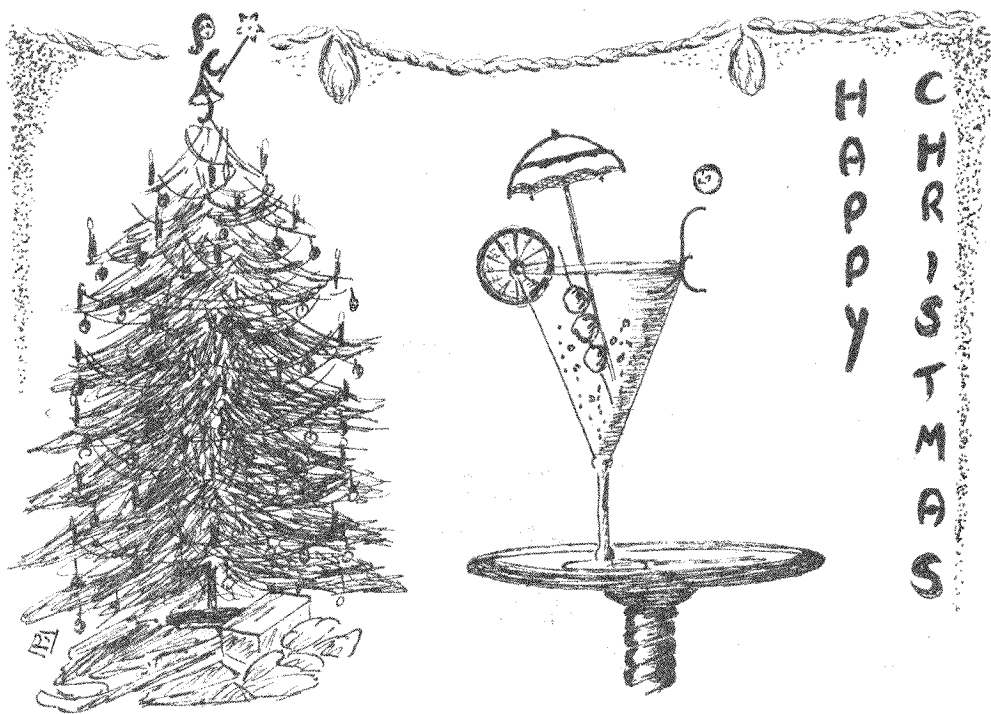


**AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 51**

**DECEMBER 1992**

Hello.

### WARNINGS

First, a couple of warnings. *Don Kensey* writes to say that he took delivery of his new Talisman on 2nd November and on Tuesday, 3rd November, the marker lights which had been fitted burned out melting the inside of the lights. These were replaced on Friday at Willersey.

The reason for this dangerous situation was that instead of 5-watt bulbs being fitted they were actually 10-watt! I hasten to add that the wrong bulbs were fitted by the manufacturer not by A-S. This led to the overheating and the possibility of fire.

Would any members who have had the marker lights fitted please check the bulbs and make certain that only 5-watt bulbs are used."

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*Derek Egleton* telephoned me to ask me to warn other members of a possible problem. In conversation recently he discovered that, because he is on a form of light medication, he had to advise the D.V.L.A. of that fact. He did so, supported by the necessary medical certificates, and has had no further problem with that side of things. But he was also advised to mention the thing to his insurers and a different reaction came forth. He has discovered that (a) there is a loading on his premium and (b) in the event that he had not notified them and had been involved in an accident, they might easily have disclaimed all responsibility. Even though his "medication" is so very slight it seems that they still take this view.

So please, **ANYBODY** who is taking any sort of medication for any reason whatsoever, get in touch with your insurers or brokers and make sure that nothing nasty is liable to happen to you.

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### Questionnaire

I have received over 300 replies to the questionnaire and I thank everybody who has sent their answers in. They are being collated and will be presented to the committee at (or before so that they have a chance to read them) the next meeting. It rather looks as though the Club is running in the way that pleases the majority of members.

Just as a sample of the letters which have accompanied the completed forms:

"I must apologise for the slight delay in returning the questionnaire. It won't tell you very much which is likely to be

useful to you as, for obvious geographical reasons, my wife and I are unlikely to attend many rallies but it is only courteous to return it, if only to show appreciation of all the work put in by you and your colleagues. We are not often "on the mainland" as we say here; most of our travels have been fairly long trips on the continent and if we are able to continue motor-caravanning it will probably be the same. I say that "if" because I am now nearly 75 and in July underwent major heart surgery but I seem to be making a steady recovery and hope that I shall be passed fit to drive the Talisman again fairly soon. Perhaps it may involve exchanging it for a new one with power assisted steering - the present van is no problem on the road but can be hard work during tight manoeuvres. I don't think we can consider anything before next Spring.

