modification has certainly helped me considerably to alleviate a problem which developed in my left ankle and leg. If *Reg* or any other member needs further help on this they are welcome to contact me. Of course, adoption

of this modification is entirely at the adopters own risk and responsibility and I accept no liability whatsoever for any consequences.

Fred Cleal.*

If you need to talk to *Fred* his telephone number is 0733 234 915 and he lives in Peterborough. This idea seems a good one and, like any others we print, is subject to the usual disclaimer which is always shown at the end of the Newsletter.

"This is an old chestnut, as regular readers of MMM will know. The common solution is to fit a false floor in front of each front seat on the same level as the central piece already fitted in the Talisman and perhaps other vans," writes *Barry Crawshaw*.



At its rear edge, each floor piece (F) rests on a bearer (B) fitted to the front of the seat box. (F) is screwed to (B). At the forward edge (F) rests on the cab floor without the need for fixing. (F) can be covered with the same carpet as the rest of the cab. This, in itself, does not give a foot position for the throttle pedal which suits everyone.

I use a wood block (W) just in front of (F). (W) is kept in place by a piece of male-type Velcro stuck on its underside. This method of fixing was originally used to allow for easy removal and alteration of the block but it works well and has now been permanent for five years.

Notice that the block is placed to fit in the instep of a shoe. By rocking the foot very slightly forward or back, just the right amount of weight can be put on the pedal while leaving the ankle relaxed. This is a great help on long journeys and eliminates the stiff ankle of which many complain.

And still on the same subject, to start with anyway:

I have a 1991 Talbot Harmony, tried a block of wood to alter the throttle pedal position, but regarded it too dangerous. So when I had a 300 mile round trip to cover in one day, I tried a thick cushion to sit on which I found very satisfactory and had no aches

at all.

Reading on through the April N/L *Pat Finch* had brake and carburettor problems. Regarding the VV carb., yes it was a poor model but I would have thought that new diaphragms would have cured the erratic slow running etc. And if my brake pedal went to the floor on full lock only I would check the front wheel bearings for adjustment. If there is too much free movement it will allow the brake discs to tilt and this will push the brake caliper pistons back in and, until the pedal is pumped, there will be no brakes.

Don Maling ."

Thanks, everyone, for some interesting points. It makes me wonder just what the vehicle "designers" (if you'll pardon the expression) actually do to earn their bread and butter. If the customers find these faults in normal running why didn't the chassis manufacturers find them first? Surely they drove a prototype chassis at some time and took it round tight corners, forwards and backwards, and used the brakes. Or am I being naive?

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Chairman's Chat

By the time this reaches you the Club will have celebrated its third birthday; we will have a new Committee and some new Officers, including a new Chairman, so this will be my last chance to do a bit of tidying up.

Peterborough: To those who are going to the MMM rally and don't know who will be there to marshal for the Club, don't worry! Just book, stating "ASOC" on the form and *Jeff (Warley)* assures me that everything will be alright on the night, a Marshal will be there. (I hope he/she will have the Club banner, too.)

Club & Company Rally: Stratford-on-Avon, 31st July-2nd August. The entertainment is being organised by the Company (Chief Whip-Cracker *Neville Jeff's*), the Barbecue Fayre on Saturday is being generously sponsored by Peugeot Talbot and the Club is attending to the administration. With any luck fuller details will be enclosed with this Newsletter so I'll just say I hope the enthusiasm and teamwork of the organisers will be matched by a record turnout of members. Just think how you would feel if we had 400 Auto-Sleepers all together and you weren't there!

Ferries: *Pete Fisher* asks me to point out that applications for the special Club discounts offered by Sealink Stena and by Sally Line should be made direct to him so that he can issue a form confirming that you are a member. This task will be passed to the new Committee shortly.

Moor View Touring Caravan and Camping Park near Modbury, South Devon have agreed to give members £1.00 per night discount on production of a current membership card - hence the free distribution of their leaflets. It may become a Motor Caravans Only site. Let us know what you think of it.

This is my last "Chat" but don't breathe too deep a sigh of relief. There'll be other forms of contribution from me, one of which I hope will meet a long-felt want.

Phil Daley ."

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Cycle Rack to fit Rambler or any Talbot, bolted to chassis, easily removed or folded flat. Custom made. Holds 2 cycles or one small motor-cycle. Price £110.00.

