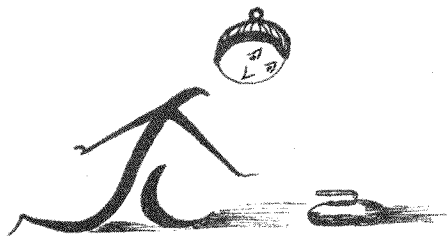
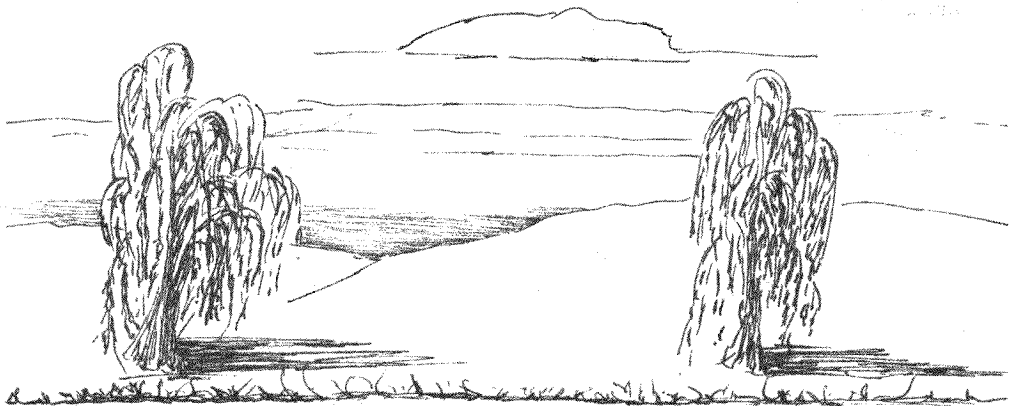


**AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 52**

**JANUARY 1993**

Hello.

And Welcome to 1993! I sincerely hope that you all have a peaceful, happy, prosperous and enjoyable year. 1992 was quite eventful for Sheila and me although it wasn't quite so nice for some like the Queen and Auto-Sleepers Ltd. Both of the latter had a fire which caused a fair degree of havoc.

But the New Year is with us and perhaps it will be a better year, a drier year even!

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### **WANTED**

With this issue of the Newsletter you will find the usual Provisional Rally List for 1993. Several of the planned rallies have not, as yet, got Rally Marshal's names against them in the full detailed programme.

This is where your committee needs your help. You will have seen how the same names keep appearing on the lists of marshals and have probably thought that it is O.K. for them because they have the experience. But they didn't always have the experience, they had to start, too.

So why don't YOU (Yes, YOU sitting comfortably by the fire!) have a go? The job is NOT difficult and the members who attend YOUR rally will be only too pleased to help out in whatever way they can.

Without the Rally Marshals there is no rally. Without the Rallies there wouldn't be the Club that you want. So come along now, think seriously about it. You won't make a fool of yourself or, if you do, you'll be in very good company!! So ring *Tony Jones* right now and offer your services. His telephone number is 0793 763 032. He will be delighted to hear from you.

Several Questionnaires bore a comment like "Rallies are too far away for us to attend". Here's YOUR chance! If you made a similar comment why not organise a local rally? Over to you!!

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### **Waste Water**

"Just like *Joy and Paul Utting* (December N/L) we are also members of the 'bucket and chuck it' brigade for the following reasons:

1) We didn't wish to drive with the extra weight of waste water in the tank.

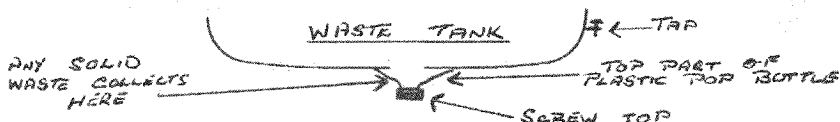
2) We experienced a 'pong' from the sink in the van despite the use of "Milton" which eased the fault. However, I was given a good tip - to cut a hole in the base of the tank and Araldite the top of a plastic pop bottle over the hole. By unscrewing the top any sludge trapped is washed away at each draining so that the tank is truly cleansed and drained. I am amazed at the amount of sludge I see in the cap each time I empty before leaving the site with a lightened tank. I leave the tap on the tank open and hang a yellow collapsible fishing bucket from it. The bucket is emptied each time I fill my drinking water container so I do not find it inconvenient.