Don't bother to reply to this letter but I thought that you might like to hear from one of your (probably few) "offshore" members. I feel sure that most members would be surprised at anyone considering a motor caravan at all in a very crowded island approximately 9 miles long by 5 miles wide. No day trips and no weekends. And the ferry to St. Malo is very expensive.

*Ted Dukes.*

P.S. I am amused that the Newsletter is posted from Solihull. It was from there that Lloyds Bank transferred me to Jersey almost 45 years ago!

As you have probably guessed *Ted* lives in the Channel Islands - in St. Helier on Jersey to be precise. We do have a few other members over there so the idea of motor caravans can't be too off-putting even though they are not allowed to be used on the island for camping. I am sure that I speak for all members when I say how pleased I am that *Ted* is making a good recovery and we all wish him well for his future travels. Amazingly, in this club he could almost be called *Young Ted* because we know of members who are older than he is who still enjoy their vans and their camping.

\* -----ooo000ooo-----  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* SNOW CHAINS \* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

The recent wet weather prompts me to mention the success I have had in using snow chains to get my Talisman on and off muddy rally fields. For example at the East Horsley rally there were 4 Talismans [Talismen? -Ed.] - three got bogged down on the way out but I fitted the chains and drove through without trouble. I've managed to unstick my van on three other occasions and the chains worked well on hard packed snow in Andorra after I came to a halt

with both wheels slipping.

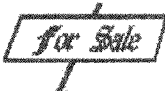
My chains are of the spring-bow type with the actual chains spaced around a spring steel bow which is placed on the inside of the wheel. It takes only a couple of minutes to fit the chains and it can be done when one is stuck. Removal is even quicker.

I stow my chains in the false locker under the fridge in the Talisman - on top of the wheel arch. The bows are tied into a smaller circle then the first chain is slid towards the rear of the van under the adjoining cupboard and the second into the remaining space.

*Alan Wheeler.*"

I must confess that I have thought about buying some chains before but haven't got around to it yet. (Same old excuse!) I must look into it again for the Clubman - and also see if we have a similar hidden locker we could use!

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This first advertisement arrived just too late for the November issue of the Newsletter. The latest date for receipt to try to get into the following month (space permitting) is the 16th of each month. I'm not sure where the letter went but although *Fred* dated his letter the 12th it didn't reach me until the 20th! Sorry, *Fred*.

Renault Trafic Auto-Sleeper 1985. Petrol 1650cc - 27,000 miles approx. Elevating roof. One owner. Price, including awning, £8,000. Telephone *Fred Bush* on 0296 748 858 or write to him at 13 Cromhamstone, Stone, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP17 7NH.

[No, my fingers didn't slip - there really is a second "stone" in the address. Ed.]

#####

Carrier to fit on the towball of any van, specially made for the awning and poles. This comes complete with the necessary board and lights and will need to be collected from *John Greenwood* who lives at 55, Park Avenue, Mold, Clwyd CH7 6XR. Telephone him on 0244 548 882 to negotiate a suitable exchange rate!

#####

Dinette and Roof Window Fly screens for Rhapsody, Rambler or Sportsman. £25.00. Double bed extension in blue moquette (unused)

for Rhapsody, Rambler or Harmony. £25.00. Levelling Ramps. £6.00. For any of these please contact *David Lepper* on 0483 480 413 or write to 9 Brunswick Drive, Pirbright, Surrey GU24 0NR.

#####

Talisman GL Diesel - 1991 'J' Reg. Under 5,000 miles. In NEW condition and complete with Silver Screens and Paging Alarm. £21,500. Telephone *Charles Stevens* on 0603 783 414 or write to 3 The Rhond, Hoveton, Norwich, NR12 8UE.

#####

1 complete Electrolux Refrigerator Door (excluding outer trim panel) as fitted in Talisman II. This was bought by an ex-member of the Club for F 79 BOV which had a slight split in the door surround but it was never used. If anyone is interested please telephone 0564 823 083 or write to Frank Oldham at 158 Norton Lane, Tidbury Green, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 1QT.

#####

Bedford CB22 ("T" Reg) Auto-sleeper. Long M.O.T. 4 berth. ALL mod. cons, Radio, TV, H & C water system, Fridge, Gas Fire. Swivel passenger seat. 2 new tyres. New paint job. £7,750. Telephone *Kathleen or Pat Morrissey* on 0926 428 205 or write to them at 4 Acacia Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6EF.

