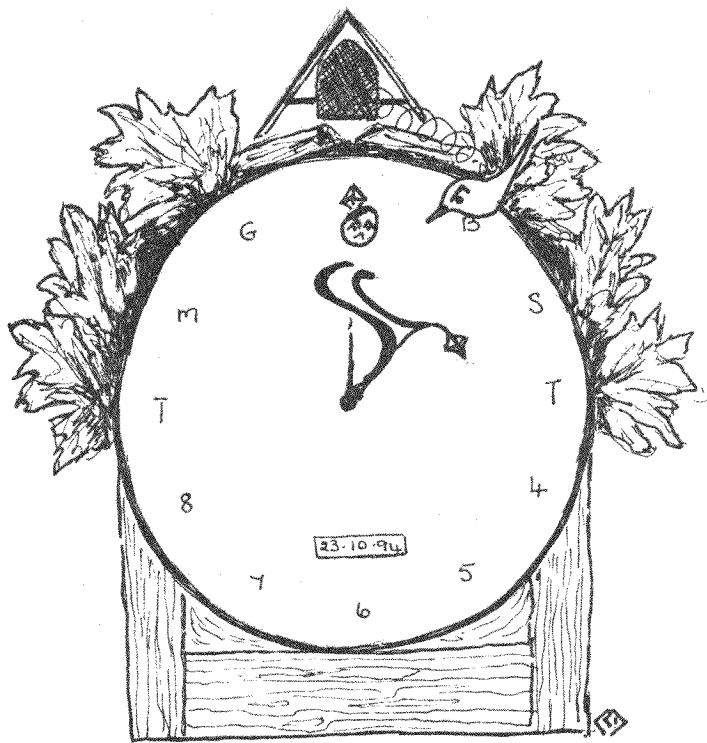


# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 73  
OCTOBER 1994**

Hello.

Having got the Club and Company Rally over for this year your Committee is now looking forward to the next one in 1995. It has been suggested that some of the games which were held at Stratford-on-Avon racecourse (if you can remember that far back) might well be repeated. You will recall that we had rounders between teams chosen among your friends, skittles, throwing a ball into numbered boxes and one or two others. We should now like to hear from anyone who has any garden games (no, NOT that sort!) which they would be willing to bring along (and operate perhaps) for other members to enjoy. Please let your Editor know if you can help in this way so that we can co-ordinate all the offers.

We also have a need for someone who knows about Public Address systems or that sort of electric/electronic machinery. Many will remember that the P.A. system wasn't always helpful this year so we need someone who understands ohms, watts, switches, plugs, wiring etc. We would need the individual to come along to the showground with members of the sub-committee to meet the person who has the sole rights to provide the equipment there. Perhaps then we could arrange the system to suit our needs and have someone around who knows which switch does what. Again, offers to your Editor in the first instance, please, and as soon as possible.

While we were at Malvern a member from the Isle of Wight who used to be a cartographer mentioned to me that he would be willing to draw a suitable map of the place for us. This would obviously be better than the amateur attempt that we had. Unfortunately, my memory being what it is, I have completely forgotten his name - and it is only luck that I remember that he lives on the Island. May I ask him to write to me, please, so that we can take up his offer?

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*Pru Osborne* has asked me to include her thanks to those people who worked so hard in the Regalia shop at the Club and Company Rally this year. The total raised was a little over £1,500.00.

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*Charles Trevelyan*, our President, has sent me copies of the entries to the Poetry Competition which was run by Which Motorcaravan at the Club and Company Rally at Malvern. There are nine poems altogether and I shall try to publish them in the Newsletter as space permits. I haven't yet seen who won the competition so when I start putting them into the Newsletter (NOT this month) they will be in no specific order except possibly judged purely and simply on length!

## *Golden Wedding*

We would like to thank all our friends in the Club who sent cards and flowers for our Golden Wedding Anniversary. We were a bit overwhelmed by it all. Thank you all very much and we hope to meet you all sometime and thank you personally.

Till then, Happy Caravanning. Love to all.

*Barbara & Jeff [Worley]*

And many more years together, from all of us.

