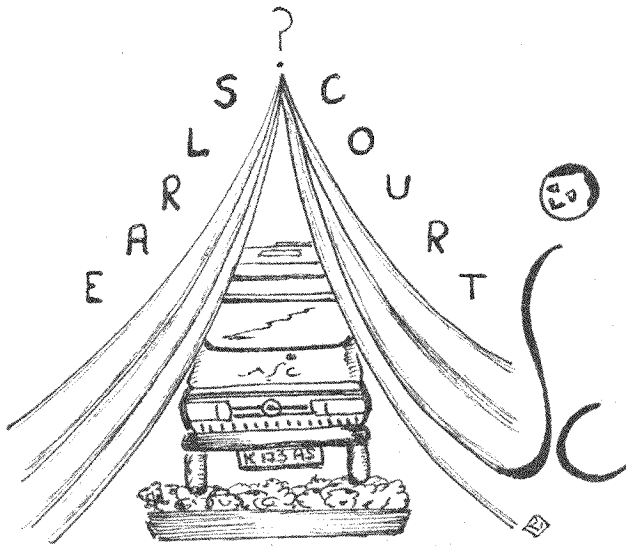


**AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 49**

**OCTOBER 1992**

Hello.

Your committee met at a "Committee Rally" at the C.L. just under the bridge at Willersey. We had decided to do this because we needed some time to talk about various things and felt that if we met at an ordinary rally we might be a bit restricted. The weather on Friday evening was good enough for us to visit the local hostelry (simply for a meal, of course!) and to sit in their garden to eat. On Saturday the morning was fair but when the afternoon arrived for the meeting so did the rain. Luckily our worthy Chairman *Arthur Irving* had obtained the use of a tent in which we were able to keep dry. A most interesting meeting ensued lasting for about 4 1/2 hours. Part of the result will be seen at the end of this Newsletter because we have decided that we will add a note to suggest that if any other magazine wants to use any article they may do so provided that they acknowledge the Author and the Newsletter. The copyright of any article remains, of course, with the Author. Also we have made a slight change to the rally booking slip. There was a space for requesting an electric hook-up. This has caused a few problems in the past when hook-ups (hooks-up?) have been limited so the request has been removed from the slip. In its place we now ask you to say how many people will be attending ("No.attending...") so that the Marshals can make the necessary arrangements for coffee. We tend to base our membership on two people to one van - so if you bring 15 grandchildren with you there might not be enough biscuits.

We are also trying to make a full inventory of the Club assets. These include such things as the regalia in stock, the banners and rally signs, committee badges etc. If you hold anything of the Club's property, particularly the rally signs, will you please advise *Tony Jones* as soon as possible.

Mention was made of the comment that we don't seem to have many "southern" rallies, most being in what is broadly termed the Midlands area. We've also heard it said that the rallies are too far South! Or that there are "no rallies near enough for us to get to". There is a simple explanation for this. To run a rally the Club needs a Marshal and a site. It is appreciated that many people who live north of London are not very keen to travel through or round it to get to a rally to the south - especially if they only know the M25 as a route. This particularly applies if we hold a rally in Kent or East Sussex because the northern people have to go either through the tunnel (or rather over the bridge going out) or right round three-quarters of London. But we should like to accommodate this request if we can. We have had a couple of rallies in that area this year, one at Tanners Farm in Kent and one at Crocknorth Cottage in

Surrey. But if you know of a site in the general "southern" area and would be prepared to run the rally, please let *Tony Jones* know and arrange a date with him. (NO! I mean a date for a rally! Not the other sort - what would *Barbara* say?).

## Wanted

VW Trident about 1988/89 or so. 1.9/2.1 litre; automatic preferred but not essential. If you can help, please telephone Tony Fuschillo on 081 530 5642 or write to him at 11, South View Drive, South Woodford, London, E18 1NP. Tony wants to join the Club but can't until he finds the right van.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wanted for 1977 Leyland Sherpa. Overdrive unit and workshop manual plus any spare bits and pieces which you may have for sale. Please write, telephone or call in for a cuppa if in the area. *Barbara & George Pearson*, "Rorkes Drift", 4 S.B.J. Caravan Park, Helsby, Warrington, Lancs., WA6 6XS. Telephone 0928 724 653.

\*\*\*\*\*

Does anyone have any 'Air Miles' to spare which they are not going to use? I can put them to good use if not. I will make a suitable donation to the Club funds for larger amounts. Please send them to *Peter Fullick*, 18, Corbin Road, Pennington, Lymington, Hants., SO41 8BN.

\*\*\*\*\*

Also *Peter* wants to hear from any Club members who are serious collectors of 'Lilliput Lane Cottages'. If there are any, please contact him at the address given just above.