#####

Volkswagen Trident, February 1992. New shape engine in front, runs on unleaded fuel. Front wheel drive. High top, 4 berth. Porta-potti, fresh water tank, fly screens and full luxury specification. As new inside and out. £15,250 ono. Phone *Ray Corah* on 0773 852 333 or write to Packhorse Cottage, Jackass Lane, Alderwasley, Derbyshire, DE4 4GD.

#####

Talbot CXL Hi-top. B Reg. 4 berth. 27,000 miles. Second battery, 3 way fridge, toilet compartment, Propex heating, Silver Screen, Alarmed, Mains hook-up. Owned by non-smokers, no children, no animals. Immaculate inside. £8,000. Phone or write to *Don Gale*, 59 Monastery Drive, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 1DP - telephone 021 706 3521.

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### Trooping in America - part 3.

Following our stay with friends in Seattle and the replacement of our "beam benders" we continued South on the I5 through Oregon and into California. Here we found spectacular though

drought parched scenery. Crossing the hills into the Napa Valley brought caution signs of "15 mph" for some of the hairpin bends.

Sunday, September 6th, found us with friends in Santa Rosa and we spent an unexpected day there at the 127th Scottish Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans! We enjoyed more of Scotland that day than we get in a year at home in Ayr! Next stop was Sacramento, the Old Town, Capitol Building and Wells Fargo historical display.

Although we were staying at KOA camp sites we did pass others, some of which looked very attractive. See the AAA camp site book.

Typical credit card prices for fuel in California were: Diesel \$1.399; 87 octane petrol \$1.299; 89 octane \$1.399; 92 octane \$1.499 per U.S. gallon. At some "gas" stations you can save as much as 5 cents per gallon if you pay in cash. There is no unleaded fuel in California. Be prepared to leave your credit card with the paydesk BEFORE refuelling.

We used I101 down to San Diego and, approaching the City, we had breakfasted at the Goleta Beach with *Jenny* testing the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean. We had detoured to San Bernadino to see friends and stayed on the most remote camp site there. Along the I15 to a de luxe camp site at San Diego with visits to Balboa Park and the Trolley car ride around the city. 6,000 miles from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

We now turned east towards Phoenix, Arizona with a night stop at El Centro. This turned out to be an experience as the site is 45 feet **BELOW** Sea Level and the 100+ temperature during the day cooled to 89F during the night. NOT recommended without air conditioning.

*Jenny & Peter Berry.*

I've got parts 4,5,6 & 7 to follow this and, now that *Jenny and Peter* are safely home again I understand that part 8 and a summary of items experienced en route will follow that!

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#### Restoration of Victoria Bead Work



Beadwork has been used as a means of decoration throughout the ages, starting with small shells, and - over the last 300 years - using coloured glass and enamelled iron beads.

Victorian beadwork covers a variety of items such as teapot stands, foot-stools, fire screens and overmantel drapes and the work falls into two distinct categories - the DIY or hobby occupation and the purely commercial enterprise.

Stitching each bead back separately to a new backing canvas and following the original design is a time-consuming but enthralling pastime. It is one which requires strong daylight and a good measure of patience.

Items of this handicraft in good condition tend to fetch high prices in the antique trade because professional restoration of the more distressed articles is very expensive. The chief snag for the amateur restorer is the scarcity of genuine beads as the modern equivalents are too large and the colours and shades are not acceptable to match the originals. Part of the fun with this hobby is tracking down a really battered specimen, too far gone to rebuild, so that it can be 'cannibalised' for the beads.

*Doreen Hammond."*

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### Chairman's Chat

I must apologise to you all for an error in last month's Chat when I wrote that the Club and Company Rally was from Friday 24th July to Sunday 26th July 1993. I have got myself into a real mess with next year's diary and got down some funny things like Shrove Wednesday and Ash Thursday but haven't quite reached 32nd March!

The correct dates should read Friday 23rd July to Sunday 25th July 1993 and we don't have to vacate the site until noon on Monday 26th July - and I have checked all my papers to ensure that I have quoted the correct dates, especially to the Three Counties Showground. All other information given was correct.

I have received a letter from A-S thanking the Club for our letter following the fire at the Orchard works and saying that they hop to resume full production soon.

I have been looking over the resume of the answers to the recent questionnaire and at our next Committee meeting, at the end of November, we shall have plenty to discuss for our future programmes. Overall, the replies showed that the Club is being run in accordance with the wishes of the vast majority of members.

Thank you to all who took the time to reply and let the Committee know your thoughts.