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## *All is Harmony*

I was very interested to read the letter from *Norman Rendle* in the August Newsletter, with his comments about the Harmony. We previously owned two VW vans (both Devons, a Sunrise and a Moonraker) each for three years. In 1991 we decided on a change so went to a dealer to see what was on offer as we wanted a high-top van where we could walk from one end to the other without having to duck! We saw one which appeared to suit our needs and as it was the end of the season the price had been reduced. But although it seemed a good buy I said to the salesman that it seemed to be pretty basic. He suggested looking at a Rambler or Harmony and, as they had an ex-demonstrator Harmony with 400 miles on the clock we looked at that. Again it had been reduced by around £3,000.00 and had everything which we now take for granted but were not so common in 1991. We thought, quite wrongly, that there must be a significant difference between this and the more basic van in the quality of finish but the body was just as sturdy, mechanically it was of equal quality and the paintwork was as good if not better than on the VW. By sheer coincidence I happened to see a Harmony for private sale, almost new at only 5,900 miles and offered at considerably less price! The original owners, both tall people, had just completed a tour of France, thoroughly enjoyed the experience, particularly the performance of the Harmony, but had found it a little on the small side for their requirements. They had decided to buy a coachbuilt Pilote. This was the only time in my life that I'd ever agreed and bought an article without seeing it first!

*Christine* drove us in our old Peugeot 504 car to the Knutsford Services on the M.6 where I had arranged to meet the gentleman with the Harmony at 8.30 am prompt - he and his wife had stayed there overnight. We drove down to Bagshot in the Harmony so that he could collect his Pilote and then went back to Knutsford to collect our car from the car park where we had left it that was on 4th November 1991. We

drove home to Derby with me in the Harmony following the car. Since then we've had the best three years motor caravanning of our lives, travelling 25,000 miles so far.

We've found the great advantage of the Harmony (and with vans of a similar size) is that you can take it anywhere, from the single track roads in the north of Scotland to the narrow country lanes of Devon; into any car park or on-street parking and on to ferries always confident that you will never be caught out due to the size of the van.

I must admit that the Talbot gears are not the best in the world to select, particularly 1st & 2nd, but if the selector linkage is correctly set and one takes time when operating the gear lever then this is not much of a problem. Despite owners looking at their A-S with pride and joy they are still looking at what is basically a commercial delivery van and the gear change really cannot be compared to the silky smooth gear change of today's car. *Norman* mentioned that gears 3, 4 & 5 are too low but again, one must realise that they are intended for their original purpose, to deliver relatively heavy loads of up to a ton in all sorts of conditions. Actually I find 5th gear a delight. It can operate efficiently anywhere between 30 and 70 mph and still pull well on long gradients. Compare it with, say, a Ford Transit under load and of the same size and power and see who gets to the top of some of the steady motorway gradients first. The Talbot will glide along comfortably in its fifth gear while the Transit will be having to drop a gear.

I have found it false economy to use "cheap petrol". As one tanker driver put it to me quite simply, "You are getting the lower half of the refinery tanks which contain a larger proportion of water in the fuel" Esso, Shell, B.P., and Elf, to name a few, don't spend millions of pounds on research and development for nothing. They are constantly aiming to provide the finest fuel for your vehicle and therefore you pay a higher price. But in the long run it is a lower price because you are achieving more miles per gallon and with less wear on your engine. Over 25,000 miles my average fuel consumption, measured very accurately, is 27.6 mpg. On longer runs, (e.g. Derby to Scotland) I have regularly achieved 31 mpg travelling at a steady 55-60 mph and with a very light right foot. The last 10 mph to take you up to 70 mph can considerably increase the fuel consumption, especially with a full load on board.

The same philosophy applies to oil. It is false economy to run on cheap oil if you wish to maintain your engine in tip-top condition. I use Castrol GTX3 which is not to be confused with the ordinary GTX.

GTX3 costs £17.99 for 5 litres (Halfords) but on taking a look at the dip-stick after hundreds of miles I find that the oil is as clear as the day it was put in - a sure contribution to long engine life.

So there you are, *Norman*. I'm sorry you had to use the word "Rubbish" to describe the Talbot gears. As for your suspension problems I'm at a loss to know what caused them. I always thought that "Monday" and "Friday" vehicles were a thing of the past, but probably you were unlucky. I hope you have a lot more fun with your "Clubman". (I'd better say that because I know our Editor has one!)