\*\*\*\*\*

## For Sale

Raleigh Free-standing motor-caravan awning for side opening door. Floor space 10' x 7', ridge 7'. Beige/brown colour, complete with curtains. Condition as new. £100. *Colin Fruen* has this for sale at 2 Fairlea Road, Dawlish, EX7 0LR or telephone him on 0626 866 701

\*\*\*\*\*

Renault Traffic Auto-Sleeper 1985 - Petrol. 12 months MOT. Elevating Roof. Electric Hook-up. Gas & Electric Fridge. 1992 Harrison Awning. Excellent condition. Non-smokers, no dogs. £7,900 or would part exchange for a Legend or Talisman with adjustment. Please contact *Margaret and Peter Miller* on 0272 240 740 or write to them at 17 Russell Grove, Westbury Park, Bristol, BS6 7UD.

Talisman GL, Diesel, March 1992. Non-smokers, as new, £22,750 ono. Will consider part exchange. Please telephone *Ray Corah* on 0773 852 333 or write to him at Packhorse Cottage, Jackass Lane, Alderwasley, Derbyshire, DE4 4GD.

#####

Talisman, Petrol, June 1990, only 3,900 miles. Immaculate condition, grey/white, two-berth, cupboard over cab. All usual Talisman fitments plus locking petrol cap, Bulldog wheelclamp. Two full Gaz cylinders. Also free standing Eurovent awning 12' x 8', Grey/Burgundy, used once, 2 ground sheets. £17,250 o.v.n.o. Telephone *Charles Francis* on 095 387 364 or write to him at Sycamore Lodge, Banham Road, Kenninghall, South Norfolk, NR16 2ED.

#####

Talisman GL registered May 1992. Mint condition, 4,000 miles only. 4 berth but has the panel to convert the Luton into a cupboard. Complete with Top Box, alarm, nudge bar, ladder guard, Pioneer radio and Omnimax TV aerial. Offers invited very close to £20,000

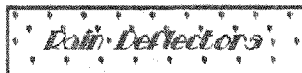
*Eric Marriott*, 10 Darrick Wood Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 8AW or you can telephone him on 0689 832 566.

In his letter to me *Eric* said that when he joined the Club earlier this year he never dreamed that he would have to sell the van but unfortunately he is unable to continue. All we can hope is that he may be able to restart at sometime in the future and we shall look forward to him rejoining us.

#####

You may remember that I put an advert in the September N/L but omitted the name and address. I said that full details would follow. As it turned out, the seller disposed of the vehicle very quickly so there was no need to add anything. I'm sorry I forgot to tell you but I hope that I have rectified it now. Incidentally, the seller kindly send a cheque for Club funds or for a Charity donation. So it has gone to the Club funds of which, as you know, a part has been added to the sum raised at Stratford.

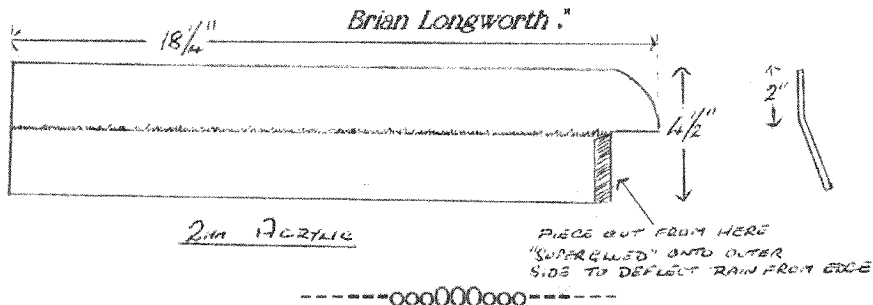
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Reference the article by *Sheila and John Read* in N/L 48 (page 6). I too have a Harmony and have made rain deflectors for the upper sliding windows using 2mm acrylic sheet offcuts. Dimensions

are shown in the attached sketch. The deflectors can be fitted in place from inside the van and retain themselves by friction when slipped into the channel left by the open window and overlap the edge of the fixed window.

The acrylic needs to be heated to enable it to be bent.



## Customer Service!

"George Greenwood's letter (August N/L) had the caption "Make your mind up". Well, I have and it has got to be Ford. On returning from France in June, Teepee, my Legend, developed a violent vibration when stationary at traffic lights (fortunately only a mile from home). Brook Shaw, the Ford agents in Sheffield, diagnosed and repaired a burnt out exhaust valve on No.1 cylinder at a total cost of £252.46 on June 23rd.

As in *George's* case, the vehicle was out of warranty by some 8 months and had just over 9,000 miles on the clock. The agents submitted an 'A' claim to Ford for the recovery of all or part of the cost and I wrote to Ford intimating that I would be looking to a full recovery for all the reasons that *George* mentioned. I received a reply from Ford saying that they were always prepared to consider a claim out of warranty and they would investigate and report the outcome to me through the agent.