Telephone *Clare or John Somerville* on 0935 813 310 or write to them at Tabard Cottage, South Street, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 3LX.

'G' Reg Talisman GL; diesel, 4,500 miles only; stainless steel rear bumper; side awning. Very careful non-smoking owners. £19,250.00 ono.

Michael Bowker, of 17 Bramble Ridge, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4SQ has this available and you can telephone him on 07464 529 (day) or 0746 764 637 (evenings)

~~Silver Screen for Bedford CF2 - £25.00.~~ Haynes Workshop Manual for CF2 - £2.00. Porta-Potti 165 very good condition - £25.00. All available because we have changed our van. Harry Henthorne, address and telephone number as shown on back page.

Dear Harry,

French Loos

I do so thank *Alan Wheeler* (April) for his hints on the use of Loos, Ancient and Modern and especially on the mechanics of the "Squat".

I eagerly await your report that *Alan* has ripped out the perfectly good W.C. Suite no doubt present in his home and has installed a good secondhand (40 years old and chipped to blazes) French version.

Chacun a son gout, but I fancy he's arguing that the first Auto-Sleeper was superior to the latest model!

Your reply by 16th May, please, *Alan* as having followed your instructions on 'How to Squat' I now find that you omitted the more important bit 'How to Un-squat'. Being carried into the Polling Station in a Sedan chair caused considerable merriment and I used to enjoy stretching out in bed.

Finally, I would recommend everyone to open the door of French Loos before pulling the chain - it is not without good reason that these antiquities, apparently salvaged from the Ark, are also known as 'The Flush and Rush'!

Yours,

Michael Mawer."

P.S. I do hope our paths cross as I'd like to buy *Alan* a pint!"

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And from the same source came the following which I think is well worth printing:-

Solutions

Ford Flair

Further to *Pat Finch's* letter (April N/L) my specialist tuner (mentioned in the January issue) thoroughly recommended an Italian Dellorto Carburettor if it proved necessary to replace the VV job. It would then have cost £85 plus fitting but in my case has proved un-necessary.

Whilst under Warranty the *Tránsit* developed a serious whine, which I judged to be in the gearbox; also, under entirely reasonable braking the front end shuddered alarmingly. Both faults were completely unacceptable.

There being no sign of real life from the Agent's Foreman, I

asked in writing for attention from the Area Service Engineer, who is a trouble-shooter visiting all Ford Agents on a regular basis.

He identified the whine as from the back axle and stated that both faults would be dealt with free of charge.

Within a month of my letter a complete new rear axle was fitted, together with new front hubs, discs and pads, obviously at great expense to Ford. That cured the whine, but after most careful driving the shudder recurred; the local Service Manager was then entitled to deal with the matter and again new discs and pads were fitted. Some 10,000 miles later all is well and the Ford parts guarantee should take care of the future.

I can only thank Ford for the complete lack of argument and the total integrity displayed, at a time when other makers are reported to fall by the wayside. And I can only recommend *Pat*, in or out of Warranty, to follow suit as I'm quite sure Ford wish their customers to be satisfied.

Michael Mawer."

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Talbots & Unleaded Fuel

Dear Harry,

I enclose a copy of a FAX I have sent today to Mr/Ms Mossop of Peugeot Talbot following your publication of a reply to *Tom Nunn's* letter. I am very concerned that Mr/Ms Mossop has jumped to incorrect conclusions concerning my previous Auto-Sleeper, and that his/her statements may mislead the unwary. I am particularly concerned that the phrase "your Talbot Express" should not be taken to mean "ALL Talbot Express's". I will keep you informed when Mr/Ms Mossop replies.

In response to your request following publication of my letter in Newsletter 41 I can add the following information (with acknowledgement to the MG Owners Club secretary Roche Bentley in his editorial of their magazine "Enjoying MG" March 1992 issue).