The Committee has approved the suggestion that the Club joins, as an Associate Member, the Autogas Installers and Retailers Association. This will provide information on fitted gas tanks because there is a growing number of members who have them. We have one in our Rambler and it is a real boon when we are away for long spells, especially when the weather is cold, and Propane can cope with all the appliances on board. To date we have received a lot of information on suppliers throughout the U.K. and Ireland and I can provide a list when requested. The list will be regularly updated when information is received from the Association. Their Secretary is hoping to attend a rally next year to answer questions on the subject of fitted tanks and L.P.G. He is constantly pressing the Government to tax L.P.G. in the same way as the Dutch Government does and, if this comes about, the price of bulk Propane will drop to around 20p per litre - some bottled gas is about 98p per litre! Earlier this year I paid 18p per litre in Holland but that was before devaluation or our leaving the E.R.M. Roll on Maastricht! I am NOT making any political points here and I wonder what the Editor will include in brackets at this point!!!!

[Nothing - but it is a long way to Maastricht for 18p per litre! Maybe I'm running cheaper to buy at £1.86 per gallon in the village of London - until the famous Treaty is ratified at least! Ed.]

The Festive Season will soon be with us but I have already seen shops with Christmas trees in their windows in early October! So *Winifred and I* wish all members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year in which to enjoy your Motor Caravanning.

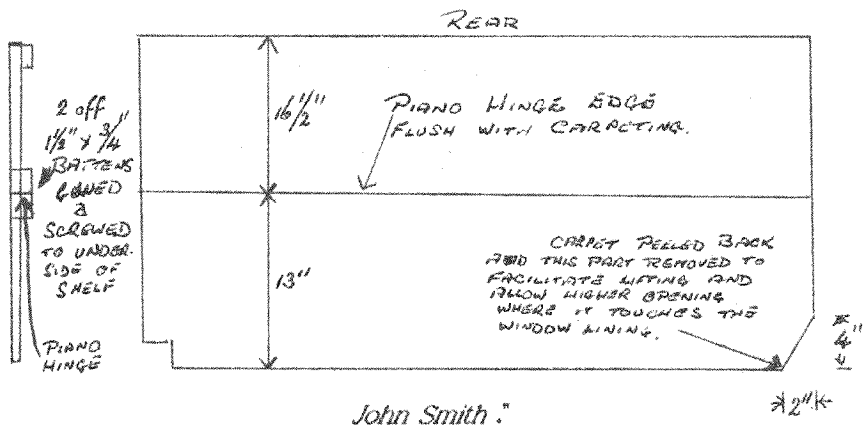
*Arthur Irving.*

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### Customising

I have customised my VW High Top in a number of minor ways (I hasten to add without changing the very good standard of finish achieved by Auto-Sleepers). However, this summer I have come up with a very simple change but one which I found a tremendous advantage when touring this year. I have put a piano hinge on the back shelf.

We like to sleep head to rear and I always found this shelf to be an awkward item to move and store. It is now much easier to "store" it and makes for easy access to the rear storage area. The diagram overleaf gives details.



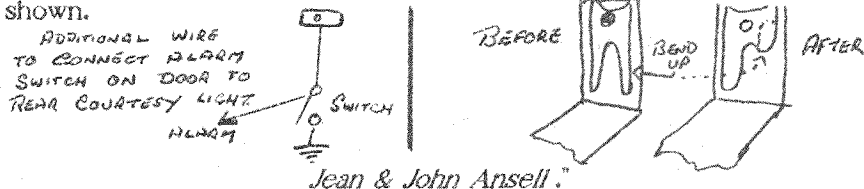
[NO, not THAT one, our very own John!] John sent in the advertisement to sell his VW last month and this letter came with it. Unfortunately space considerations precluded inclusion then. His reason for changing the van is because the *Smiths* had spent 25 days touring on the continent in 1992 and had experienced the wettest weather ever known to them in 35 years of camping and caravanning. They decided to move up to a larger, more comfortable van, hence the "For Sale" note.

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*and there's more!*

"When we bought our Talisman it was fitted with an alarm system with a switch on the rear door. Noticing that the rear courtesy light had to be operated manually, I connected the two together as shown in the diagram. This also meant that all three courtesy lights came on together as well as proving that the rear door alarm switch was working. When doing this mod I found that the cable to the alarm was corroded through in three places!

Now the other side of the coin. When any of the doors was left open, ALL the lights stayed on and could not, in our case, be turned off. Hence the second mod giving each light an off position. To do the same, remove the lamp cover and bend up the tag as shown.



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I decided to join A.S.O.C. following the death of my wife for two reasons:

- a) the last 25 years we had spent holidays camping, and
- b) the idea of the Club and rallies seemed a good idea to keep me actively camping.

"Seemed a Good Idea" proved to be just right. So what I am trying to say is Thank You to everybody in the Club who, on seeing me being taken for a walk by my three dogs, has passed the time of day and, if the time was right, offered coffee or tea. So, to everybody in the A.S.O.C. - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Good Rallying in 1993.

