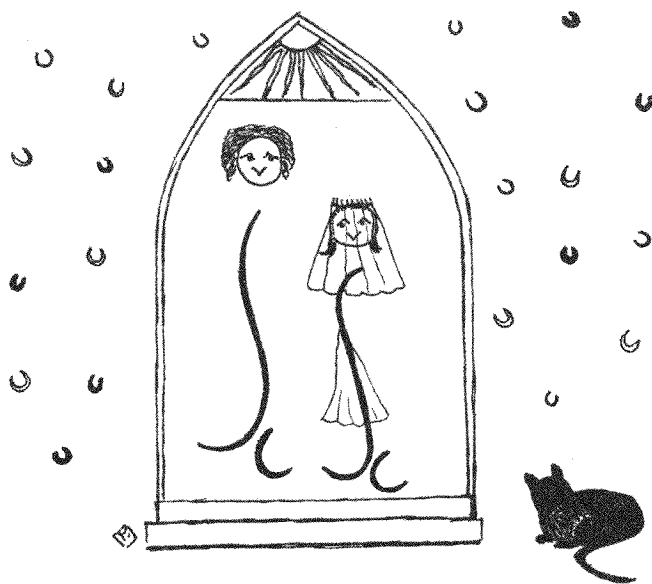


**AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB**



NEWSLETTER 45

JUNE 1992

Hello.

As many of you will know, the weather arranged for the A.G.M. and rally at Wicksteed Park was the normal for the Club. We had rain, we had wind, but we had a lovely time. Many members present said to me that they had enjoyed the rally and particularly the food at the dinner. The amount of the turkey served was more than enough for me - our cat had to help me out with some of it! It was a pleasure to see and speak to so many of the members whose faces I could recognise but to whom I couldn't really give a name. That's where the name badges come in so handy, even if one has to peer at them a bit!

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Oldest Van

Isn't it amazing how coincidences occur? You may remember that last month I started looking for whoever had the oldest Auto-Sleeper and just as the issue went to press Sheila received a letter from a gentleman who is not a member but who wishes to sell his van (see For Sale later on). He had been given the details by Martin Watts of "Classic Campers" and thought that our Newsletter might be the right place to sell it. It is a 1966 Commer - so has anybody a van older than that?

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Index

The Index for Newsletters 37 - 42 is now available. Usual procedure, please, a stamped, self-addressed envelope, of a size suitable for the Newsletter, sent to me will bring a copy by (almost) return, unless you choose the time when we're away at the end of June!

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A Concert

"Having attended our first A/S Club rally at Honeybourne may I say how much my wife, *Helen*, daughter *Ruth* and I enjoyed it.

On Saturday, 20th June, I shall be running a concert for the North's leading folk/comedy group "The Houghton Weavers". All profits go to our local church. Would any members like to attend? If so, could they please get in touch by phone and I will suggest a local site where they could meet for an "unofficial" extra rally

John Greenwood."

John asked me to mention this at the AGM in case anyone was interested but I'm afraid that other things drove it out of my mind completely. *John's* address is 55 Park Avenue, Mynydd Isa, Mold, Clwyd, CH7 6XR and his telephone number is 0244 548 882. The concert is in the Mynydd Isa Community Centre and starts at 8 pm. There will be food and bar facilities too. The hand-out which *John* sent also says that the tickets are £6.00

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RALLY REPORTS

"The nice easy start to marshalling early in the year, we hoped, with perhaps 20 vans. Every day the postman brought more bookings and we had to negotiate with the site for more pitches and hook ups. A final total of 46 vans attended.

Members began to arrive on Wednesday, taking advantage of reduced fees. All week long the rain had poured down and many pitches were waterlogged. Melvyn [Tucker], the site owner, did a lot of head scratching, 'juggling' and hard work putting in hard standings especially for us and somehow fitted all in. Apologies to those who didn't get a hook up.

On Thursday the sun arrived and shone all the weekend. Coffee on Friday evening was served in the restaurant by kind permission of the site owners. On Saturday night 71 members enjoyed an excellent meal and many booked for lunch on Sunday - shows what good value it was. During coffee on Sunday morning a warm round of applause was given to Sue and Melvyn [Tucker] to express our appreciation.

When we left on Sunday afternoon we were tired, but pleased that our first attempt at marshalling seemed to have gone well, albeit not entirely to plan! We should like to thank *Marion & Ray Tullett* for the assistance they gave us over the weekend, to *Barbara & Jeff /Worley/* for the encouragement, to all those who attended but most of all to Sue and Melvyn for a very friendly welcome to such a lovely site.

Sandra & Bernie Wisely ."

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National Rally & AGM (I)

"As new members of the Club and comparatively new motor caravanners, we were feeling rather apprehensive at the thought of attending our first Rally. However, this proved to be quite

unfounded as the members with whom we came into contact, particularly members of the committee, were most friendly and helpful. We were favourably impressed with the organisation of the Rally and the social events were very enjoyable. We are aware that it takes a lot of hard work, which I am afraid is not always appreciated, to make these occasions such a success and the committee is to be complimented on this count.