3) Having solved one problem it also cured another - before the mod there was always water in the tank and I was being flashed by kind motorists soon after setting off because they thought I had a water or petrol leak if I had forgotten to turn the tap off.

I am sure the suggestion for a removable tank could easily be a thing of the future but I am of "yesteryear" with a good Bedford (not VW) Clubman which I do not intend changing. If you wish to show your artistic qualities you may reproduce this drawing of my drainage point.

NOT TO ANY  
KNOWN SCALE

*Audrey & Roy Williams."*



[My Artistic Licence has just been renewed - Ed]

#### Trooping in America - part 4.

"After the temperatures of El Centro we continued eastbound on I. 10 through sandy desert, pebbly scrub and cacti slowly climbing to a still very hot Phoenix, 1,090 feet above mean sea level. *Jenny* visited the Indian Cultural collection at the Heard Museum while *Pete* found interest in the Museum of Flame where 100 fire engines and equipment are displayed, some early English!

A night stop at Wilcox (3,500 feet up) brought some relief with cooler night air. Auto-Sleepers had air-mailed a plug for our Zig

unit to replace the plug stolen with the fan during shipping the VW to Nova Scotia. Now we could keep the rear of the Trooper comfortable.

We crossed the Continental Divide range of mountains at 4,585 feet and slowly descended to find the most spectacular site at Las Causes, New Mexico, where the pitch overlooked the city lights below. Next morning we drove through an industrious El Paso and onto the open plains of Texas surrounded by mountain ranges and found the first rain in five weeks.

Southern California, Arizona and New Mexico are littered with "RV Resorts" mostly in remote places where you may retire in your RV at very low cost-of-living rates!

Turning onto the I. 20 for Dallas the scenery suddenly changed to a broad, flat green plain stretching as far as the eye could see. At Sierra Blanca we had our first compulsory stop where a heavily armed State Trooper, puzzled at our British number plates and then asked for our passports and immigration papers. Satisfied, he allowed us to continue.

So far, in 7,500 miles, we have seen only one passenger train. There are, however, frequent coast-to-coast freight trains, some having more than 150 wagons and being pulled by 5 diesel locomotives. Many trucks carry two sea containers stacked one on the other.

We have found the very numerous long distance truck drivers courteous in their driving, cruising at what seems to be 70 mph whatever the limit may be and many of the trucks are chromium-plated beauties.

*Jenny & Peter Berry.*

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## RALLY REPORTS

A total of 24 vans attended our second rally at Hidden Valley - a good turn out for the time of year. The weather had been non-stop rain until Friday and then the sun came out and stayed out apart from a short shower on Sunday morning. It made a very pleasant weekend.

We were joined by a prospective new member *Clive Hackney* who had been given the venue and our names by *Sheila Henthorne*. (Thanks, *Sheila*, I think *Clive* enjoyed himself and intends to join.)

He may well have the oldest A-S in the Club then as his is a Commer of 1963 vintage!

We started the weekend with coffee in the club house (with no help from the urn - again!) and the raffle tickets sold well. A few lingered on in the bar to keep Melvyn (site owner) company. On Saturday night we had an excellent meal, thanks to Sue's efforts. On Sunday we had coffee in the club house and those who wanted to stayed on to take advantage of Sue's generous Sunday roast before departing homewards.

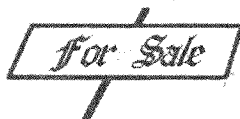
By the number of familiar faces from the April rally this is proving a popular venue and, hopefully, we are getting it right. Thanks to all who donated raffle prizes and to our helpers, Marion & Ray [?].

Finally, we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and hope to see you at the same place some time next year.

*Sandra & Bernie Wisely  
and SAM the dog.*

As you can see, this was scheduled for last month but there just wasn't enough room.

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Fiamma Cycle Rack, Compact 200 to take two cycles. Offers invited.

Silver Screen to fit Transit cab, e.g. Legend, Flair etc. £50.00

Both items available from Allen Gray, "Brookside", Bridgemoor Close, Tregorrick, St.Austell, Cornwall, PL26 7AF.

#####

VW Fiamma Cycle Rack - No drilling of van required. £80.00

Vern Harray, 2 Valette Road, Moordown, Bournemouth, BH9 3JB or telephone 0202 515 231.

#####

Talbot: Driver and passenger seats, new in July 1992. Both have head restraints; upholstery Scillee; will replace any Talbot seat fitted with slides. £210.00

Set of four Talbot wheel trims, almost new. £20.00

Locking cap for Talbot petrol filler pipe, complete with 2 keys.  
£4.00.