On August 24th I received a cheque from Brook Shaw for £230.83. I am still a Yorkshireman so I rang the agents querying where the other £21.63 had gone. I was told that Ford had worked it out on the discounted price of parts. However, in the interests of good customer relations and me being a valued customer, a further cheque for the balance was on its way.

Result - one very satisfied customer who now knows that Ford really does value its customers. Perhaps A-S should get another coachbuilt onto the new Transit chassis to give us an alternative with what seems to be better customer service from the chassis builders.

*David Carrigan."*

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THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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Thanks to all of you who have, so far, returned your questionnaires. Our postman must not like us very much because he has had so many bundles to deliver. But if you haven't completed and returned your form yet, please do so. The answers I've been getting are very encouraging and show the sort of things which have pleased (or displeased) you. I shall be collating the results and reporting back to the Committee when I feel that there are no more answers to be received. I am amused at the number of different ways you lot out there have found to fold the sheet of paper. I am NOT, repeat **NOT** going to give a prize to the smallest - but at least one contender has managed to fit the A4 sheet of paper into a "gift card" sized envelope! I should like to think that at least 50% of our members would have enough interest to return the questionnaire - and so far it is shaping up well.

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Rally News

I understand that *John Greenwood's* rally up in North Wales proved a success and is to become an annual event. So please support him next year. Also, when *Sheila and I* were up in Norfolk for the Bank Holiday weekend at our niece's wedding, we discovered a nice little spot for a rally at a village called Trunch, about 2 miles inland from Mundesley. As a result we have booked it for a rally in early September 1993 so watch for the full details and come along. We don't seem to have many rallies in either of these places, North Wales or Norfolk so it is well worth a try.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Christmas Shopping rally at Abbey Wood Caravan Club site has had to be postponed until the following weekend, 4th-6th DECEMBER. The fee is £17.50 for the weekend, electricity is £1.90 per night and the rally fee is £1.50.

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To: All the friends we made when attending rallies with A.S.O.C. We wish you well and good camping weather too. We have had to sell our Talisman owing to *Ken's* illness but now we have a car and a small trailer van so we have not given up our hobby. If we come across a rally in our travels we shall pop in and say "Hello".

*Ken* is now recovering, but it is slow and he will have to take things easy for quite a while. Thank you all once again for your help and friendship while we were members.

*Ken & Molly Coombes.*

We are so pleased, *Molly* to hear that *Ken* is recovering and I am sure that I speak for all the Club members when I wish him and you the very best of good health and good luck in the future. Rest assured, if you don't come across for a cup of coffee and to say "Hello" you will be descended upon from a great height by a mass of Auto-Sleepers!

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## RALLY REPORTS

"Thanks to all for a superb weekend at Stratford. It was our first venture in our old Sherpa but we managed the 270 mile round trip without a hitch.

We met and enjoyed the company of a few new friends but we were a bit overwhelmed by so much going on. That's the trouble with old age - you can't take everything in. Everything was so professionally organised it was just superb.

*Barbara & George Pearson".*

What's this "Old Age" bit? ALL of our members, of whatever age, are just "going on 27" in my book, 'cos that's just how they seem to be.

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"Thank you to *John, Helen and Ruth Greenwood* for making our first rally a wonderful experience. Our three year old, Farah, was whisked away immediately after we parked. *Ruth* took her to the playground so she wasn't under our feet while we were setting up "home".

I am now looking forward to our second rally at Shepton Mallet and hope the weather is kinder to us there than at Argoed High

School. I wonder if *Ruth* will be there?

Thank you to *Steve* (the policeman with the two alsations) for the bike rack information. Sorry for not noting your surname, will try better next time.

*Fauziah Coffey*

Just a point of interest, *Steve* has the good fortune to be married to our Club Secretary, *Carol* and their surname is *Bowler*. Depending on how the dogs have behaved themselves they will say they own one dog each or tell you that both dogs belong to the other party. In fact they are two of the nicest dogs I know but they will insist on treading on my feet - and they are weighty.

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## Chairman's Chat

"Just three weeks after the very successful gathering at Stratford your Committee held a Rally at Willersey when the weekend was spent in discussing, both in and out of the formal Committee meeting, the holding of an Annual General Meeting Rally and/or a Club and Company Rally in 1993. Many views were expressed and those Committee members who were unavoidably absent had sent in their written ideas so a meaningful meeting was held. Members reported on their informal discussions with other Club members on the subject of whether there should be a combined rally or two separate events. The vast majority appear to support the latter so we agreed to hold the Annual General Meeting and Rally at Edithmead in April and a Club and Company Rally in, probably, July subject to agreement with Auto-Sleepers Ltd on the suitability of the actual date. Several venues are being investigated in conjunction with the Company and these include Stratford Racecourse (again). We hope soon to announce the venue and the date.