Unleaded Conversions

Remember the Powerplus, Carbonflo debate and that we surmised that the claims made by these companies were untrue and misleading and that we recommended that members have nothing to do with these companies or the dubious products which are supposed to convert leaded fuel only cars to unleaded? The latest is that announcements were made under the insolvency act that Powerplus International Marketing Services, Powerplus Universal

Corporation Limited and Powerplus (Southern) Limited had seen liquidators appointed. Be aware though that other companies based on similar names have emerged. Carbonflo is also confusing as various companies exist with variations on the Carbonflo name and and then there's another called Fuel Cat. One of the Carbonflo companies has fallen foul of Walsall's trading standards department and we understand that the case has been committed to Crown Court. We'll keep you advised. In the meantime, have absolutely nothing to do with any conversion from leaded to unleaded fuels which involves metal tablets, discs, or even magnetic fields which some claim actually change the properties of the fuel.

I am also happy to pass on, with acknowledgements to Motorcaravan and Motorhome Monthly, the advice given in the March 1992 issue by their consultant Peter Underwood (owner of the motor caravan dealers H. C. Underwood of Bournemouth) in answer to the question "Will my A-reg Auto-Sleeper CX200 run on unleaded fuel?":

No, never and not under any circumstances should unleaded fuel be used in this engine. I would go further and recommend that using unleaded fuel is inadvisable in any of the petrol engines fitted in motorcaravan base vehicles built prior to 1986 - and especially those with a cast iron cylinder head. Without question, the lack of lubrication at the valve seat will ultimately cause excessive wear at this point, with a possible side effect of a cracked cylinder head. In the case of the CF, not only is replacement quite expensive, there are often periods of time when it is not available. Even on more modern vehicles (except those fitted with an exhaust catalyser) the occasional use of a premium grade leaded fuel is an advantage, both to the running and to the future condition of the engine.

I hope this additional information is of use and, as requested, will keep you informed of the result of the court case. Unfortunately I shall be unable to come to the rally at Kettering but will definitely be with A.S.O.C. at Peterborough.

David Perry."

The copy FAX is two pages long so I haven't reproduced it here but if anybody is specially interested I shall be happy to send a copy to them on receipt of S.A.E. Briefly, *David* said that luck should not play any part in the health of an engine, P/T should not make assumptions and that they have attempted to diagnose faults using incomplete facts. I shall be pleased to print any reply which *David* receives in due course.

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

May & June 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!**

8th-10th May. National Motorhome & Tourer Show, East of England Showground, PETERBOROUGH. Fees - normally £12.00 but special reduction for Club Members to £10.00. Booking forms will be found in magazines. Mark your form A.S.O.C. very clearly, please pay Rally Fee (£1.50) to our own marshals when you arrive.

15th-17th May. Merley Court Touring Park, Wimborne, Dorset. Fees: £3.75 per night. Electricity: £1.30 per night. Rally fee: £1.50. Marshals: Barbara & Tony Jones, 49 Wessex Way, Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 7MT. Tel: 0793 763 032. Directions: At roundabout at junction of A.31 and A.349 follow s.p. Merley Court Touring Park. Bourne-mouth and the New Forest are close at hand. Meals are available on site.

22nd-25th May. Beverley Race Course, BEVERLEY, Yorkshire. Fees £3.00 per night. Rally fee £1.50. Marshals: Vera & Brian McLean with Marion & Jim Henwood. Booking forms to Brian at 47, Westlands Road, Sproatley, Hull, Humberside, HU11 4XG. Directions: Race Course North side on A.1035 Beverley to York road 2 miles west of Beverley. Entrance at end of main stand.

29th-31st May. Highfield Farm Camping Site, Loog Road, Comberton, Cambs. Teddy Bears Rally. LIMIT 30 VANS. Fees: £3.50 per night. Electricity £1.50 per night. Rally fee £1.50. Marshals: Jean & Matthew Boyd, "Beaels", 9, Finch Road, Little Eversden, Cambridge, CB3 7HG, assisted by Angela Green, Meg Andrew & Mary Colling. Directions: Leave Cambridge on A.45/A.1303 (s.p. Bedford). Just after American cemetery (3 miles) turn left at roundabout (jnc. with A.45) and follow international caravan signs to Comberton. From west leave A.45 at Hardwick roundabout (just before American cemetery) then as above. From N or S on M.11 leave at Jnc.12 onto A.603 (s.p. Sandy). After 0.5 miles turn right onto B.1046 to Comberton. Places of interest include Cambridge (colleges), Ely (cathedral), Newmarket (horse-racing museum), Duxford (aeroplanes) and Welney (wildlife).