Dennis Barry , 8 Melvyn Close, Goff's Oak, Waltham Cross, Herts., EN7  
5RR or telephone 0707 873 480.

#####

Talisman GL 1990. Petrol. Less than 7,000 miles. Immaculate condition  
and untouched by dogs, children or smokers! Selling because wife  
could not resist charm of Auto-Sleeper salesman at Earl's Court  
when we ordered a new Clubman. Telephone Peter Shaw on 0590  
673 392 or write to him at Monks Lantern, Fairfield Close, Lymington,  
Hants., SO41 9NP.

I've heard some reasons for changing vans but....! Ed.]

#####

Porta-Potti 265 virtually new, colour beige. £20

Toilet tent. £15.

Buyer would have to collect sometime when the weather has  
improved! Margaret & Michael Howell, 75 Charlton Rise, Ludlow,  
Shropshire, SY8 1ND or telephone 0584 875 788

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**WANTED**

Cycle rack to suit Talbot based van with rear opening doors. Please  
contact Vern Harrhy as above.

#####

Double bed extension for Harmony. Please contact Kath & Harry  
Prince at 299 Markfield Lane, Markfield, Leicester, LE67 9PR or  
telephone 0530 243 457 if you can help.

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**Obituaries**

I have been advised of the death of *Glynis Jenkins* Member No.  
919 from Woodford in Essex. She apparently died suddenly at the  
end of April this year. We offer our condolences to her family.

#####

*Hazel Cooper* has written to tell us that her husband *Bill* died in October following a heart by-pass operation. She consoles herself knowing that he is no longer suffering. Again, we offer our condolences to *Hazel* and to *Marjorie and Austen Cooper* and the rest of *Bill's* family.

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Insurance

"It might interest members to know of the treatment I have experienced. I have been on various levels of medication throughout my life and am likely to be so for the rest of it. When I became old enough to qualify for a driving licence not only was it refused but I was advised that I would never qualify (not by the DVLA may I add).

However, at a far later stage of my life, I managed to get a provisional licence and then passed my test. Now I hold a full licence which must be renewed every three years and can be withdrawn at very short notice. Not satisfied with just a full licence, I took and passed the advanced driving test last year and am now a full member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

We have been perfectly straight with our insurance brokers and they have found us the best cover possible under the prevailing circumstances even at a slightly increased premium. As a member of the IAM I qualify for discounted motor insurance being thought to be a good risk. This was refused because of my medical history even before my driving record was considered.

I would advise anybody that an insurance company will look for the slightest reason to exclude a claim. Firstly, go through a well established broker and, secondly, be honest with them. Like everything else, with insurance you get what you pay for, It may seem a good idea to buy cut-priced insurance until you come to make a claim!

*Richard Osborne.*"

*Richard* wrote this after reading *Derek Egleton's* comments last month. It does show that the Insurance people are a law almost unto themselves. I notice that they are now asking that bottomless pit of money, The Government, to take over the risk of the terrorist explosions. It seems to me to be almost like me wanting to gamble on a horse or dog and expecting someone else to lose if it doesn't win! But if my choice does win, then the profit is mine!! I must

also apologise to *Prue and Richard* for misspelling their name in previous issues. Somehow I had managed to put a "U" in it where none should be. Sorry, folks!

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|| SPRINGS ||

"I was interested to read *Les Davey's* letter in November in which he referred to the "squeaking rear springs" in his two Ramblers. I have had this problem in a new Harmony purchased on 1st August 1991 and I know of two other cases in North Devon with the same problem.

At the first service the noise was reported to the Peugeot agents and a 'cure' was carried out by greasing the rear springs and bushes. On a long trip in May and June the noise returned after about 1000 miles and I contacted a Peugeot agent in Penrith who said that the fault was common on the Talbot Express and 'cured' it again by cleaning and greasing the springs. After a further 1000 miles or so the noise returned yet again and my local agent obtained permission to replace the springs. Silence - for another 800 miles when, lo and behold, the noise returned!

By now I had written to Peugeot and the reply from the Customer Relations Executive intimated that there was nothing more they could do. The South-West representative for Peugeot had meanwhile said that they had had no complaints from other garages. Fortunately my garage then had exactly the same fault on another Harmony bought by a lady in Exeter on 1st August 1992 and, only a fortnight after Peugeot told me they could do nothing more, I had a call saying that my garage had been sent a modification memo which involved replacing the shackle pins. This has now been done - the new pins apparently have a rubber bush longer by 8mm - and I can only wait and see the result.