Two sub-committees have been appointed to cover these two major rallies. Enclosed with the last Newsletter was a Questionnaire (printed on yellow paper) and I earnestly ask you, if you haven't done so already, to complete it and return it to *Harry Henthorne* as soon as possible. The replies are being analysed and will help the sub-committees in their deliberations so that they can produce the kind of rally which is required by the majority of Club Members. Some new ideas are envisaged so that, hopefully, improvements will

continue to be made. Of course, well tried and most acceptable events will continue to be included.

In the last Newsletter you will also have read that the monies collected at the Club and Company Rally totalled £1,454.93. The Committee agreed to make this sum up to £1,500.00 as the total donation from the Members of the A.S.O.C. to the Macmillan Trust in keeping with the original suggestion that the profits (if any) should be given to a National Charitable Organisation. The cheque will be handed over at the Shepton Mallet gathering. Thank you all for your contributions, in any way, to the superb final total. I shall be most interested in your replies to question 13 on the questionnaire - "When the Club is able to support a Charity, have you any special preference as to which National Charity it should be?"

Enjoy the rest of the camping season.

*Arthur Irving ."*

I can tell you, *Arthur*, that the questionnaires started to arrive on 2nd September and have been coming in steadily ever since. The best answer to question 13 that I've seen so far is the hopeful member who put in "(Me?)"!!!

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#### ↑ Headrests ↓

"Our new Ford Flair, purchased in August '89, had no headrests and this always gave us concern, especially after the BBC programme "Watchdog" confirmed our fears as to the dangers of non-existent or inadequate headrests.

At the C & C rally at Stratford we were referred from the Auto-Sleeper tent to Unique Furnishings next door where we were told that they had already had four enquiries by 11 am on the Saturday. They told us the cost of supplying and fitting would be £75 each and the vehicle would have to go into their workshop, also that the matching fabric is no longer available. We considered the cost outrageous and the inconvenience not worth the effort.

Unfortunately I have developed a problem with my neck and a solution to rectify what we consider to be a serious omission had to be found quickly. At this point I must relate our disappointment at finding second-hand headrests matching our van upholstery had been sold on the bric-a-brac stall only minutes before. The purchasers kindly took us to the original owners and when we left them we thought that we would be able to buy the much needed

headrests from a well known motor accessory shop chain. Not so! They are no longer available from that source.

Last week, whilst on a mini-break in the Welshpool area, we came across Marks Auto Accessory shop and success has at last been achieved. He ordered two grand prix headrests, simulated sheepskin, from his supplier in Manchester but if any member is interested the manufacturers are Stylex Motor Products Ltd., Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3PL, Tel: 0284 701 666. They are an easy clamp fit to the seat and the cost was £19.95 each.

Black!! Black!?! Well, my wife bought upholstery tweed matching exactly the carpet-type lining of the motorcaravan, 1 yard @ £13.00 per yard plus thread (78p). Total outlay £53.68 and three hours sewing time.

Not only are we delighted with the new headrests themselves but we also have such happy memories of our weekend at Stratford where the search began.

*Eileen & Ken Shakesheff."*

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## Rally Plaques



One thing I forgot to mention last month. At the committee meeting held at Stratford (yes, we were still working even then) we discussed the subject of rally plaques and agreed that we would continue with them BUT the number ordered by the rally marshal would only be the number of bookings for the rally received by 14 days before the start of that rally. The order for plaques has to be placed by *Heather Tidbury* at least 10 days before the rally so the odd couple of days gives the marshal time to count up and telephone her. If you do book later there is no problem (unless there is a limit on the number attending) but you may not get a plaque.

RENROC ELZZUP

Talking of *Heather*, she has provided a "Wordsearch" puzzle to tax your brains. See if you can find the various names connected with this year's rally sites. They can be the name of the site, the town or even the county/country. List all those you can find and send your list to *Heather Tidbury*, 26 Ferny Close, Radley, Abingdon, Oxon., OX14 3AN by 30th October 1992. Whoever gives the most correct answers will win a prize. If more than one person finds all the answers, the names will be put into a hat and the winner drawn.

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB  
RALLY SUPPLEMENT

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October/November 1992  
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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!

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2nd-4th October.. Camping International Site, OXFORD. Fees: £4.50 per night INCLUDING Electrics. Rally Fee £1.50.

Bookings: Heather Tidbury, 26 Ferny Close, Radley, Abingdon, OX14 3AN.  
Tel: 0235 525 730.

All bookings MUST be received 2 weeks before rally: later please phone first. Limit of 30 vans, possibly 10 more elsewhere on site.

Directions: From Ring Road on SOUTH side of Oxford take A4144 towards City Centre. Site about 0.25 mile on left at rear of Texaco filling station.

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2nd-4th October. Chester Southerley Caravan Park, Balderton Lane, Marlston-cum-Lacae, Nr. Chester.

Fees: £5.00 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Bookings: Duncan Ellis, 6 Tudor Close, Shotton, Deeside, Clwyd, CH5 1NY.

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

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

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9th-11th October. Forestry Commission Site, Bracelands, Forest of Dean.