*Barry Smith ."*

No comment necessary - I think that *Barry* has said it all, don't you?

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Information Requested

This is a bit different from our usual run of things but I thought that somebody out there might be able to help so here it is.

I am writing to you in the hope that you can help my wife and myself. We wonder if you would have room in your Newsletter for the following. It was published in the October issue of MMM and produced little or no response.

My wife and I are planning to sell up and leave this country. We intend to buy a motorhome (26-30 feet) and travel around Europe for a couple of years. We need something with an overcab bed (for our three year old son) and a rear bedroom.

We would be grateful for any advice from anybody who has done something similar. Tips on anything from wild camping to health care insurance; from what to take to cheap camp sites; in fact anything to do with long term living on wheels.

Thank you. Tracey and John Davison.

They live at 5 Eastwood Close, Hasland, Chesterfield, S41 0BE.

Their choice of vehicle does not really fit in with anything that A-S currently make because of the rear bedroom. But one or two of you have been wandering around Europe and may like to write to

them with whatever advice you can offer. I am sure that they will be pleased to hear from anyone. Thanks, as usual, for your help.

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### ANSWERS

"Thank you to all who spent time trying to find the rally venues hidden in the wordsearch. I suspect some people were being hopeful that they had got all the answers when they put HOPE as their last place. Well, I am reliably informed that Hope exists but also that we have not held a rally there. Now there's a challenge: who can arrange and marshal one there for the Club next year?? No, motor caravans have not become amphibious yet and we have not held a rally in the SEA or, for that matter, ventured as far as PERU!!!

Now to the results. There were two fully correct answers so the names were put into a 'hat' and drawn by my daughter Nicola. The winner, who gets a voucher for a free 2 night rally with ASOC to be taken at any time in 1993 (excluding the AGM and the Club & Company rallies), was *Alan Wilkes* (Member No.202 from Evesham). The runner-up was none other than the Chairman, *Arthur Irving*, to whom a small consolation prize will be awarded. The amusing part was that Alan's was the first entry to arrive and *Arthur's* was the last. More entries next time could well mean more prizes. Look out for the next quiz, or whatever, in the January Newsletter. I thought that you would all have too much to do before Christmas and with the chaotic state of the post at that time I thought it safer to leave it to the New Year.

Here, at last, are the answers:-

Abbey Wood	Bainbridge Ings	Banbury
Beverley	Bracelands	Brecon
Bryn-y-Baal	Chester	Curry Pool
East Horsley	Fell End	Hawes
Hidden Valley	Holland	Honeybourne
Kent	Kettering	Kingsbury
Lytham	Moreton Glade	Newport
Oxford	Pooley Bridge	Ripley
Salisbury	Shepton Mallet	Sidmouth
Stratford	Tackeroo	Truro

30 in all. Now, hands up all those of you who are sat at home with a correct set of solutions and didn't send them in. Shame on you! You could have won a free weekend. Thank you to all who wrote notes of appreciation, I enjoyed reading your comments and,

as I said, the next 'puzzle' will be in the January Newsletter if the Editor has space.

*Heather Tidbury."*

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With reference to *Les Davey's* comments about mains electricity and his suggestion for a neon indicator lamp I would strongly recommend the use of a Martindale Ring Main Tester. As soon as the mains hook-up is completed plug the Tester into a 3 pin socket and switch on. It will show not just whether power is 'on' but also whether it is safely 'on', i.e. that there is no earth fault, live/neutral reversed or a neutral fault.

The reply printed in November's MMM to my query about 'Reversed Polarity' gives the possible dangers when hooking-up and even U.K. sites have been known to have faults! Better safe than sorry!

*John Read."*

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1.

Motor Caravan Insurance

We are currently insured by Safeguard (Tel: 0532 581 614) and have found them to be very efficient and businesslike. The premium is £198 p.a. for fully comprehensive, max PNCB, 3 named drivers (one under 25 and one over 50). Cover includes personal effects, £750 awnings and 60 days free Green Card.

At renewal in July 1992 we enquired with the Caravan Club agent Devitt who quoted £365.85 with the young driver or £136.94 one driver over 50. So, as usual, very much depends on your circumstances.

2.

Petrol Consumption - 2 litre Legend GL

We have completed 18,000 miles in under 2 years, mainly on local journeys of about 20 miles a day, and have kept a record of all petrol used. After initial problems with engine power we are getting about 22 mpg overall on premium unleaded. Holidays abroad with more leisurely motoring yield about 24 mpg. We have spent about £1,879 on 919 gallons - just under 20 mpg total!

3.