Unfortunately it has usually taken about 1000 miles before the noise recurs and, as I am unlikely to do many long trips during the winter, it may be May or June next year before I really know. I can only say to anyone troubled by this annoying fault, persevere with your agent and, between us all, we may eventually get a cure.

*Jack Briggs."*

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Many of you seemed to enjoy the wordsearch puzzle printed in the October issue and I am indebted to *Heather Tidbury* for No.2 of what might well become a mini-series.

WxOxRxDxSxExAxRxCxH...PxUxZxZxLxE

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

This square contains a large number of things which might be found in a motor-caravan. The answers can be read horizontally (forwards or backwards), vertically (up or down) or diagonally. Answers, by 1st February 1993 please, to: Mrs. Heather Tidbury, 26 Ferny Close, Radley, Abingdon, Oxon., OX14 3AN.

## Refrigeration

When starting out for a weekend, or maybe longer, it is possible to "prime" the fridge if one has a deep freezer at home. I assume the usual type of fridge in the van, e.g. an Electrolux or similar. Get a plastic container such as a 5 litre oil container with the top cut off or something of similar size. Clean it thoroughly, of course. Fill it with water to about 4 or 5 cm from the top (about 1 1/2" to 2" in old money) and place in the freezer for at least a day or preferably longer. Then put this hopefully frozen pack into a plastic shopping bag but NOT one with holes in. Place on top shelf close to the fridge's freezer compartment. Result - instant cooling. While travelling one would normally use the 12v facility in the fridge. I have found that the ice will last at least two or three days depending on the outside temperatures. Some will melt but the plastic bag will collect any water that would otherwise spill while moving.

For just the long weekend I find that this obviates the need to use expensive gas but if one has a hook-up available that is a different matter. When the ice eventually melts, the empty container is still useful for odds and ends in the same place in the fridge. This idea is less useful if you need to pack every available inch in the fridge.

*Hilda and Ron Wallis."*

A variation of this idea which we have used with success, particularly when we had a van without a fridge and had to rely on a cool box, was to freeze a couple of cartons of milk - the pint size is ideal. It does help with instant cooling and is very useful as it thaws. It also saves having to carry a bottle. Ron tells me that Taibots refunded the other half of his claim without quibble (see December Newsletter)

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## "Camping on Jersey"

With reference to the contribution by *Ted Dukes* in the December Newsletter, might I clarify the position?

There are three camping clubs with a selection of tents, caravans and motor caravans in each. Members are able to camp on any of the four registered camp sites on the island but each of the clubs remains loyal to one camp site owner.

Clubs are allowed to camp on each weekend from Friday

evening to Sunday evening commencing in April right through to September. Campers who are not members of a club may only camp on any of the recognised sites but then only at the owner's discretion.

The most important point, however, is that caravans and motor caravans from the UK or the continent are not allowed onto the island for camping purposes.

*Cliff Petit .*

Having spent a little time on holiday on Jersey I can quite imagine what it might be if they did allow all comers to bring their vans in. Their roads are pretty but narrow and would very soon get clogged. Pity! I thought of suggesting that we held the AGM or the Club and Company over there!

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#### "Outside Storage Box

I made this rear storage box and fitted it to our Talisman. It is made entirely from 1/2" waterproof bonded plywood which is screwed and glued together. Afterwards I gave it a good coating of bitumastic paint.

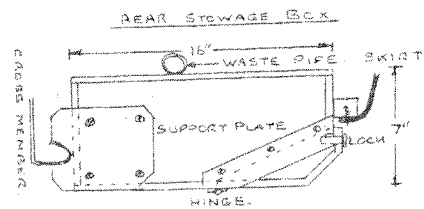
It is fitted between the existing steady jacks with the forward edge supported with two plates located on to the chassis cross member. These can only be fitted after the box has been placed in position. The rear edge rests on, and is screwed to, the rear skirt with the aid of two blocks of wood.

I have also fitted, outboard of the two ground steady jacks, a pair of ramps made from the same plywood and some scrap blocks of wood. The base is profiled to match the curve of the body skirt. The notch on the high side locates onto the existing chassis cross member. The lower end is secured to the body skirt using a bolt and nut plate which is also fixed to the skirt.