29th-31st May. Lytham, Nr. Blackpool, Lancs. Site on Playing Fields. Fees £3.25 per night. Rally Fee £1.50. Ice show, including coach £5.00. Marshals: Kathleen & Norman Bennon, "Holmfield Cottage", Bannister Street, Lytham, Lancs., FY8 5HQ. Tel: 0253 736 245. Directions: Leave M.55 at jnc.4 onto A.583. Turn South towards Lytham at garage, fork right at junction by school on entry to town. Site on left. On A.584 Preston-Blackpool turn right at zebra crossing in Lytham into Park Street. Site on right on outskirts of town.

Close to town centre; hardstanding available if wet. Anyone using a wheelchair is very welcome - no problem on the coach or at the ice show. ICE SHOW BOOKINGS MUST BE WITH THE BENYON'S NOT LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE RALLY because that's when the Ice Dome has to be paid. NO FOOD nor BAR arranged for Saturday night.

5th-7th June. Motor Caravan Fair, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.
Booking forms will be found in magazines - write A.S.O.C. clearly on form. Please pay Rally Fee (£1.50) to own marshals on arrival.

12th-14th June. Barnstones Camping & Caravan Park, Great Bourton, Banbury. **LIMIT 50 VANS.**
Fees: £3.50 per night. NO electric (except possibly for disabled members only). Rally fee £1.50.
Marshals: Barbara & John Cox, 73 Westmead road, Barton-under-Weedwood, Staffs., DG13 8JR.
Directions: Leave M.40 at jnc.11, s.p. Banbury. In Banbury turn right at crossroads onto A.423 s.p. Coventry. In 3 miles turn right at s.p. Great Bourton, Cropredy. Site on right is 120 yards.

19th-21st June. Brynich Caravan Park, Brecon, Powys.
Fees: £4.50 per night. Electricity: £1.25 per night, 20 points provisionally reserved. Rally fee: £1.50.
Marshals: Helen & Geoff Gray, 25 Felindre Avenue, Fescoed, Mid Glamorgan, CF35 5PD. Tel: 0655 862 423
Directions: Site is one mile east of Brecon on A.470, near junction with A.40, well signposted. A pleasant, level site with commanding views of the Brecon Beacons. Good walking country including gentle strolls along the nearby Brecon to Monmouth canal. A community hall is being reserved at Talybont-on-Uk for an American Supper on Saturday.

25th-28th June. Coombe Nurseries Touring C.P., The Race Plain, Netherhampton, Salisbury, Wilts.
Fees: £4.00 per night (covers 2 persons, 1 dog, and 2 children under 12 or one child 12-16. Extra child over 12 - 50p. Extra dog - 10p.)
Electricity: £1.20 per night. Rally fee: £1.50.
Marshals: Rosemary & Anthony Bevie, 16 Chapel River Close, Weyhill Gardens, Andover, Hants., SP10 3QC. Tel: 0264 355537.
Directions: Turn left off A.36(A.30) Salisbury - Wilton onto A.3094. In one mile follow s.p. Stratford Tony. In one mile sharp left behind racecourse stands.

26th-28th June. The Glyndwr Boating Club, Parc Lleweli, Mold Road, Denbigh, North Wales.
Fees: £4.70 per night. Rally fee: £1.50.
Marshals: Jean & Duncan Ellis, The Alamo, 6 Tudor Close, Shotton, Deeside, Clwyd, CH5 1NY.
Directions: A.543 Mold to Denbigh. Site is on left about 2 miles before Denbigh. This is a GREEN FIELD SITE. There is one toilet. Water and Chemical disposal point available. Gliding lessons may be available - contact site manager on 0745 813774.

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

RALLY SLIP

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!

RALLY SLIP

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 _____

Telephone No: _____

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

Name _____ Tel. No: _____



BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address _____

Telephone No: _____

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

Name _____ Tel. No: _____



Meanwhile, our new van is diesel - so I shan't have to worry - unless you know better!

-----ooo000ooo-----

Referring to my letter about unleaded fuel, which you published in the March Newsletter, I wrote to Peugeot/Talbot service department and asked for a reply to the following questions:

1. Would you please confirm that it can do no harm to use unleaded fuel in my 1991 Rambler, in fact, that it is officially recommended? (I enclosed chassis and engine numbers.)
2. Assuming that the engine is mechanically sound, carburation correct and ignition timing properly set, is there any advantage in using leaded, four-star petrol?
3. The writer of the article seems to feel that lead in petrol has a "cushioning" effect on valves and valve seats. Has this any basis in fact? Need I worry about "valve recession"?