Electric Hook-ups

We are always amazed to see nowadays how everyone seems hooked on hook-ups. We never use them preferring the caravan

battery and LPG bottles. Certainly during the summer gas is much cheaper to use than mains electric and, provided the vehicle is used daily, the caravan battery appears to cope very well. Admittedly we do not use a television in the van (although we could as there are 12 volt models available). The main advantage of hook-ups to us seems to be that the individual sites are sometimes better, e.g. hard standing and/or more level.

#### 4. Waste Water

Although the Legend has a waste water tank, emptying it can be a problem on many sites. We have found the "little and often" approach to be preferable and now use a bucket under the waste tap allowing it to fill by flowing straight through the tank. When full, carrying the bucket to a suitable waste point is easy.

#### 5. Vehicle Burglar Alarms

We have a MOSS Model MS715 alarm fitted which is operated only by a key fob. As the ignition is isolated by the system it is impossible to start the engine without disarming. We have found this alarm to be very reliable and not prone to false warnings. It is in use all the time when the vehicle is unoccupied.

*Joy and Paul Utting .*

I'm not quite sure that I understand the final calculations in item 2. And in 4 it seems that they have rejoined the good old "bucket and chuck it" brigade which was the normal way of waste water disposal yesteryear. We have found that we can usually get away with a full weekend before we have to empty the waste tank and for us it is reasonably easy when we return home because we can park the van on a slope to encourage the water to flow. I have often wondered why we can't slide the waste tank out from under the van for emptying purposes, rather similar to the Cassette of the Porta-Potti. I'm sure that it could be arranged and with plastic tanks it ought to be reasonably simple for the mechanical geniuses at the Orchard to arrange, maybe even putting wheels on the tank to make it easier to take to the disposal point. (Hint! Hint!)

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#### A Sailing Rally.

Yes, it does sound rather odd but I have been talking to *Jack Hammond* who has sent me the following details:-

"Topsail Services is a private agency functioning to put

impecunious barge owners in touch with interested charter parties with particular reference to Thames sailing barges and offering day, weekend or longer voyages. The small fleet of barges is based on Shotley Point Marina across the river from Harwich. Ex Naval types will be familiar with the locality - just below the famous HMS. Ganges.

What follows is a log entry type of account of one such charter in June 1991.

The party of six couples travelled independently to Shotley arriving at 1800 hrs on Friday. Dinner was served on board as soon as the berthing arrangements were completed. (Fore cabin - 4 bunks; After cabin - 4 berths. Amidships two cabins each for two people.) The charter party become temporary honorary members of the local yacht club.

Saturday morning 0600 hrs reveille. Assist skipper and mate to lock out into the river. 0630 hrs full cooked breakfast. Day spent sailing south in light breeze. Coffee and biscuits at 1100 hrs. Full cooked meal at 1300 hrs. Various members of charter party practised their long-forgotten skills (?) on helm or sail handling. (A 90ft barge handles rather differently from a dinghy!) 1800 hrs the party, supported by the crew, opted for anchoring for the night and a quick trip ashore to sample the beer by those so inclined.

Sunday, 0730 hrs. Retrieve anchor and retrace course to Harwich. Some rain and the reverse course was sailed in 1/3 time taken on the outward leg. The afternoon spent navigating up to Ipswich and back. 1600 hrs. barge anchored off the marina entrance and the charter party landed by tender. Meals as per Saturday - afternoon tea served just before landing.

General points - 25% of the charter cost has to be paid with the first booking. There are no refunds for non-attendance. Last minute cancellations must find a substitute or expect to pay the full fee. Accommodation on board is adequate if basic. The food is good and plentiful, well cooked by the hostess and members of the charter party can suit themselves whether they are actively engaged in sailing the craft or just sitting about and enjoying the change of atmosphere. By Insurance requirements the craft may not sail more than 5 miles offshore.

*Jack* sent in a copy of the 1991 programme and the costs seemed to be of the order of £80.00 per head for a weekend, £105.00 for a long weekend. The weekend consists of being on board for Friday and Saturday nights and finishes at about 6.00 pm on Sunday.

If this idea for a weekend appeals to you, please get in contact NOW with *Jock Hammond* at 70 Birmingham Road, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 2NH or, better, telephone him on 0922 23 260. He needs to have an idea of numbers who are sure they would take up a weekend because he can only make a FIRM booking if he has receive proper assurances. Full details for 1993 should be available by Christmas but it is essential that you speak NOW if you would like to join in.

Bon voyage, as you sailor types say, and let me have a write up afterwards, please!