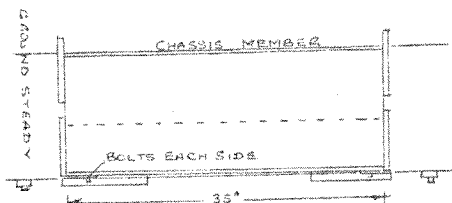
One of the advantages of these arrangements is that mud etc., no longer collects underneath.

Finally, another gadget which I find very useful when backing alongside a wall which I have to do when parking on our drive. It is simply a length of dowel rod, painted red, which is fixed into a piece of plastic tube. The tube is then slipped onto the rear bumper and the rod shows clearly in the mirror to indicate just where the rear corner of the van is.

*Jean & John Ansell .*

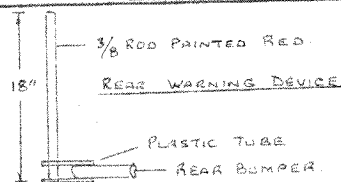
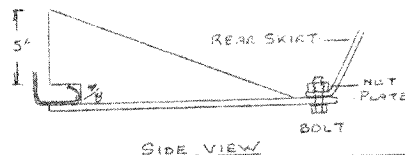
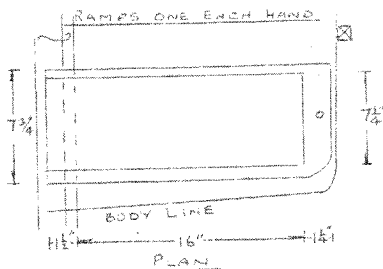


SIDE VIEW & SECTION



PLAN

NOT TO SCALE



Haven't we got an inventive lot of members? One member wrote on their renewal form that A-S had a heck of a lot of experience/inventiveness/imagination at their fingertips if they only asked around the Club for what is really wanted. But, that member continued, not like the famous American car which was "designed" by the users - and failed! Nor, I hasten to add, like a camel which is only a horse designed by a committee!!

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Taling of the renewal forms, I hope that you have sent your form back to *Sheila*. This applies whether you pay by standing order, cheque, postal order or cash. She needs it so that she can keep the membership records completely up to date and can thus ensure that she has your present address and van details. Surprisingly, one or two people have moved house and only told us when the Newsletter stops arriving. But your renewal form also helps to keep track of the standing order payments. It is not unknown for a bank to make a mistake and either not pay the order or pay it more than once. If *Sheila* has received your form and has not been notified of the payment being received she can contact you. If she has not received your form she can only assume that you have resigned.

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Many members may recall that *Brenda & Don Strickland's* dog had a stroke at the Club and Company rally at Stratford upon Avon. I am delighted to be able to pass on the information that the dog is now O.K. again.

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PEN FRIENDS

*Keith Bennett* started the "Over 50's Pen Friend Service" as a hobby and it has snowballed. He publishes a simple newsletter every three months and, apart from providing a stamped addressed envelope, there is no charge at all. If you are interested in having an advertisement for a pen-friend in the UK or abroad placed in his newsletter and you are over 50 all you need to do is provide the SAE and write to: Friendly People Club, PO Box 25, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard,, Beds, LU7 7ZR.

*Keith* will be pleased to hear from you as he has many people seeking pen friends.

-----ooo000ooo-----  
Westcoaster Trip to South Island, N.Z.

Having left my friends in Waikane we headed for Wellington. There we went up Mount Victoria to the viewing point and saw The Basin Reserve where cricket and (I think) rugby are played. The next day was my son's birthday so I rang him before setting sail on the "Arahura" across Cook's Strait and through Queen Charlotte Sound - like a fjord. A lovely day with beautiful scenery and arrived at Picton which had been a whaling station, then by coach to Havelock. Children living in difficult country areas are collected on Monday, boarded for the week in Havelock where they do their schooling and taken home again on Friday. The Government pays half of both school and boarding fees. Onwards through Richmond where the Newman brothers started their flights - well coaches in 1860. They then had six horses (cobs) and a coach.