The service given by the staff at Wicksteed Park, as I am sure all present would agree, was of a high standard and the food provided was good value. The Salvation Army's service on the Sunday morning was 'uplifting' and completed the weekend admirably, and we went home rejoicing.

PS. The inclement weather, I am sure, had nothing to do with the committee'

The author of this report, whose name I know, has asked to remain anonymous - he or she (or should I say she or he) is rather shy!

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National Rally & AGM (2)

Ernie and I attended our first rally at Kettering and were very impressed with the organisation and efficiency with which everything was managed. The AGM was interesting without the boring items which permeate meetings of other organisations. Even such disagreements that did occur were dealt with courteously.

Laughter is very much a part of our camping trips and we found plenty at the rally, along with making new friends. We look forward to meeting *Barbara and Alan Potter* again who were also attending their first rally. Our thanks to everyone who helped.

Joan & Ernie Prince .

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Commer Auto-Sleeper, 1966 ("D" Reg) in first class condition in spite of its age. Present mileage 52,780 most of which was covered in the early years. I doubt if it has done 1,000 miles in the last 15 years. I have kept it in roadworthy state, taxed, tested and insured but poor health and advancing years have convinced me that we must part company. It has a lifting roof, a new water tank and a 2 burner & grill stove but no electrics or fridge. I don't know what it

is worth so will consider any reasonable offer. Kenneth Tarbuck, 2 Heath Drive, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside, L49 6LF or telephone 051 677 1785.

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WANTED

I would like to purchase a Silver Screen to fit the Transit based Legend. If any member wishes to dispose of one please write or telephone. I missed the last two on offer! *Les Davies* 2 Craft House, Priory Court, Chirbury, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 6BH - Telephone 0938 72 692

#####

My wife and I are very keen to join the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club but unfortunately we are having difficulty in locating the right vehicle. We are looking for a diesel high-top (Rambler, Rhapsody, Harmony, Flair or Rapport). If anyone has such a van available will they please notify John Lane at 26 Stokes Hill Road, Waterloooville, Hants., PO7 7HY or telephone him on 0705 257 525.

This request turned up in a letter to *Peter Fisher*, our previous Secretary, who passed it to me for inclusion. So if you are thinking of changing your (suitable) van, this might be your opportunity.

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Wild Camping, Electronics, etc.

"May I throw a subject out for comment, please? I feel that there are so many vans on the road, with more being produced, that we should think very carefully before "Wild Camping". We may park in a quiet corner with no-one else about, but someone else might be there the next night and someone else again the following night until the locals get fed up and the councils have to stop it. "Wild Camping" in an emergency is reasonable, or in somewhere like Norway and Sweden where it is at present accepted (and essential in remote areas), but to choose to do it when a site is within reasonable distance, I feel, is storing up trouble for the future. Do you agree?

Also, on the subject of ever more automatic systems, I have already remarked to the Thetford people that the bellows system of flushing the toilet is better than the electronic one. It is more controllable and the electronic one sometimes jams on until hastily thumped. We are beginning to find that the twist knob has become quite stiff too. Do other members have this problem and if so, should we tell Auto-Sleepers? If members would write to me I will

collate the replies and let A/S know - and the Newsletter too, of course!

Rita Daley."

Rita's address is 46, Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 8BQ. I tend to agree with the comments about "Wild Camping". I have done it, many years ago, but in the present time I think that there are so many pleasant CL's or CS's (depending on which Club you belong to) and the payments demanded at many are so cheap that it isn't worth the hassle of possibly being awakened at good-heavens-it-can't-be, and/or moved on, by the police.

Incidentally, *Rita* would still like more sites and advice for Spain, particularly for the winter months, and any other items so that she can update the "First Timers Abroad" booklet. So if you can help with recent information, please write to her.

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NEW ZEALAND

"Just a note to help anyone contemplating a long visit to the Antipodes. I hope to be able to write about our actual trip quite soon.

It seems that there is only one company for RV. Motorhome World, 514 Great South Road, Otohuhu, Auckland is about 10 minutes drive from the airport and useful for anyone having no contacts there. They have a very large stock of ex-hire vans for sale on a "buy back" basis so as we needed a van for three months and didn't want the trouble of selling when leaving we used this method. One needs to see the selection of vans available first and choosing one could take some time. But beware, jet lag could really affect one's judgement! They willingly allowed us to test drive any van we liked. Virtually all are Japanese based vehicles with a central engine like the Toyota seen in the UK. In my view these small panel vans are nice to drive but cramped for living space. Some of the type had been converted with small coach-built bodies but we thought that there was too little storage and they were rather cramped for three months living.