Please find enclosed a photo-copy of their reply. I find it reassuring and refuse to worry any more about using unleaded fuel - I **WILL** use it!

Philip Rae. "

"It was very interesting to read about the media article that you attached to your original correspondence and, of course, as major manufacturers we are especially careful when making specific recommendations concerning the use of unleaded fuel. It is specifically impossible for us to make any technical judgement on the reader's experience but I can assure you that we are unaware of any other customer experiencing similar problems.

It would be a matter of personal preference as to whether any discernible advantages can be found by using leaded fuel over unleaded because, as you know, your engine can use either without any tuning adjustments being found necessary.

Owing to the design of the cylinder fitted to your Express it is equipped with steel valve inserts that are designed for use with unleaded fuel which will not have a detrimental effect as the media article suggests.

We do sincerely hope that this will allay any fears or pessimism concerning Talbot Express vehicles that we presume are maintained in accordance with our recommendations.

P.R. Langeveld,
Supervisor - Customer Relations (H04A).

So, where do we go from here? It does seem a case of left hand and right hand not knowing what the other is doing or saying. Should we, *dare we*, suggest that Mr/Ms Mossop and Mr/Ms Langeveld get together, preferably with the engineering team, and produce a proper reply to satisfy all users of the Talbot Express based vehicles whether old or new.

-----ooo000ooo-----

I've had a volunteer come forward to help in indexing the hints, tips etc. which have been published in the N/L from issue number 1. So we shall now be able to get things moving, but not in time for the National - perhaps for the Club and Company later on. When I have received the information I shall try to prepare an informative little booklet on the subject so that you will be able to trace anything that you want.

-----ooo000ooo-----

The start of the Rally Season - Oh! what joy,
The van's nice and clean, just like a new toy
Up the M.6 we battled against the wind
To the County of Cumbria, the site at "Fell End"
We don't need good weather to enjoy a rally
A great crowd attended, plus Tom, Dick and Harry.
A trip to the shoe factory for those on their uppers
A pleasant trip around, then back for the 'cuppas'.
Meeting with friends is always a delight
When we gathered for supper on the Friday night.
A social evening on Saturday when we met once more,
And listened to *Tom's* exploits, on his American Tour.
After coffee on Sunday, thank the *Wanes* and their
crew.
A marvellous weekend. Yes, a Jolly Good 'Do'.

This contribution was received from *Audrey Crouch* a little too late for the April issue but I thought you might like to see it now. And to keep our newer people in the picture *Tom* is our travelling friend *Tom Conway* who has just been roaming all over the North American continent with his wife and van and although *Audrey* suggests that "Tom, Dick and Harry" were present - I was NOT!

Thanks, *Audrey*, anyway - you've captured the spirit of our laid-back, do-your-own-thing type rallies.

1. In the early days of the Club it was suggested to A/S that many owners would like the opportunity to be shown round the works, similar to the Open days that Autohomes and Jack Holdsworth have each year.

May I ask the Committee to raise this request once again with A/S? I realise that it would be impractical during normal working hours as it would obviously be disruptive to production, but how about at a weekend with limited pre-booked numbers of Members shown round in small parties by a few of the working staff.

We would not expect lavish hospitality as was shown to our 1000th Member but perhaps just a "cuppa" from a vending machine at the end.

2. At the "Club & Company" rally at Stratford this year would it be of interest to Members to have a "Question and Answer" session with the Managerial and Production representatives of A/S?

I am not suggesting that A/S have their repair teams ready but I am sure that members have many questions about their vans which A/S could answer. It could even assist A/S as a form of Market Research to know what people want in their vans. For instance, A/S could answer the question which all Talisman owners ask - "Why isn't there a retractable step in the side door entrance?" A 19" step is a bit much as you get older. Many other manufacturers install retractable steps as a standard fitting.

After the comment in the January Newsletter in Chairman's Chat we may even be told how the design of the Talbot Executive came about. Was it perhaps a designer's dream, a divine inspiration or a fanciful folly?

3. Some petrol consumption figures for *Bob Meason*. These relate to my three A/S vans, all 2 litre Talbots. (I keep accurate records on all purchases of fuel.)