I stayed in Nelson where they export Fish and Chips! The fish is Snappers, Mussels and Clams; the Chips come from Pine tress and are used for gardens and to make particle board (chipboard) for house floors and partitions. I saw a motor caravan park of about 2.4 acres where about 7,000 folks visit each summer. I'm told their parks are generally not as "POSH" as ours. At Punakaika the Pancake Rocks have a weird symmetry caused by thin bands of Mudstone between layers of limestone. Then Greymouth, well named, where the Grey River flows into the Tasman Sea and on to Shanty Town. This was specially built to show how things were in the Gold Panning days. The shops, Post Office, Stocks, Jail, Church etc. have been rebuilt just for people to view. There is a short train ride, a gold

panning area, a large cafe for light refreshments and a gift shop. We drove through the area where the panners had lived, worked and died and saw a small cemetery amid the remains of their living accommodation (tin shacks) in the rocks; very barren and primitive. The West Coast airport is at Hokitika and you can buy Paua shell, Ku-ku shell and Jade there.

Then Franz Josef Township with a hotel of the same name a little further on whose rooms all face the F.J. Glacier. Next morning a helicopter landed on the lawn and took 7 brave folks up onto the glacier. They came back and said it was like walking on the moon. The Haast Pass and Bridge only opened a few years ago and our coach firm (Newman's) had been the first to be asked to drive through as a gesture because they had been the first to open up the West Coast - rather like Wells Fargo in the States and Cobb's in Australia. Next we saw the "Bungy Jumping" in the Kararua Gorge - people, mad as hatters, were queuing up to jump!

A trip on the Lake Wakatiputo took us to a farm where you could have your photo taken sitting on a bull - then to the farmhouse for a three course meal. The farmer came to see us and, as he had a cap with lots of badges on it, I gave him my ASOC badge and he was delighted. He wanted to know all about the "Vans". On the return trip we had a singalong led by a lady playing a grand piano which we all enjoyed. The next day we drove through Homers Tunnel which had been hand-chipped out of the glacier by 3 men in 1933. Very rough and eerie with no lights except those from the coach. In Milford Sound we boarded a boat to go out into the Tasman Sea to see the waterfalls, large and small. And in Queenstown I had my hair done by a hairdresser who came from Macclesfield!

En route for Christchurch we stopped to see a small church put up in memory of the pioneers. This was in McKenzie country where a shepherd had trained his dog to rustle sheep - miles from anywhere and mountainous! In Fairlie at Easter they have the Highland Games, complete with bagpipes and kilts. Across the Canterbury Plains which are very fertile because of irrigation even though they only get water every 6-7 weeks. From the hotel I rang some friends and their son took me round the outskirts of Christchurch before delivering me to his parents home. They are both in their mid-80's and are still looking after a large garden, selling produce and flowers at the gate. If I can reach their age and look as fit as well as they do, that will suit me! They took me across to their son's home and all round the garden was a railway track, even across the pond where he keeps fish and frogs. Inside I was taken to see his train room - a long room with tracks and

scenery on three sides and a console in the middle with quite a selection of trains including some larger sizes for the outside. I next was taken up to the hills to view Christchurch with the mountains in the background. It was dark by now and that view will stay with me all my life. After a tour of the sights I returned to the hotel and next day flew to Wellington where it was raining hard!

*Dilys Stinchcombe ."*

Our members roam far and wide, don't they? In just one issue we have had reports from the US of A, the Antipodes and, seeing what comes next, a bit of the Med. We've heard about Iceland and South Africa, the North Cape and Holland. Where next, I wonder?

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*Sicily*

I have recently returned from a 5,600 mile trip to Sicily and Southern Italy in my Renault Rimini and thought that the following observations might be of interest to other members.

1. I was overcome with the efficiency of my Electrolux fridge as a heater when touring in temperatures of 35<sup>o</sup>+C. Have any other members had such value for money? To be fair, it did keep its contents relatively cool, but the blast furnace effect coming via the top vent into the van was a bit much when parked on a site and gasping for every whiff of cool air.

Electrolux tell me it is possible to have two vents to the outside with a fan inside the top/back of the fridge to assist the passage of warm air to the exterior. I find it incredible that A-S have fitted it thus knowing that nomads such as me are likely to be travelling to hot climates and isn't it about time that Electrolux came up with their own recommendations? I have approached my local dealer who tells me he can remedy the matter but I shudder to think of the cost when really this "venting" should be fitted as standard.

2. Has anyone out there any good/easy solution to the difficult access to the roof rack? How do you use it? I am a middle aged female (!) not quite as agile as I used to be with limited strength in upper arms for reaching, pulling etc.

3. What recommendations are there re best method of levelling?

4. 2 litre diesel averaged 29.36 mpg doing varied driving, e.g. fast motorway driving for much of the way down to Sicily and much mountain road driving plus typical stop/start Italian driving in very busy, narrow, streets. That was rather better than I thought it would do.