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### **BOLTS**

"I think a problem I had should be aired. Unusual sounds from the engine made me look hard to see what was wrong and I was lucky to spot two bolts missing from the offside engine mounting brackets. These bolts go into tapped holes in the bottom bracket - the engine one which hangs from the body mount - these bolts, made presumably from high tensile steel, had sheared leaving the engine hanging by just one bolt and allowing the top mounting bracket to twist forward throwing the engine out of line and partly trapping the flexible oil pipe that leads to the turbo. There is no doubt that very soon the remaining bolt would have sheared as well; had that happened the engine would have dropped down and undoubtedly caused very serious damage, possibly seizing up the transmission which, had I been travelling at speed, doesn't bear thinking about!

Fortunately I was close to our usual Talbot dealer who, strangely, didn't seem at all surprised at this happening; said they would drill out the broken bolts and fit new ones; call back next day. This I did and was shaken when presented with a bill for £156.00! However, although the warranty was nearly one month out of date, Talbots would probably meet part of the cost. I was sent a cheque for half that amount which I have not cashed; instead I wrote to Peugeot Talbot claiming that for such a serious and potentially dangerous fault in assembly I should be reimbursed in full. My letter has been acknowledged and they are investigating the case. I will let you know what happens in due course. My engineering friends tell me that there is no doubt that these bolts were grossly over-tightened so I would suggest that when one checks the oil level etc., a glance is taken at the mounting bolts - there might just be one or two missing!

*Ron Wallis."*

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## *Power-assisted Steering*

I was interested in the copy of a letter written to the Product Manager of Peugeot-Talbot regarding Power Assisted Steering (November Newsletter). Following a slight heart attack in May this year I was advised by my doctor to have this fitted to my Talisman GL Turbo Diesel. Telephone calls to three local agents showed a lack of interest; I was referred by one to their Head Office but was warned that the cost would be in excess of £3,000. I discussed the problem with the helpful Mr. Pithouse of S.V.O.Ltd (see their advert in M.M.M.) who was able to assure me that there was no problem in the fitting; that other than P-T parts would be fitted where these were not available. The unit has now been satisfactorily operating on my van for five months; the charge for the parts and fitting at a far lower estimate than that quoted by P-T. One bonus is that if you are able to obtain a doctor's letter stating that P.A.S. is necessary you are exempt from V.A.T.

The other subject which has had a brief mention in previous issues concerns the fitting of a back box onto coachbuilts. My wife now forbids(!) me to clamber onto the roof to the top box so, as an alternative, I have fitted an Omnistor box to a Fiamma cycle rack. The rack falls below the level of the window. A-S have been most co-operative in overcoming the possible stress created on the bodywork. First of all the Talisman models come out of the factory with reinforced points to accept internal furniture which in some instances can be used for cycle racks. In addition, in my particular case, further reinforcement was made to the inside furniture. I took the problem to Mr. Roger Parkinson of R.G.P.Fabrications, Unit 5a, Chalwyn Industrial Estate, Poole, Dorset, who very quickly made me a stress bar which is held at the base of the cycle rack, running down at an angle of 45° to the bumper bar (U-shaped holding cups were welded to each end). A safety chain is fitted between the bar and the bumper in the unlikely event that the bar becomes dislodged. We have now completed 3,000 miles without signs of distortion to the coachwork. The advantages of the box are that on site my wife and I have easy access to a large outside locked storage area and while travelling are able to move around inside the van which is uncluttered. We are careful when travelling only to carry light bulky items, such as plastic containers, hoses, cable, wellies etc., inside the box.

How do other members manage to keep an uncluttered van when away from home for three months at a time?

*Tom Childs*

"We have owned our Talisman now for just over two years and have been very pleased with it except for that most important item - the beds.

The Talisman is cunningly organised so that you can have two forward facing seats which will make up into two single beds or one big double. To do this our friends at A-S have used four base seat cushions which can be moved around to achieve the desired layout. The problem is that we like to have to longitudinal single beds but, because the seat cushions have a pronounced stepped front roll, you end up with two very narrow (and very hard) beds. As we are both "over the hill" these beds have been a source of discomfort every since we bought the van and we spent a lot of time looking over other vans without finding anything so good, in our view anyway. Also we didn't want to be drummed out of ASOC!

So I wrote to A-S. "What problem?" said Mr. Trevelyan. "Just get in touch with Unique Furnishings at Kirkby-in-Ashfield and they will sort you out". and they did. In no time at all they supplied two seat cushions, each the full length and depth of the seat bases, in soft foam, with no front roll, piped all round and with velcro on the bottom. All finished in the blue/grey of the Talisman and buttoned to match. The result is superb. Two beds each a full 2' 4" wide and with no joins or bumps. Of course, we still have to use the front seats for the leg space but legs don't need much room.

Out of interest, in our examination of other makes of van we found that to have two full length beds in an 18' vehicle you tend to lose a lot of the facilities that are built into the back end of the Talisman. The alternative is to go to a 20' van but that is too long for our driveway and would prevent us sneaking into many public car parks as we do at present - provided that there is no height bar. So the new cushions seem to be the best solution.