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

Bookings: Tony Jones, 49 Wessex Way, Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 7NT. Tel: 0793 763 032.

Directions: 1.5 miles north of Coleford. From junction A.4136 and B.4228 follow international signs.

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16th-18th October. CURRY POOL MILLS, Bridgwater, Somerset. Fees £2.00 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Bookings: Jeff Worley, 26 Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8SQ. Tel:0935 24049

Directions: 5.75 miles west of Bridgwater on A.39, approximately 2 miles west of Cannington turn South into unclassified road s.p. Spaxton/Asholt. Site entrance 500 yards on left. Possible visit to nearby Atomic Power Station - please indicate on slip if interested.

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30th October - 1st November. Hidden Valley, West Down, Ilfracombe, North Devon. Fees: £2.50 per night. Rally fee £1.50.

Bookings: Bernie Wisely, 12 The Laurels, Roundswell Village, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3QY. Tel: 0271 46 400.

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

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6th-8th November. FELL END CANCELLED.

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27th-29th November. Christmas Shopping Rally, Caravan Club Site, Abbey Wood, London, SE

Fees: To be advised.

Bookings: Arthur Claxton, Flat 13, Albany Mansions, Upper Maze Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0YD. Tel:0424 714915.

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

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

ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE MARSHAL BY NAME, PLEASE

\*\*\*\*\*

R A L L Y S L I P

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

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

Day/Time of arrival.....1st Rally? Y/N No.attending.....

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!

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R A L L Y S L I P

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

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

Day/Time of arrival.....1st Rally? Y/N No.attending.....

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!

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R A L L Y S L I P

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

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

Day/Time of arrival.....1st Rally? Y/N No.attending.....

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\*\*\*\*\*

BLOCK CAPITALS, PLEASE

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No: \_\_\_\_\_

I am told that she will give me the name(s) of the winner(s) in time for the December Newsletter and also details of the prize(s). I'm hoping for the full list of words to be found!

N	W	B	O	E	D	A	L	G	N	O	T	E	R	O	M
R	C	R	A	C	U	R	R	Y	P	O	O	L	Y	E	T
P	H	Y	E	I	E	L	O	R	U	R	T	P	R	S	E
K	E	N	T	O	N	L	T	F	O	U	A	O	U	D	L
B	S	Y	U	L	Y	B	E	O	X	C	H	O	B	R	L
S	T	B	R	T	E	L	R	D	N	O	H	L	S	O	A
S	E	A	H	W	L	E	O	I	N	I	O	E	I	F	M
D	R	A	R	E	K	O	H	E	D	E	P	Y	L	T	N
N	M	L	N	C	W	O	Y	D	E	G	E	B	A	A	O
A	E	D	A	Y	L	B	E	G	Y	L	E	R	S	R	T
L	L	T	E	L	O	N	N	R	R	S	O	I	T	T	P
E	U	B	A	U	V	I	U	E	A	N	D	D	N	S	E
C	B	N	R	A	R	B	V	B	E	M	U	G	L	G	H
A	D	N	L	E	N	E	C	W	O	S	R	E	E	A	S
R	E	L	T	A	B	N	P	U	W	O	R	E	W	P	E
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Y	E	L	P	I	R	H	K	I	N	G	S	B	U	R	Y
K	T	U	A	T	Y	E	L	S	R	O	H	T	S	A	E

## FRANCE IN THE SPRING.

### An April Fool's Trip.

Lowestoft, as you may know, is a grim place in the three months between Christmas and Easter. East Anglians have a saying, "As the days lengthen, so the cold strengthen." True enough the months of February and March are dominated by a lazy wind coming off the sea; too lazy to go round, it goes straight through you. Even in April things are little better, so early in our retirement, I conceived the bright idea of taking off to France from the end of March to the end of April. France would be pleasant in the spring time, and England would have warmed up by the time we got back.

This was not to be a grand tour, staying in the best hotels. Our transport was classy enough, a Lotus Elan plus 2, but our shelter was a pair of home-made tents, and associated equipment. Why home-made tents? The Lotus was never designed as a camping vehicle, it has very little luggage space. We don't like cramped quarters either, so the outer tent was designed to be about 19' long, 10' wide and 6'6" high and made of 4oz. proofed nylon supported with a frame of curved, sectional, aluminium tubes. The inner tent was made of similar material but was about 6' square, and formed the bedroom. All this, and the rest of the gear, including a pressure cooker, packed behind the seats, and in the boot.

We left Lowestoft on March 31st. in blazing sunshine and shirt sleeves. This was going to be a truly memorable holiday, and so it turned out. We planned to spend the first night at Hemel Hempstead with our daughter and family, and go on to Southampton for the ferry next day. After about 20 miles the car started playing up, misfiring, and at times refusing to go at all. We got to Hemel, and I decided to fit a new set of plugs and HT leads. That did the trick, the car gave no more trouble for the rest of the trip.