5. Other costs. Camp sites, mostly in Italy but about 1 week in France

£277.30 for 34 nights - average £8.16 per night - NOT using electricity as I have a second battery. Motorway, nearly all the way to Sicily a little in Sicily and about half of the way back home - £162.00.

6. Fuel costs for 5,614 miles was £425.28.

7. An oil change and service, on demand, at a Renault service station in Pontarlier, Doubs, France was a dream! Dropped in at 10.00 am, spent 2 hours in Hypermarket across the road and picked up van at 12 noon! What wonderful service compared with here. Cost £62.00.

8. The "stays" on my cab seats keep on detaching themselves from their rivets. Any comments?

9. I am generally happy with my Rimini. I've had three trips abroad in my first year with it.

I hope some of my comments may be of interest and I would be glad of answers to my queries, if possible.

*Linda Loughnane."*

It really is amazing how A-S manage to satisfy the majority of users in so many ways. We have previously had reports that there is too much draught coming through the vents for the fridges - here is one with the opposite comment. Perhaps *Linda* ought to try a trip to the North Cape to see whether the "blast furnace" is a welcome facet of the fridge! Personally, I liked the arrangement in the Bedford Clubman where the fridge door was facing the back of the van and there was a solid panel parallel to the side. The draught which came in was automatically deflected and didn't worry us at all. Now, with the VW Clubman GL the fridge has been turned through 90° and there is a direct COLD draught into the van! Will all of us ever be completely satisfied? But sorting these things out is half the fun, isn't it?

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## Chairman's Chat

*Winifred & I* have just returned from a flying visit (not a caravanning visit!!) to our friends in Germany for a short holiday and to see, amongst other things, how they prepare for Christmas. We visited the Weihnachtsmarkts (Christmas Markets) in both Bochum and Essen before going to the largest in Dortmund where there were over 200 stalls selling Christmas items, decorations, tableware,

food, fruit etc. Most Markets being in late November and continue until noon on 23rd December to be ready for the Christmas Eve which is the big day of Christmastide for the Germans.

Many stalls sold Christmas Tree Decorations of all shapes, sizes, materials and themes mostly at more realistic prices than we would find in the U.K. Even with the realignment (I say depreciation) of the pound against the D.Mark. Needless to say, we bought many decorations and tried the food - bratwurst and brockwurst etc., etc., and it was cold enough for us to be warmed, internally and regularly, by drinking Gluhwein - and three or four do something to your sense of balance! Everywhere everyone was out to enjoy themselves in a very happy way and it was good to join them.

Just before we flew to Germany your committee met at Birmingham with quite a number staying one or two nights at the Wythall Caravan Club site and being ferried to the Committee Meeting by the *Bowlers* and *John Tidbury*. *Carol & Steve Bowler* had made superb arrangements for the meeting and for the evening - many thanks.

We heard reports on the Club Insurance Policy and a Broker's advice on up-dating the cover and this has been accepted to include, amongst other things, additional cover for Rally Marshals and the regalia representatives. We heard, too, that there are now 809 active units in the Club and this means that there are some 1600 people who are members. The latest membership number issued, as at 28th November 1992, was 1318.

Our Rally Co-ordinator told us that 30 Rallies had been booked for 1993 including some 9 new venues but he still needs Marshals! If you hold any items of Club equipment and have not yet advised *Tony Jones*, the Rally Co-ordinator, please, PLEASE do so quickly as all such equipment must be included (a) in the Club's list of assets and (b) on the Club's Insurance Policy.

We shall be meeting again, at the same venue, at the end of January 1993 to receive the final report on the recent questionnaire to which well over 320 members took the time, and the trouble, to reply and we hope to be able to show you a graph, based on the replies, at the Club's Annual General Meeting Rally at Wicksteed Park, Kettering, in April 1993. My thanks to all who replied and to all who have been involved in the preparation and analysis of the questionnaire.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and that you will have a very Happy New Year.

*Arthur Irving ."*

"HOW NOT TO LOSE IN FRANCE  
(As revealed at a Secret Rendezvous in ????)

1. Priorite a droite.

This, arguably, is the regulation most feared by UK drivers, although it is generally applied there are many occasions on which a major road will be protected from a minor road by a 'STOP' sign on the latter.

(a) traffic on your left - give way if you think that the other driver thinks that he has priority.