The larger coach-builts are on truck chassis and we chose one thinking we would spend less time driving than in the living area. It had an enormous picture window at the rear so with the van parked the right way round we could enjoy the wonderful views but keep out of the high winds which seemed to persist for the first part of our holiday. A huge double bed, lots of storage space, an electric fridge - noisy at night when working off the second battery. In NZ

all vans need a certificate of safety for the electric wiring from a qualified electrician and next summer all sites must have the new style of mains sockets as used in the UK. The van was well equipped with electric points and about six trip switches! The dealer kindly supplied quite a lot of the necessities - duvets, pots and pans etc. - and friends made up most of the rest for us.

The van was a 3 litre diesel with over 200,000 km on the clock. Diesel was 75p to 95p per gallon depending on area of NZ. There is a small tax for private diesel vehicles paid in advance for a given number of km as recorded on the wheel odometer. The truck engines are underneath the front seats and can be quite noisy. We stuffed a lot of cloth under and around the seats where more soundproofing should have been and it helped. The steering is inclined to react badly to the camber and to high winds. Our van was rather slow on hills and, believe me, there are many long and steep hills so we often had a tail of other cars, partly because many drivers seemed reluctant to overtake ("number two forms the queue"). The suspension was hard and travelling in the rear could be very uncomfortable although the roads are really excellent. Newer vans have the seating within the wheelbase instead of at the back which must give a far more comfortable ride.

Insurance cost was most reasonable and, sad to say, the day before we handed the van back we were hit by a car coming out of a side turning which dented the side door. The young girl driver swore that it was my fault, insisted on calling the traffic police who told her that because of the point of impact it was clearly her fault. In spite of that, when the dealer tried to claim from her she still strongly denied liability and also had no insurance. I believe insurance for bodily injuries to third parties, which is the minimum required, is covered in the car registration fee.

I would suggest that anyone thinking of a long holiday in NZ or Australia should consider buying a new van, DUTY FREE, and shipping it out. Obviously this would require planning maybe a year ahead but the duty saved would approximate to the cost of shipping and one would have a first class living-in vehicle. A friend has just shipped out his large coachbuilt and when he returns I shall try to get details of costs, shipping lines etc.

The same friends last year also shipped their van out to Singapore on a RORO ship at a very reasonable cost. The boat normally carries new cars from Japan to UK. After touring Malaysia and Thailand, the van was shipped to India, toured there including Bangladesh, Pakistan etc. They wanted to drive all the way home but Iran was refusing visas to Brits (no problem now) so the van had

to be shipped home in an open topped container which resulted in some repairable damage to the roof. I'll also try to get details of this trip when they return.

If anyone would like further information about New Zealand please write to me at 22 Wavertree Road, London, SW2 3SP or telephone 081-674 1956 and I'll do my best to help.

Ron Wallis

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Chairman's Chat

This is my first Chairman's Chat and I am very honoured to be in this position and will try to follow the high standards set by my predecessors. Thanks to all members for their kind words at the AGM and rally following the announcement of my appointment immediately after the Dinner on Saturday evening.

Winifred and I are in Holland on the 1992 Bulb Fields Rally together with some 30 members and I am having to 'make' time to prepare this Chat so that it will be in the hands of that hard taskmaster, The Editor, by the due date.

The AGM and rally at Wicksteed Park was superbly organised to provide all who came with a great weekend. If you were there you will know this; if you were not you missed a great time - DON'T miss the Club and Company Rally which promises to be equally good. Full details will follow soon.

Last month you will have seen the full details of our new Committee and I should like to offer a warm welcome to our new Secretary, *Carol Bowler*, and our three co-opted members, *Pru Osborne*, *Bob Williams* and *John Edden*. I am sure they will be of benefit to the committee. Also a sincere 'Thank You' to our retiring Chairman, *Phil Daley*, for leading the Club through a most successful year. He is now our Public Relations Officer (as well as Newsletter Printer - Ed) so will still be fully occupied! *Peter Fisher* as Secretary was responsible for many innovations, all for your benefit, and his wife *Wendy* took over as Regalia Officer and did that job superbly. Both have now retired from the committee and are to be thanked for their great efforts. *Terry Plant* and *Ken Honeybourne* for different reasons found they could not continue and are also thanked for their efforts. And *Jeff Worley* after presenting an excellent rally programme has now become the Vice Chairman. No doubt I have forgotten someone so may I say thank you to all who

have contributed, in any way, to the well being of our Club which is far and away the largest one make Club in the UK and one of which we can all be proud.