<u>VAN</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Litres</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>M.P.G.:</u>
High Top CXL 1000 B' Reg	11,535	2021.07	444.58	25.95
Talisman II E' Reg	11,298	2234.81	491.60	22.98
Talisman GL H' Reg - (to date)	6,157	1170.05	257.38	23.92

Barbara & Bill Clarke ."

"We have been enquiring about the insurance of the contents of our motor caravan as neither my own home contents insurance nor the van insurance cover this.

I am wondering if any other owners have any ideas where to get the contents and/or fittings of the van insured.

Tricia & Ted Pratt .

I must look into this myself. I had thought that a certain amount was covered in the van insurance. I believe that some insurance companies or brokers who advertise in the magazines do, in fact, include a certain value of contents so perhaps you should try them.

-----ooOoo-----

"Re. Fuel figures. I think it is more important to find the overall running costs of the different vehicles: service charges; life-span of brakes, clutch, tyres etc; cost of replacement parts. I believe these facts are more relevant than a mile or two either way in M.P.G. figures.

Keep an eye on ones own fuel figures though, so that any fault in the fuel system can be spotted quickly. If we were a bit more weight conscious when loading the vans we would all get better economy.

All window surrounds are prone to hold water. Legend and other Transit based vehicle owners should wind down the front door windows, pull the rubbers away from the door frames and be prepared to apply Waxoyl or similar along the metal edges, cleaning away any rust beforehand.

Are there other people out and about who suffer from allergies when living in their vans? The area around *Irene's* eyes puffs up overnight but as yet we have not found the solution. Or should I say 'Solvent' causing it, glue, foam, plastic etc.?

Irene & Alan Train .

-----ooOoo-----

I enclose a copy of a list which I produced giving immediate access to Talisman information, quantities, dimensions etc. The list is of a size which fits neatly into the plastic envelope at the rear of the driver's sun visor.

The right hand half is a check list to be examined on all occasions before driving off, exactly as an aircraft pilot goes through a check list before taking off. The list is always readily available by turning down the driver's sun visor.

It helps to prevent damage to awnings, corner steadies, "hook-ups", roof ventilators, food in fridge, etc., as well as reminding a daily check on engine "essentials" especially on long tours.

The dimensions are helpful when low bridges or limit clearances are suddenly encountered.

I have left out the actual Registration Number and VIN which appeared on the original version, for obvious reasons.

Of course, this particular sheet relates to the turbo-diesel Talisman but it will not be difficult for Members to produce similar versions for their own vans.

Hope it's of some use!

Bruce Cunningham"

The list which *Bruce* submitted is given below. It is NOT the same size as the original because of our printing arrangements but you will no doubt be able to arrange matters to suit the size available to you and also to amend the details to suit your van.

TALBOT J5 AUTO-SLEEPER GL

Regn No. ----- Veh. I/D No (VIN) -----

VAN INFORMATION

Height Overall	2.718m	8'11"
Width (Mirrors "In")	2.311m	6'11"
Length (Overall)	5.346m	17' 6 1/2"
Weight (Unladen)	2420Kg	2tons 7.6cwt
Weight (Max load)	3000Kg	3tons 1.2cwt
Load capacity	680Kg	13.4cwt
Tyres (front)	4.0Bar	58psi
Tyres (rear)	4.5Bar	66psi
Fuel capacity	70litres	15.38galls
Engine oil capacity	6litres	9.80pints

Fresh water tank	68litres	14.94galls
Waste tank	68litres	14.94galls
Cassette fresh water	15litres	3.30galls
Aqua Bowl (per fill)	100ml	
Cassette effluent	20litres	4.40galls
Aqua Kem (per 20litres)	150ml	

CHECK LIST BEFORE MOVING

Awning	Stowed
Corner steadies	Up
Mains lead	Stowed
Roof ventilators	Closed
Refrigerator	Gas "OFF" - 12v "ON"
Trumatic heater	Gas "OFF"
Water Heater	Gas "OFF"
Cooker	Gas "OFF"
Gas bottle	Gas "OFF"
Fresh water tank	Check and fill
Waste water tank	Empty if necessary
Cassette water	Check and fill
Cassette effluent	Empty if necessary
Engine oil level	Check and fill
Coolant level	Check and fill
Brake fluid level	Check

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This list is not laid out as *Bruce* originally did it because I couldn't get it into the space available to me. But if you want to copy it, no doubt you can re-adjust it to fit the space available. *Bruce* actually produced this in two columns, Van Information on the left and Check List on the right, all in a space of 5" x 3 1/2".