(b) traffic on your right - give way if you think that the driver on your right thinks that you think that you should give way because you think that he has priority.

(c) at roundabouts - both of the above.

Now that the elegant simplicity of PRIORITE A DROITE has been explained we can turn to the rules for traffic moving in a common direction.

2. Lane Markings.

Used, of course, to indicate the number of lanes of traffic permissible on any stretch of road. This is calculated according to the simple formula: number of lanes of traffic in actual operation = 1.5 times the number of lanes marked on the road surface.

3. Overtaking.

Mandatory at ALL times when the vehicle is not stationary.

4. Pulling in after overtaking.

This rule is a natural corollary of Rule 3 and states that any space between you and the vehicle in front must be filled by another (or part of another) vehicle. Thus it is obvious that there is NO justification for sounding your horn at a driver who cuts in just in front of you; he is obeying the traffic rules and your use of the horn is illegal - its use is reserved for a totally different purpose as explained in Rule 6. You may, if you wish, flash your headlights but this is regarded by the other driver as an expression of petulance.

5. Traffic Lights.

These are in the familiar pattern of red, yellow and green and the relevant rules are closely similar to international practice, i.e.:

(a) Green - proceed with caution, beware of crossing traffic.

(b) Yellow - proceed.

(c) Red - proceed if the vehicle in front proceeds.

Frequently a fourth colour is used, viz: BLACK. This should be treated as an alternative to Red.

6. Use of the Horn.

As indicated in Rule 4 the horn must NOT be sounded to express annoyance or alarm at the action of another moving vehicle. It is

reserved almost exclusively for use in stationary traffic when the driver ahead is in no way responsible for the lack of motion nor has any way of clearing the jam (e.g. when there are a further 35 stationary vehicles ahead of his). It is NOT used when the driver in front is taking some action to relieve the jam (e.g. by reversing to allow another car to move). The correct action then is to defeat his manoeuvre by closing up or attempting to pass him so that the jam is re-established. NOW you can sound your horn. We should add that the horn is also used occasionally to indicate to the driver in front that he has failed to comply with Rule 5(c).

7. Use of side and head lights at night.

This is optional.

8. Direction Indicators.

Employed to advise the vehicle behind you that you have successfully completed the manoeuvre indicated at Rule 6.

9. Parking.

Ample parking is provided in cities and towns in specially designated areas called "roads". On the narrowest roads parking is restricted to the two sides only. On other roads any portion of the available surface may be used. In some areas parking meters are provided for the chaining of bicycles and motorcycles. To carry a red cover marked "hors service" for placing over meters is considered unduly cautious.

10. Pedestrian Crossings.

Again the purpose of these is commonly misunderstood. They do NOT provide a safe area for pedestrians to cross the road. They are there only for the purpose of apportioning the blame AFTER an accident. It is not true that some local drivers regard them as the preferred killing grounds.

11. Police.

Police are posted at intervals in the cities and towns, particularly when traffic is heavy, to assist in the implementation of Rule 5 by stopping traffic when the lights are green and obliging it to proceed when the lights are red. It is safe to assume that the sounding of a whistle by a policeman is an instruction to proceed - unless the sound of the whistle comes from behind you in which case you must proceed even more quickly.

12. Taxis.

Remember that taxis are in the hands of expert drivers who have a thorough knowledge of the above 11 Rules and who apply all of them rigorously.

13. Windscreens.

Vehicles will sometimes be noticed approaching with the driver folding the ball of his middle finger against the inside of the

windscreen. This is NOT a salute so do not acknowledge. It is some magical method which prevents his windscreen from being shattered by stones thrown up by YOUR excessive speed relative to his. Respond in a similar manner but with your hand rotated 180 deg in the vertical axis - your finger need not touch the windscreen.

Learn and apply the above simple Rules and you will have nothing to fear from French traffic. In fact you will soon be accepted as a resident with full authority to assist an uncertain visiting driver by means of hand gestures and short phrases tossed good-naturedly from your vehicle to his.

*Agent 865!*

P.S. Having acquired the necessary expertise be aware that if you return to Britain with a French number plated car that it is people like you who give French drivers a bad name!

My thanks to *Margaret and Alf* (who shall be nameless) for this erudite explanation. I rather wonder if the item should have been headed "*Campbell's* Kingdom" but I think somebody has already pinched the title.

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So space has beaten me yet again. It never fails while we have members who keep sending stuff to me -KEEP IT UP!!

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