During the next few months we shall be travelling northwards, using several ferries, and won't be around until the Club and Company rally. That will be a social and fun meeting. A/S will bring some vehicles for you to see and admire and will open their famous Stores Shop which so often includes just what you wanted but couldn't find! There will also be other traders to supply your needs and wants. *Neville Jelfs* and some of the lads will be involved in the Barbecue, which they promise will be good, and for other items, especially on Saturday. Look out for their Treasure Hunt, run by *Phil Bennett*. The Club must do its share too, and I ask that if you have a hobby or interest which you could display and/or demonstrate will you please enter the details CLEARLY on your booking form where a space will be provided. Tatting, Bobbin Lace, Model Aircraft Flying, or whatever. You know and enjoy your hobby - why not let others share your enthusiasm? *Barbara Worley* will run a Bring and Buy Stall and invites you to make, or bring, cakes, jams, pickles, confectionery and the like for sale there. ONLY EDIBLE ITEMS, PLEASE.

There will be side-shows, e.g. skittles, bouncing balls into buckets etc., etc., - if you have any other ideas and could run a side-show please let us know SOON. *Dave Clark* and his great supporting team will run the Raffle and will be after you for your money - and for prizes for the raffle.

Early booking for this (and indeed for every) rally will greatly assist the Organisers and Marshals and make their job that much easier. All profits from this rally will go to the Cancer MacMillan Relief Fund, which was started in 1911 to provide nurses in the community and in hospices to help relieve pain and control symptoms of this disease; also to give advice and support to patients and their relatives. A/S have supported this worthy cause so your committee thought that we should do the same.

And now back to Tulips, Narcissi, Hyacinths, Windmills and other things such as.....well, you guess what!

Arthur Irving ."

That's not a bad contribution from the new boy, is it? Next month it will be the **Vice-Chairman** who has to write this - and your **Temporary, Unpaid, Acting Editor** who has to edit it!

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A L A R M S

"Reference Help Wanted from *Dave Warcup* (Newsletter 43). We have had an alarm fitted to our Talisman and we think it is a really good system. We found ours through an advert in MMM and the address is: Eddie Jones, 74, Milton Street, Brixham, Devon, TQ5 0AS. Telephone 0803 851 792.

Sandra Wisely."

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Insurance of Van Contents

"I have had such an insurance for as long as we have been caravanning (30 years)", writes *Melvyn Crapp*. The firm concerned is Frizzell Insurance and Financial Services Ltd., General Insurance Dept., Frizzell House, County Gates, Bournemouth, BH1 5NF and the telephone number is 0202 292 333.

This year I am paying £36 for £1500 of cover for "Equipment, Clothing, Luggage & Personal Effects whilst contained in or about the assured's motor caravan". The insurer is Lloyds 100%."

Melvyn, who I am beginning to believe is a source of quite a lot of useful knowledge, kindly sent a second copy of his letter which I have passed on to *Tricia and Ted Pratt* who made the original enquiry. It does prompt me to wonder just what sort of encyclopedia we could write with all the experience we must have in the Club. But I'm not going into that because I don't really want the job of trying to collate and edit such a massive book!

Leslie Coell, Product Manager, Insurance Services, The Caravan Club also wrote to point out that the Club operates a special motorcaravan insurance scheme for its members which includes cover for the contents up to £1,500 as standard. The rates seem to be competitive, an elevating roof T4 conversion (not an A/S) was quoted as £155 in February for a driver aged over 50, with a good record and living in Sussex. If you are a member of the Caravan Club, their brokers are Devitt Insurance Services Ltd., 32-66 High Street, Stratford, London, E.15 and the telephone number is 081-519 0202.

Thanks, Leslie, it does show that our Newsletter gets read in all sorts of places!

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The next subject has already been mentioned, briefly, but a letter was received which brings it to life again:-

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

June/July 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!**

5th-7th June. Motor Caravan Fair, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

12th-14th June. Barnstones Camping & Caravan Park, Great Bourton, Banbury. **LIMIT 50 VANS.**

Fees: £3.50 per night. **NO** electrics (possibility of some for disabled members only). Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Barbara & John Cox, 73 Westmead road, Barton-under-Needwood, 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, Pencoed, Mid Glamorgan, CF35 5PD. Tel: 0656 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-Usk for an American Supper on Saturday.

26th-28th June. Coombe Nurseries Touring C.P., The Race Plain, Wetherhampton, 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 Bevis, 16 Chapel River Close, Weyhill Gardens, Andover, Hants., SP10 3QC. Tel: 0264 355537. (Assisted by Barbara & Jeff Worley.)

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 Glynder Scaring 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.

3rd-5th July. KINGSBURY Water Park, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. (Camping & Caravanning Club site.) LIMIT 30 VANS.

Fees: £4.75 per night. Rally fee £1.50. NO electric hook-up, limited toilet facilities.

Marshals: Maureen & John Eddes, 4, Nursery Lane, Hopwas, Tamworth, Staffs, B78 3AS. Tel: 0827 65850.

Directions: Leave M.42 at Junction 9 and follow Water Park signs. IGNORE MAIN ENTRANCE TO WATER PARK. Follow International camping signs to site.

The park covers 500 acres in the valley of the River Tame and has more than 30 lakes, a nature reserve, walking, fishing and water sports. You can, if you wish, bring your own canoe or inflatable.