-----ooo000ooo-----

A SKIING TRIP BY AUTO SLEEPER

"Last Christmas my company extended the holiday - actually they took a day off the Easter break - so I could make a longer holiday by adding a few days leave. We decided to take our Talisman to France and try our hand at skiing. We had visited the Alps in winter before and, knowing that temperatures can drop below -15 C, we chose to rent a studio flat for one (skiing) week and then do some touring in the van before returning home.

Plans made, we prepared the van for the cold weather. We had to live in it for 36 hours as we travelled to our ski resort

(Flaine), then park it for a week before using it again. We decided that the safest way was to drain all the water systems (hot, cold, pump and cassette flush) as if winterising the van. Then we added a few gallons of fresh water to the main tank - being careful not to switch on the pump. All our water for the journey came from a separate one-gallon container which could be refilled from the main tank drain tap if necessary. Special anti-freeze for the cassette Porta-Potti is available; at about £16 a bottle we decided not to use it, but to flush the toilet from a plastic bottle (4pt milk container).

On Thursday 19th December we set off (with some trepidation as force 9 gales were blowing) for the night ferry from Portsmouth to Le Havre. Despite a late start we had a reasonable crossing arriving on time, at 7 am. We drove to Rouen arriving just as dawn was breaking. Then it went dark again as a thunderstorm approached and we were treated to lightning, rain, hail, sleet and snow. We found that our way out of the town went up a steep hill - even having hairpin bends. A car coming down slid on the snow but managed to keep out of our way. We went slower and slower as we lost traction and finally stopped only yards from the top. This was a good start to the day - 500 miles to drive and here we were, stuck after only 50 miles! With the use of a spray called "Liquid Tyre Chain" (and the thawing snow) we soon made it to the top. A few miles later the snow thinned out and we were able to make good progress - after a stop for breakfast.

The most direct route took us through Paris so we used the Boulevard Peripherique late on Friday morning. We shan't make that mistake again; it was stop-go in places! By late afternoon we were well south and stopped to buy some 'moon boots' ready for the cold and snow. Later still the children and *Heather* kipped down on the double bed while I drove on towards Geneva. Approaching midnight, I felt that I had driven enough for one day (despite an earlier nap on the van floor while *Heather* was driving) so found a large lay-by and stopped for the rest of the night. Early in the morning I woke with severe stomach pains and a bout of diarrhoea. As I staggered back to bed, *Heather* opened a curtain and said it was snowing hard with two inches of snow already laying. *Robert and Nicola* greeted the news with a cheer - I could hardly manage a groan.

We decided to get going and have breakfast later. Having seen a car slide off the road, we set off slowly and carefully hoping that the road would clear soon. Unfortunately it got worse so we stopped to fit the snow chains - not my favourite job while still feeling weak. A few miles further on we came to an access to the Autoroute Blanc (A 40) and we took this hoping to make faster progress. It lived up to its name, but the snowploughs were keeping

it open and we soon reached Cluses, where we made a quick stop for food supplies. The manager was announcing the bargains, using a leek for a microphone!

It was still snowing heavily as we reached the road up the mountain to Flaine and we didn't need the road sign to tell us to refit the snow chains. The snow was now about 3 inches deep and we had to climb 4500ft in 20kms of very twisty road. This journey was extremely difficult and most of it was in 1st gear with the front wheels alternately spinning and gripping - an action which would shake the gear lever out of gear and make the steering wheel snatch from side to side. Higher up the hill the snow was bad enough to make a virtual white-out and we were guessing where the road went. The lack of visibility did help in that we couldn't see the sheer drops as we slid across the road and back! On two occasions the children came and crouched between the front seats to try and get more weight over the driving wheels. Although we didn't stop once it still took one and a half hours to complete the 20kms. But we made it and only just in time as the road became impassable a few hours later.