As soon as we got to France the weather turned cold. We headed south, watching the dashboard thermometer, waiting for the temperature to rise to about 15c. By the time we had reached Hendaye, almost on the Spanish border, it had managed 10c and we had to be content with that. Hendaye, out of season, is not a very inspiring place; my impression was of miles and miles of empty beaches swept by a cold wind straight off the Atlantic Ocean. Apart from a day trip to San Sebastian there wasn't much to appeal to us and it was bitterly cold.

Maybe the Mediterranean coast would be better. That is one of the joys of a camping holiday, one has complete freedom to go

where one likes. So off we set, in pouring rain, for the east. At the end of a long day's drive we were about half way across, so we stopped in a little town. It was still pouring, so we decided that we would be extravagant and find a hotel.

Easier said than done. Eventually we found a small place which could offer us a room but no evening meal. "There's a good restaurant just round the corner" we were told. We realised that we were at the eastern end of the town and we thought we had seen a cafe as we came in, so we walked back to see what we could find. It seemed a long way and we noticed a little old shop as we passed it. Eventually we found the restaurant and we were relieved to see that it was ablaze with light. The lights were on so that the proprietor could see what he was doing as he hurried to get his re-painting done in time for the new season; he certainly was not open!

Back we went and the little shop was open. We chose the makings for a meal that we could eat in the hotel room; biscuits, butter, sausage, wine etc., and asked the old lady "How much". She thought deeply, "dix-neuf cinquante quatre francs, M'sieur, si'l vous plait." I'm not that quick at French numbers, and it took a moment to translate; 1954 francs, at 10 to £1; that was about £200. "C'est impossible!" She added it up again and got the same answer. My own rough guess was around 20frs (£2.00). I know tourists are fair game for profiteering, but this was a bit rich. Then the penny dropped, there had been a re-valuation of the Franc a mere 20 years or so earlier, and she was still working on the old currency. I proffered her 20frs, got my change and all was well. We enjoyed our meal, slept well, and departed next morning. We turned left from the hotel, along the main road, under a railway bridge, and there was the restaurant. It looked a good place too; still, without these little mishaps there would be no story to tell.

Argele sur Mer was our next stop, a large resort almost on the Spanish border. The town was getting ready for the new season and we had the huge camp-site almost to ourselves. It is a good centre for walking, and in fine weather it would be an attractive place. After a couple of days it started to blow half a gale from the NW, accompanied by frequent squally showers of rain and hail.

One of the advantages of being an ex-meteorologist is that I understand weather, so I suggested to D.[Dorothy] that we should nip over into Spain and get the shelter from the mountains. There would be less wind and more sunshine there and, because of the Fohn effect, it would be warmer. So we nipped over to Rosas and found a campsite. I started to head toward the shelter of a high

wall when the warden came out and shepherded me into a cosy corner where there was just space to pitch our tent, surrounded by walls on two sides and a building on the third. He murmured something about expecting a gale of exceptional severity. I took the hint and secured our guy lines to an electricity post, a tree stump, the car and anything else that was handy. I was confident the tent would stand the strain; after all I had designed it with gales in mind and D. had constructed it with great care.

The evening was rough. The tent shook and quivered like a thing demented. About ten o'clock I took a look outside to see that all was well. It was well enough apart from a 12' branch lying in front of the tent which had obviously come from a tree behind us! It was a good job it had flown clear over us and not landed short. It seemed a good idea to sleep in the car, at least it would probably be a stronger shelter, so we reclined the seats and settled down, fully clothed, in our sleeping bags. There wasn't much sleep that night. The wind rose to a steady roar. Stout poplar trees by the car swayed like reeds in the wind. The most curious feature was that there was no rain, not even any cloud, it was a clear starlight night. It was terrifying, we were so helpless, there is nothing one can do about wind. It was worse than my memories of the Blitz in London, and that is saying something. Our one hope was that if something terrible happened it should be complete. The thought of being injured and having to spend time in a hospital was more daunting than death itself. At one point we saw a star blown clean out of the sky, some wind I thought to reach up to that height.

Eventually dawn came and the camp site looked like a scrap yard. Frame tents were demolished and several trees were down but our tent was still standing, shaken but none the worse for its ordeal. We were proud of it. The wall I had originally intended to shelter under was demolished.

We stayed at Rosas for a few days; it was sunny but cold so there was no question of sunbathing. From there we made our way back into France and up to one of our favourite places, Marseillan Plage. The site wasn't really open, in fact the owner was tiling the toilet block when we arrived but he let us stay. We had to cut the grass with kitchen scissors before we could pitch the tent!

As the holiday drew to an end we made our way across to the west side again and stayed a night at a small town some 20 miles south of St. Emilion. The only available site was a free, seasonal, one used by the grape pickers during the vendage. It was a bog in late April so we decided to stay in a hotel.