10th-12th July. Forestry Commission site, Tackeroo. GREEN FIELD SITE - OWN SANITATION REQUIRED.

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

Marshals: Kris & Terry Plant, Foxfield, Waste Lane, Balsall Common, Coventry, West Midlands, CV7 7GP.

Water available; waste disposal points

Directions: Turn east off A.34 Cannock - Stafford one mile north of Huntingdon, s.p. Rugeley. Site on right, about 2.5 miles.

17th-19th July. Bainbridge Ings, Hawes, North Yorkshire.

Fees: £2.00 per night. Rally fee: £1.50.

Marshals: Margaret Harrison and Audrey Crouch. Bookings to Audrey, please, at "Sydney", Sylvan Close, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Salop., SY13 2TB.

Directions: From Bainbridge on A.684 turn south at s.p. Gayle. Site in 200 yards.

24th-26th July. Midland Railway Trust, Butterley Park, RIPLEY, Derbyshire. Fees £1.75 per night, plus a modest charge to cover entry to the museum and train travel. Rally fee £1.50.

Marshals: Sheila & Harry Henthorne, 144 Devonshire Hill Lane, London, N17 7NR. Telephone 081 808 9112.

Directions: IGNORE ANY SIGNS TO MIDLAND RAILWAY CENTRE. A.610 to Codnor Clock Tower. Follow unclassified road (beside clock tower) s.p. Riddings and Somercotes for about 1 mile passing Codnor Gate Estate on left. At bottom of steep hill turn left into Coach Road. (If you pass Newlands Inn you have gone too far!) BEWARE OF TWO SPEED RAMPS in Coach Road. A few yards beyond second ramp fork right. Turn right in front of the workshops and proceed through gate.

This rally will appeal to those interested in steam railways. Lunch on a train on Sunday may be possible. There are toilets available close to the licensed buffet.

31st July-2nd August. Club & Company rally, Stratford-upon-Avon racecourse.

Fees: to be advised.

Marshals: Barbara & John Cox, 73 Westmead Road, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs., DG13 8JR. Tel: 0283 712394.

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

Send one of these slips to the Marshal named at least 10 days before the event. You can arrive at the site without booking and you will be welcomed but if the rally is limited you may be disappointed.

ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE MARSHAL BY NAME, PLEASE

R A L L Y S L I P

Site..... Date.....

Name.....Membership No.....Van No.....

Day/Time of arrival..... 1st Rally? Y/N Electricity? Y/N

Saturday night meal, if available? Y/N. Any Special Needs?.....

.....
Please send this slip to the Marshal with the fee. Please complete
BACK of slip IN FULL!

R A L L Y S L I P

Site..... Date.....

Name.....Membership No.....Van No.....

Day/Time of arrival..... 1st Rally? Y/N Electricity? Y/N

Saturday night meal, if available? Y/N. Any Special Needs?.....

.....
Please send this slip to the Marshal with the fee. Please complete
BACK of slip IN FULL!

R A L L Y S L I P

Site..... Date.....

Name.....Membership No.....Van No.....

Day/Time of arrival..... 1st Rally? Y/N Electricity? Y/N

Saturday night meal, if available? Y/N. Any Special Needs?.....

.....
Please send this slip to the Marshal with the fee. Please complete
BACK of slip IN FULL!

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

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

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:.....

Photographs

Dear Harry,

The time of year has come round again to ask for assistance through your Newsletter for contributions to our 1993 Company Magazine - namely the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club page.

I seek, particularly, quality photographs of Club activities, in colour, which will add impact and interest to the Owners' Club article. In order to get sufficient interest from the Club Members, we would be pleased to offer a first prize of £40 with further prizes of £10 to the five runners-up. Colour Prints AND Transparencies are acceptable but the emphasis must be on variety, interest and, of course, showing the versatility to which Auto-Sleepers may be used.

I have asked *Rita Daley* if she will be good enough to accept the initial submissions as she has kindly done in the past. The deadline for her to receive entries must be Monday, 20th July 1992 and I cannot stress too strongly how desirable it is to have varied, quality pictures.

Charles Trevelyan

So there you have it. Get your cameras out and start snapping. The resulting pictures last year I thought were very good. I wonder where I put the Box Brownie?

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Some items have been "on the spike" for some time now, mainly due to my moving across London. But I have found the dreaded spike and can start to include them in the Newsletter. If there is a contribution from you which hasn't yet been used, my apologies - maybe it is one of the following!

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Levelling

I was most interested to see that *Peter Fisher* had queried my system of levelling my Rambler (NOT Talisman - although I imagine that makes no difference) with Peugeot-Talbot. I did the same before starting to use the jacks and was told that they couldn't see why not, provided that the jacks were soundly based! Perhaps he has elicited a more careful response by writing to them - I telephoned.