Unique Furnishings Ltd is at Ventura Court, Sidings Road, Lowmoor Industrial Estate, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts., NG17 7JZ and their helpful M.D. is Roy Varney. The foam used is CMHR 36 and the fabric to match the Talisman is Astoria 22 blue/grey.

I hope this helps some of those oldies in the Club who are searching for a bit of comfort for their aching bones.

*Pat Johnson.*

We may have some members who have aching bones, but I don't really think that we have any "oldies". Everyone I've met seems to be in the 27-30 age group - no matter what their birth certificate may suggest!!

"The LEGENDary Auto-Sleepers

I don't have a great FLAIR for writing, or any ability to compose a SYMPHONY. Since joining the Club over three and a half years ago, I have been very impressed by the RAPPORT and HARMONY between the members. We certainly are a FRISKY bunch and each member is a SPORTSMAN or woman. It is interesting to see the increasing numbers of Citizens' Band radio enthusiasts, no doubt started by the CB22. Perhaps the Editor was thinking of his crystal set when he was counting the cat's whiskers!

Many members use their vans as a RAMBLER uses his boots. Once loaded up, off they go, sometimes stopped at a foreign border by a TROOPER who admires their Auto-Sleeper. Then with a cheery wave off they go to RIMINI or perhaps further east to engage a SHERPA for a spot of mountaineering. One or two members manage to put their van in TRANSIT to America hoping on the way not to find out if King Neptune really has a TRIDENT. (Sorry, I didn't put the COMMERS in the last sentence.)

With the strength of an Auto-Sleeper around them, our EXECUTIVE'S do not need a TALISMAN to help them DODGE the other vehicles on the road.

Now I have taken delivery of my new van, I shall, of course, remain a CLUBMAN!

Yours sincerely,  
*Bob Williams*

P.S. In RECROspect perhaps this letter isn't such a good idea!"

I can see that I shall have to CHEVVY *Bob* a bit more so that he can prepare some more AUSTINtious views about the TRAFIC going through the Orchard.

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**HELP**

*Ron Wilson*, who does so much work for the AGM etc. has sent a plaintive plea. He had a copy of REIMO's catalogue which he lent to somebody at a rally early in the year. He forgot to get it back and, as it cost £5, he would very much like to find it again. He says that it is his own fault for not remembering it but if you have it please contact him.

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I would firstly like to thank *Richard Melville* for his suggestion to obtain a 'Powerfit' tyre pressure gauge, it has proved to be ideal.

The second matter is regarding a recurring problem on my Volkswagen Trident (T4) because the brake warning light keeps coming on when driving. Despite four visits to VW Van Centres since July the problem has remained. The cause appears to be moisture entering the electrical connection on the brake reservoir cap. The last "solution" by the VW Van Centre was to apply silicon to the connecting plug, but after two weeks the warning light reappeared whilst driving. I would be pleased to hear from any member who has had a similar problem with their T4 based van.

The best fuel consumption figure I have recorded so far for my Trident is 30.16 mpg over 1500 miles touring in Scotland. As the van is fitted with a catalytic converter I feel that this is a good figure.

*Roy Raeburn.*

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And now for something completely different, as they say.

The enclosed announcement is neither "For Sale" nor "Wanted" but "For Hire". I feel sure that many members have enjoyed reading of other members' experiences in U.S.A. but have not fancied the effort required to transport their own vehicle. This provides an easy way out at comparable expense.

#### FOR HIRE IN SAN FRANCISCO

Member's own modern motor-caravan, 24'. Easy drive, Automatic, P.A.S., Cruise control etc. Sleeps four comfortably. All mod. cons., including central heating, microwave, shower, flush toilet etc.

Details from *Dorothy & Leo Scoble* telephone 0452 700 526 or write to them at Windmill Cottage, Blackwells End, Hartpury, Gloucester, GL19 3DB.

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A short rally note which says it all for the Club!

"Thank you *Kathleen and Norman [Benyon]* for an excellent rally at Kirkby Stephen. It is an excellent site and one to be remembered - lovely and clean - NO MUD!!

My thanks also to *Irene & John [?]* for their company. They helped to take my mind off worrying too much about my husband who was unwell in our van. We got home safely, me driving, and

*Mick* is now in hospital undergoing more tests and loads of antibiotics. He had an illness like this last year, so we know what he is in for.

*Margaret Howell."*

PS Happy Christmas to one and all.

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And that, once again, is all we have time for this month. All that is left is to say, from *Sheila* and me, is a Very Happy Christmas to all.

Your Editor  
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