French cooking is well known to be out of this world, and this certainly was. The evening meal consisted of vegetable soup, better known in England as vegetable water. The main course was a very ordinary steak & chips, and the sweet a small block of ice-cream straight out of the fridge. Breakfast was similar to the usual French baguette and coffee, except that in place of a whole baguette there were a couple of slices each and when we asked for more we were grudgingly offered another slice each. The final straw was when I went to pay the bill. There had been a double bed and a single one in the room; we were quoted one price if we only used one bed and a higher price if we used them both. I suppose it was only natural that they tried to get the higher price but it didn't work. We have had some very pleasant experiences of French hotels, but that one was best forgotten.

Niort is a large town in mid-France and has a big, well appointed, campsite. It was near the end of April by this time and they were so busy preparing for the Mayday weekend fair that they were not bothering to collect fees from campers which made it even more attractive. As we were only intending to stay one night we only used the smaller inner tent. It too was made of proofed nylon, so it would not matter if it rained. The groundsheet was of rather heavier material and was brought up outside the walls to make a good seal. It rained quite heavily in the night. The water ran down the walls of the tent, between the upturned part of the groundsheet and the walls, and so into the tent. By morning we were lying in a puddle. (At home the design was altered so that the groundsheet came up inside the outer walls and that problem was solved.)

The rain followed us all the way to Chinon. There the campsite is on the banks of the River Vienne, a tributary of the Loire. The warden had spent most of his childhood in England, and spoke English like a native. Much of the site was occupied by a trade fair, side shows and so on. On the Saturday evening was the official opening of the Fair, the high point being the illumination of the chateau by laser beams. It was scheduled for 9 o'clock but it was a full half hour later before they got the lasers to work and they were very disappointing. The beams were so concentrated that they only formed small, intense, spots of light on the chateau walls, not nearly as effective as a normal spotlighting system would have been. One of the highlights of the fair was an afternoon show by Michelle Torr on the Sunday. (She occupies much the same niche in France as Shirley Bassey does in Britain) It was a pouring wet afternoon; she was on the stage, looking out over a sea of umbrellas; but she gave her all like a true trooper.

The next day was wet too. In the evening we intended to spend our time "doing" the fair, but to our surprise all the shows were closing by about 7. Perhaps it was so wet that they thought it was not worth staying open. Later we realised that there was probably another reason why they wanted to be away early. We retired to the tent to play backgammon. It wasn't a very good game; I was losing! Action was necessary, so I reached for a new bottle of wine. At the same time I became aware of a commotion by the door of the tent. There was a French couple there; "M'sieur dame, M'sieur dame" they were saying in an agitated voice. I went out. "Vous avez un peu de Francais?" they enquired. I agreed I had. "Regardez, les eaux montent". I looked where they were pointing and, sure enough, where there had been green grass under the trees was now white with flood water. I couldn't grasp all that they were saying but got enough to realise that there was a flood warning out and it was imperative that we moved. Twenty minutes later we had moved the car on to the road, the whole tent up to a point about 10' higher up the bank where we would be safe, and resumed our game of backgammon. For much of the night we could hear the flood waters gurgling in the drains. Near us was a manhole cover and, in some mysterious manner, at irregular intervals the waters lifted this lid with tremendous clattering. That was another rather sleepless night wondering how far would the waters rise and would we be able to continue our journey for now our appointment with the ferry was getting urgent. Next morning we saw that the waters had not risen as much as we had feared, but the pitch where we had been was covered in a couple of inches of water, so it was just as well that we had moved.

The rest of the trip, another two days, was quite uneventful.  
*Nial Reynolds.*

Yes, I know that it isn't to do with A/S type camping but I found it interesting and amusing. Many of us have started under canvas so I thought you might like to relive old times. I always thought that a meteorologist was a man who could look at a blonde and tell whether!

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### "TROOPING IN AMERICA - 1

Readers may recall our previous stories of purchasing an A-S VW Trooper and our trip to France, printed in N/L 23 & 39. Our longer term plan has been to tour the United States and planning has been in progress for more than two years. We finally found a US insurance company who would accept the vehicle risk with British number plates and our International Driving Licences.

The Trooper was delivered to the garage at Liverpool Docks on July 23rd for steam cleaning and documentation (get three copies of the certificate) before being driven onto the "Atlantic Cartier" for the eight-day crossing to Halifax, Nova Scotia. It arrived on August 2nd and awaited our delayed arrival on August 8th due to heavy bookings on the Glasgow-Boston Route.

To summarise these preparations (list of addresses on receipt of s.a.e.):

Insurance: American International Global, Wilmington, DE.  
Cover for £17,000 / \$29,500 cost £324 / \$584 for 3 months.

Shipping outbound: Gibbons Freight Ltd., Tilbury Docks.  
Freight & Shipping was £625 plus £306 marine insurance.