Presumably the fear is of a jack collapsing. Mine are used only

to tilt the body an inch or two and common sense would indicate that they shouldn't be used on a steep slope or come anywhere near lifting a wheel (or two) off the ground. Used with common sense it is difficult to see what the risk is. I am not just being obstinate - I would like to know and will see if I can get the reasons out of Peugeot-Talbot.

Dan Flunder."

About the only reason I can see is that the jacks are intended to lift the dead weight of the vehicle off the ground so that a wheel can be changed. I am guessing that the movement of a person inside the van while the jack is in place might be a bit dangerous - the vibration might cause the jack to wobble a bit. Really I suppose that it is the contrary problem to using the steadies, when fitted, to raise the wheel off the ground - you shouldn't even try it.

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Arthur Irving wrote to elaborate on the item about concessionary fares on ferry crossings. The stock concerned is the 5 1/2% redeemable non-cumulative preferred stock in P & O European Ferries. The concession applies only to P & O European Ferries services from Dover, Felixstowe, Portsmouth and Cairnryan/Larne. The latter service has the concession - for 600 shares of 25% and for 300 shares of 12 1/2%.

Shareholders must travel personally and may be accompanied by up to 3 adults - two children count as one adult. A concession is also available on the Dover/Ostend service which is operated by Regie Voor Maritem Transport (RMT) for car ferry service only. (P&O European Ferries have withdrawn their Dover/Zeebrugge service from 31 December 1991.)

Reduction is for standard rates for private vehicles and passengers - not applicable to special fares, foot passengers, towed caravans/trailers, inclusive holidays or shipboard goods and services. It does not apply to certain Calais/Dover sailings on Tuesdays from the end of July until the beginning of September 1992.

The stock was being traded, on 8th January 1992, at 99p and this year, on a crossing from Felixstowe to Zeebrugge and return, the cost for 2 people and a motorhome would be £191.00 - with the 50% concession this amounts to £95.50. This, together with the tax-paid dividend on 600 shares at 99p, would give a return of about 20.07%."

"I have one reservation to add to the item on the benefits of P&O shareholding and the perks appertaining thereto. Could you add, please, a Political Health Warning? Some of us would prefer not to contribute (knowingly) to Conservative Party funds and P&O does so rather heavily. Point taken about British companies but those of us with Peugeots, Renaults or Volkswagens and who spend large amounts of foreign currency can't occupy that moral ground very convincingly.

However, all is not lost. The Sealink Auto Club will also provide a discount. Regular users can get 20% of the last bill discounted from the next - if used within two years. Details from Sealink Auto Club, PO Box 14, Horley, Surrey, RH6 8DW, or use the hotline number 081-541 4390.

One other comment - on squat loos! We sympathise with those who cannot understand anyone having a preference for them. Our first camping holiday in France in 1966 with three daughters led to a loo test before settling down, so to speak. But in Yugoslavia a few years ago we had a semi-conversion; squat loos are more hygienic, we observed, even if they are for the relatively athletic.

David Matthews."

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Talbot Fuel System

"As a recent member I read with interest the troubles reported with the Talisman fuel system. I wrote to MMM in December and I enclose a copy of my letter which may be of interest to other members.

My wife and I have just completed our second year as Motor Caravanners; we were able to buy a Talisman and in general have been pleased with it. I have noticed several references to the Talbot Express petrol tank problems and thought that my experience might be helpful to other owners of vans on this popular chassis.

During last winter I fitted a locking fuel cap (the correct Peugeot-Talbot part) which clearly sealed the fuel tank better than the original screw cap. Imagine my concern when holidaying in France in warm weather to find, when I came to refuel, that an enormous pressure had built up in the tank; so much so that when I released the cap the sides of the fuel tank 'clonked' in. I clearly had a potentially explosive situation on my hands and therefore left the filler cap loose for the rest of our holiday.

Once home, the local agent assured me that there was a vent

pipe (plastic) which was taken down alongside the fuel tank and suggested that I should inspect it to see if it was in any way blocked. My inspection showed that the pipe was fitted with a non-return valve which had been fitted UPSIDE DOWN thus holding the pressure in the tank. I still just wonder what might have happened if the tank had ruptured under the cab whilst we were on the move!

The only other mechanical problem is that my Talisman has always had a terribly noisy exhaust - there are no leaks but all the baffles seem to be loose - in fact I am quite embarrassed to change down in towns. I wonder if anyone else has had these snags. My van is, of course, out of warranty although it has only covered 5500 miles.

Norman Tamplin ."

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Rallies and Help

Tony Booth wrote to say that he liked the new style of print in the Newsletter. He is a relatively new member and has only been to two rallies but intends to try to get about more in 1992. He goes on to say that "there are times when one wants to do more, but not knowing anyone locally, getting support to organise a rally is difficult". He would also like to see members helping each other with the little jobs on the vans.