After a late lunch we booked into the resort and unloaded all our gear into the apartment. By Sunday morning it had almost stopped snowing; we heard that there had been more snow during the previous 36 hours than the whole of last winter. The Talisman looked very strange with an extra high roof caused by 18 inches of snow on top. When we moved the van a lot of the snow came sliding down over the front and we had to dig it out before going any further. We later discovered that our borrowed roof box had collapsed under the weight of the snow, luckily this was the only damage caused by the severe weather. We were glad we had booked the apartment for two main reasons: on Sunday it rained (skiing in the rain!), we got soaked to the skin and it needed all the extra space to get four sets of clothing dry. Secondly, *Heather* had a bad fall and tore the muscles in one leg so was confined to the room for three days.

The children thoroughly enjoyed skiing and were quite good by the end of the week. I found it very tiring (mostly due to carrying the heavy ski equipment around) and rather scary as I lost more and more control on the steeper and steeper slopes. Even so the three of us managed to ski down the 3,000ft mountain on the last day and we all enjoyed it enough to want to have another go in the future.

At the end of the week we repacked the van, trying to remember where everything had come from. The roof box was stuffed to hold it back in shape while large amounts of sticky tape

held the shattered plastic ends together. We then took a last trip up in the cable car to show *Heather* the view from the 'top' (about 8,000ft). She thought that it looked to be a gentle stroll over the snow to Mont Blanc, but actually it was about 40 miles away and twice the height of where we were standing - such is the effect of the very clear air.

The drive down the mountain was easy as the road had been almost completely cleared and we could enjoy the views; we even found that we had driven up through quite a large village/town without seeing it! At the bottom, the snow of the previous week had virtually disappeared. After a quick shopping trip we booked into a camp site where the owner took great delight in putting us next to the swimming pool and suggesting that we go for a swim in the morning - despite it being well below freezing and the pool had its winter cover on. The next day we drove down to Annecy and caused much amusement to the locals as every time we stopped or turned a corner a pile of snow fell off the roof onto the completely clear road. *Heather* still could not walk very far so we drove down the side of Annecy Lake on a very quiet Sunday afternoon. Near the southern tip of the lake we ran into thick snow again, though the roads were clear. At an all winter camp site we found one French way of charging for electricity: you pay for the current you want and they fit the appropriate overload trip to your supply - so if you are using an electric fire etc you need to work out what power you need. Here we also discovered how hard the snow was, walking on top of a foot of snow did not leave even a mark in it.

Next morning we went into Albertville and saw the preparations for the Winter Olympics - actually this was by luck as we had gone to find some shops. We also noticed that the clear air of the mountains did not extend into the valleys; the polluted air seemed to be held down in the valley though I would have expected it to be warmer and therefore rise. Heading north again, we climbed up to Megeve, passing a 'caravaneige' campsite to which we returned to spend three nights. This site was over 3250ft high and the temperature ranged from +1C in the day to -7C at night. We kept snug by using a small fan heater when we were sitting in the van and the gas fire on low during the night. Even so there was frost on the inside of the double glazing when we woke in the mornings - obviously the blinds provided good insulation as did the Silver Screen.

During the day the clear, still and sunny weather made it very pleasant. Robert and Nicola enjoyed themselves tobogganing, though the snow was very bumpy and still so hard that even the toboggan did not cut through and threw them off before they had got very

far. Some Dutch people camped next to us were having great difficulty digging themselves out of the snowdrifts around their vans especially when the spade handle broke trying to break through the hard crust! Thursday saw us back on the road heading home, through Cluses for the third time. The weather was still cold with a lot of freezing fog giving picturesque hoar frost on all the grass and bushes. Again the fog was confined to the valleys so there were strange views from high ground of a sea of fog with hill tops rising through it. The last of the snow finally melted from the van roof at lunchtime. The remainder of the journey home was as tedious as the northern part of France always is at the end of a holiday. We arrived back in Le Havre on Friday evening in good time for the ferry only to find that it was again blowing a gale. While we waited, another Talisman was unloaded and gave us a very cheery wave as they drove off into the night. We didn't recognise the occupants but if it was you, you now know who was waving back!

In contrast to our summer holiday when the toolbox was in constant demand, it was only used twice on this trip - once to repair the roofbox and once to change the gas bottles. The family voted it a great holiday; now I have got to find enough time to go again and enough money to pay for the skiing.

John, Heather, Robert and Nicola Tidbury."

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Once again, we've reached the end of an issue. See you at Kettering!

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