Shipping preparation: All Car Services, Liverpool.

Shipping inbound: Manaco International Forwarders, Miami, FL.  
Freight & shipping quoted as £525 / \$997 plus £270 / \$512 marine insurance.

Customs: UK: Take original Sales invoice for proof of VAT and Duty paid: DVLC Vehicle Registration Document: UK Driving Licences with photo-copies of each. Also take AA or RAC Membership Card.

No personal effects are allowed in the vehicle but we left all the camping gear, bedding, tools etc., which seemed acceptable. The Shipping Preparation agent will give you the Steam Cleaning certificates as well as a full check list of all items in the camper. The Liverpool agent sent us four copies of the Bill of Lading.

Canada: No charges up to 12 months; no sale in Canada. Copies of Bill of Lading and one copy of Steam Cleaning Certificate.

USA: No charges up to 12 months; no sale in US. One copy of Steam Cleaning Certificate.

US EPA: Use Form 3520-1 to import temporarily a

"non-compliant" vehicle for up to 12 months; no sale in US. Have copies with you.

CB: Take your CB licence with you.

Personal Insurance: We used Annual World-wide policies from Britannia (CSMA) and A.T.Mays. £54 p.a.

We paid our air fares with Visa to gain their travel insurance cover.

We also have £100,000/£50,000 (O.A.P) Personal Accident Insurance with an AA/Sun Alliance Family Injury Policy.

Monies: We took both Canadian and US Dollars in cash (£1=\$1.893/\$C2.25) and Travellers Cheques to cover spending money and food. We arranged for our local Halifax BS office to pay our monthly Visa account and used the card for night stops and petrol. Jenny also had a Master Card in case the Visa went astray. We are in the Card Protection Plan to cover the cards.

We arrived at Halifax/Dartmouth on Saturday evening, August 8th, and had to stay two nights in the Holiday Inn (£49/\$C85 per night) until Customs and Agent offices opened on Monday morning. Our plan was to clear formalities by lunch time then drive for 3 1/2 hours to Yarmouth and take the 16.30 ferry to Bar Harbour, Maine. This seemed worthwhile as the 6 hour crossing got us within a day of our first visit to friends in New Hampshire and cost \$C75 for the VW and \$C45 / \$C33.75 (OAP) for the two of us. An alternative route is from Halifax to Digby (2 3/4 hours) then 2 1/2 hours on the ferry to Saint John, \$C60 for the VW, \$C20 / \$C15 for the two of us. Saint John to Bangor, Maine, is a 3 1/2 hour drive.

Canadian Customs: The VW had been minutely examined and was undamaged and complete, apart from 2 camping chairs, a torch, 12 volt fan and bread knife.

US Customs: We presented full documentation at Bar Harbour and the officer was pleased to wish us "a pleasant holiday"!

We stayed at the Mount Desert Narrows Camping Resort (!) near Bar Harbour for the first night in the US. AAA listed and cost \$28 with water and hook-up. Heated pool, rental canoes, coin laundry, groceries, propane, transport to Bar Harbour, clamming. Credit cards OK.

Our chief worry was whether we could get a small enough propane gas cylinder into the VW gas cupboard. This is built for two 6lb Camping Gaz cylinders. We would also need a new regulator for Propane. This was a problem. We found a 12lb cylinder to fit the AS cupboard lying on its side but with regulator, fittings and a new hose to be made it became unrealistic so we bought a 12volt water heater element instead!

We then planned to drive down to our friends in New Hampshire for a couple of nights before heading West for Seattle. Later our tour is to take us South to San Diego, East to Florida, back North-west to Wichita and finally East to Portsmouth, Virginia where we plan to ship the Trooper home at the end of October. We had two deadlines, a Business Aircraft Convention in Dallas in mid-September and another Convention at the Beech Aircraft factory in Wichita in mid-October. As we had lost a couple of days starting, due to airline seat availability, we shall have to keep an eye on progress. More later!

*Jenny & Peter Berry."*

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I've received a rather plaintive letter from Thelma & Graham Sedgewick which seems to me to be rather optimistic. See what you think.

"We've been motor caravanners for the last two years with our beloved 'Betsy' - a VW LT28 motor home and have admired the A-S Clubman GL. We are looking to change our van and think that the Clubman GL with its layout of two bench settees and cupboard over the cab is the only one which will serve our requirements. There are only two of us and both being tall (6'1" and 5'10" respectively) we require a large double bed and settee type seating for lounging during the day.

We would be interested in purchasing a Clubman GL with the above layout but cannot afford a new one. If anyone is thinking of changing theirs we would be willing to travel to view it."

If you can help them at all, please telephone on 0229 839 734 or write to 107A Highfield Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 5PB.

So, once again, I've run out of space. The trouble is that if we enlarge the Newsletter it will cost more to post and you'll all have to write more. So I'll call it quits for now and use what there is on the spike for next month. Cheerio till then.

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