Well, *Tony*, if you can find a site somewhere near where you live and would like to hold a rally there please have a word with our Rally Co-ordinator, *Tony Jones*. He would be only too pleased to assist in any way he can and I'm sure that if you felt that you needed help to run a rally *Barbara and Jeff Worley* would act as your assistants - and they don't live too far away from you. Take my word for it, running a rally is fairly easy - even I can do it. I've always found that the members who come along will do all that they can to ensure that everything goes well and at the end of the weekend you will get home to say that your are rather sorry that it has finished! So do try.

As far as the help is concerned, if you need any assistance drop me a line and we'll put it into the Newsletter - you could be surprised at the result!

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Co-incidence again. The next letter on the spike was this one:

Van Work

I know members are interested as to where reliable work can be obtained for their motor caravans so it pleases me to be able to pass on the following.

Over the past ten years or so, whenever I have required medium or small amounts of work carried out on my vans, I have used W.R. Conversions, 7 Ency Park, Abingdon Road, Nuffield Estate, Poole, Dorset - Telephone 0202 680 451. You will see their advertisement in MMM. The work has always been carried out to my satisfaction. The proprietor, Mr. George, is a motor caravanner and was a boat builder; very approachable and understanding of our problems. He leads a small team of experienced tradesmen and his prices are fair and reasonable. I have no hesitation in recommending him to fellow members.

Tom Childs."

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Legend draughts

I am wondering if any member has experienced the problem I have with my Legend. In certain high winds I get a very bad draught through the inside door handle; this only happens when the wind is in a certain direction and only one side of the van at a time, depending on the wind direction. It would be nice to know if this is a common fault.

I would also like an advert put into the Wanted column - I missed the last two offers!

Les Davies."

See the WANTED advert above. Should I have headed this "Legendary Draughts", do you think? (And please don't say "Chess"!)

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G A S

Dan Flunder wrote to *Charles Trevelyan* and his letter included a note which is of interest to all of us. With the permission of both people I reproduce the relevant paragraph.

"You may have heard of one small problem [with the Rambler - Ed] - I had to file away nearly 1/4" of a fillet supporting the lid of the gas locker to get the cylinders in. I could not work out what

on earth had happened. I went about saying plaintively "...but it was quite all right at first..." and my usual supplier assured me that there had been no changes in cylinder sizes. *Rob Palmer* [of Auto-Sleepers - Ed] was also surprised until he rang Calor themselves who told him that individual cylinders could vary quite considerably. This was news to all of us and my filing stays filed! I think in fact that Calor must have changed their standards or tolerances. I have used their cylinders over many years in towed caravans and motor caravans and never had a problem before - it seems peculiar that for the first several months of this van's life there was no problem either."

Has anyone else found any difficulties with their cylinders? I wonder if metrication has anything to do with this problem.

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I thought that with all the recent chat reference 6kg gas cylinders, my own experience may be useful to other members. Last summer I fitted a 30 litre gas tank under my Talisman. My first fill, from empty, took 23 litres at a cost of £6.44. This lasted for 7 weekend rallies, 2 weeks in France and 1 week in York in October. The refill required 20 litres at a cost of £5.20. If any members are interested, the Midland firm Gaspower Ltd will supply the kit, ready assembled and tested, for you (or your local dealer) to fit yourselves for a total cost of £150 plus VAT.

The kit consists of a 30 litre tank (tested and freshly painted), gauge, regulator, flexible filling and supply hoses, valves, cradle and straps. All the gas fittings are ready assembled to the tank and tested, so all you have to do is secure the tank under your van with a couple of lengths of steel angle and make an access door through the floor of your van to operate the valves and view the gas level gauge.

I have negotiated the price for Club Members so if anyone interested will contact me I will pass the orders on. You will, of course, have to collect the equipment from Birmingham although in exceptional circumstances I may be able to collect the kit and meet you at a rally.

For orders or any queries please contact me on 0827 65 850.

John Edden ."

This seems like a good idea - especially when you consider the price of the gas refills. *Phil Daley* has also had a similar tank fitted

and keeps harping on about how cheap the gas is when bought this way. Much must depend on whether you have a suitable filling station reasonably close to you. And I believe that it is a prudent thought still to carry a cylinder in the locker just in case the tank runs out, as it will always do, at completely the wrong time. But please be very careful where you site the tank and how the piping runs, etc. I would certainly seek wise counsel before I attempted to have a tank fitted.

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Travelling in Convoy

I suppose *Dorothy* and I might be thought of as an unsociable couple because we ramble around on our own and never dream of going on holiday with friends. Certainly after an experience last summer we would be very wary of going anywhere in convoy. We'd had our usual month in France and started the trek home on the last Sunday. It turned out to be one of those mixed sort of days, when you decide to get settled down to a steady pace and get on with it but fate has other plans.

We left the coast at La Tranche at about 10 o'clock and it was OK as far as La Roche sur Yon (25 miles), then we fell in behind a hold up caused by several "Nomads" with their caravans stretching over a mile or more of road. Fair play, they left several hundred yards between each outfit so that others could pass, but all the same they were a considerable hold up. We solved the problem by stopping at a view point for a comfort stop. By the time we got going again there was no sign of them and we did not see them again.

Towards the end of the morning we came up behind a convoy of five Dutch caravanners, going at a cautious 40 mph and so close together that no one could pass. Just as it looked as though that was going to be our speed for the rest of the day their leader pulled into a layby, they all followed, so we got past.

Some hours later, after a diversion through a large town, we caught them up again by a large roundabout. Exit No.1 was a very minor road; exit No.2 didn't go anywhere; exit No.3 was the main road. Their leader took exit No.2, the others followed, each very close to the man in front. Just as the last outfit of the convoy was about to get off the roundabout the leader stopped, realising his mistake. Nos. 2,3 and 4 all stopped so No.5 had to stop with his van still on the roundabout. We managed to get past and on our way. Wondering how they were going to sort themselves out, I looked in my mirror and saw a cloud of speech balloons issuing from the

low-cars, each filled with vociferous exclamations in fluorescent blue double-Dutch. How the leader's ears must have been burning. Travelling in close convoy is not for us!

The day ended on a happy note. We stopped for the night at St. Ouen, just north of Vendome. Hundreds of people thronged the place. Such was the crowd that we had a job to work our way in. There was a lake in the middle of the site with a track round it. Eventually we came to a tape across the road and we were marshalled off the road across the grass into the camp site proper. The tape was the finishing line for a race that was in progress. We were gate crashing the local fete day and reached the finishing line just ahead of the leading competitors!

When we were settled, the camp guardian explained that, as campers, we were entitled to special reduced rates at the fete barbeque. He took us along and introduced us; we got andouillettes and chips at a fair price. Andouillettes are a sort of haggis, best described as the indescribable stuffed into the unmentionable. Then we booked in and, as people attending the fete, we were entitled to free camping. All's well that ends well.

Nial Reynolds."

I'm not sure that I like the sound of those andou-whatsits. Could be that they would be the thing to turn people vegetarian - or maybe not if the things are stuffed with vegetables.

Nial, in his covering letter, said that if I wanted to put this into the Newsletter he would be happy to put it onto a 3 1/2" disc (or disk). If any member has a computer or word processor and can produce input in ASCII or LocoScript format on 3", 3 1/2" or 5 1/4" discs I shall be pleased to accept them because it saves typing. And I promise to return the discs. In the first instance perhaps you would back up the disc with a printed copy just in case I can't get our machines to read your disc. But once proven - well, just bung a disc along.

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RALLY NEWS

Brynich, Brecon Rally - 19th - 21st June. Arrangements will be made for a pub meal on Saturday evening as conditions for hiring the community hall were not considered suitable for members wishes (no drinks to be brought in).

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⊙ Tyre Pressure Gauge ⊙

"In answer to *Roy Raeburn's* query (N/L 44 - May) I am not conversant with the valve extensions on the Trident T4 but I believe that the gauge I described in N/L 37 (October 1991) would satisfy his problem. In case he missed it, the gauge operates satisfactorily on the long extensions on my Talisman. However, these plastic extensions do snap from time to time and, like the Editor, I remove the wheel trims and check the tyres before setting out on a journey.

If *Roy* would like to obtain one of these pocket size gauges, which reads from 10 - 120 psi, they are available from Mr. T. Feeney, Powerfit Ltd., Unit 6, Harbour Close, (off Copse Road), Fleetwood, Lancs., FY7 7QB, Telephone No. 0253 770720. The price is £9.50 including VAT, postage and packing and you should allow about 28 days for delivery.


Richard Melville ."

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✎ Touch-up Paint ✎

"I would like to purchase from A/S at the Club & Company Rally a 1/8 litre tin of 'Talbot Gris Armee' dark grey touch-up paint for the bottom colour of the coachbults. This size tin is much more than I require so I need 3 members to share the tin and divide the cost by 4, i.e. about £2.50 each/

If you are interested, please ring me on 0784 454 400.
Reg Rogers ."

Sounds just what our club is all about. Anybody want to join in?

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Driving Position 

"May I express my appreciation of the help given in response to my query in the April Newsletter.

Using a combination of the advice given by *Fred Cleal* and *Barry Crawshaw* I have achieved a much more comfortable driving position and as we are shortly intending to make a trip to Switzerland and Northern Italy I look forward to it with less apprehension than before.

Again, many thanks.

Roy Stanley ."

I have to apologise once more; I misread *Roy's* signature on his

original letter and called him Reg. Sorry about that, but I'm glad that the advice given has been of use. As a point of idle interest, I used the platform principle shown by *Fred* to make a small platform at the front of the Clubman GL so that I can put the toolbox there out of the way. I haven't finished it yet (the story of my DIY) but it does work well.

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Don't forget that if you have anything for the July issue of the Newsletter you must send it to *Phil Daley* as I've got time off!

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DISCLAIMER

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

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