Our Harmony has an additional identification now. As a result of the Club's excellent Regalia service from Pru Osborne (who I was very sorry to hear has had to step down from the post of Regalia Officer) we have now received a set of "Century Old Style Bold" letters which are firmly affixed to the forward roof line to make the name "Yorkshire Belle". These letters match almost exactly with those used for "Harmony" and "Rambler". Being a Yorkshireman I had a dickens of a job convincing *Christine* to use that name. As a Scot she preferred "Highland Lassie". Ah, well, she can't win 'em all!

The security chain idea for between the front doors which I described in my small article in the MMM (February 1994) has proved worth while and certainly provided us with peace of mind when leaving the Harmony unattended for long periods. On a number of occasions we have returned to find people waiting to ask us for all the details.

As "ordinary" members of the Club we would like to offer our sincere thanks to all the committee members who give their time to provide such an excellent service to the Club. Their work can often go un-noticed and sometimes they can be taken for granted - I sincerely hope not in this case.

In conclusion, if anyone is wondering where the Harmony with the little yellow balls attached to the back step has got to recently, *Christine* had a hysterectomy and fibroid operation earlier this year and on doctors' orders was advised not to undertake any journeys of too long a duration as any "bumps or jars" could retard the healing process. Best wishes to everyone, hoping to see you in the not too distant future.

*Christine & Tom Nunn.*

First of all, on behalf of all Club members, our very best wishes to *Christine* and get well quickly, please. I'm a bit surprised that you two didn't come to terms over the name for your van, why not "Yorkshire Lassie" or "Highland Belle"? It is quite true what you say about the vans, they are basically commercial vehicles. Many of us learned to

drive on less than silky gearboxes and the good habits we learned then stand us in good stead now. I wonder what it would be like with an A-S conversion on a Rolls-Royce chassis? I wonder what the price would be, too! Thanks very much for your comments about the committee members. That is the sort of thing that makes the job worth-while.

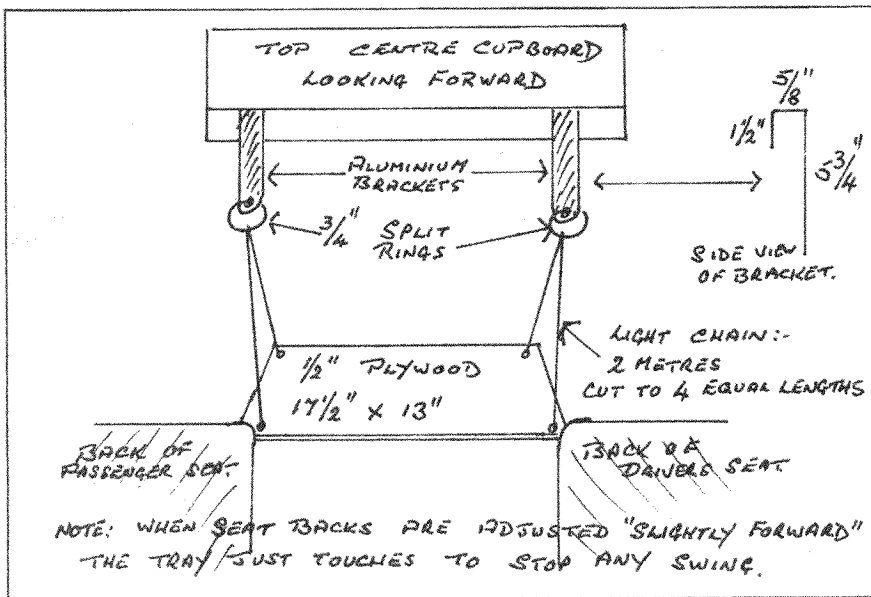
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## T.V. SHELF

Suitable for T4 Trident and possibly other vans with some adaptation.

You will know from experience that space is at a premium and must at all times be used in the best possible way. Since converting to a motor caravan I have left the "Telly" at home as I couldn't find a suitable place to rest it where it was not in the way of something else. This has bothered me a bit as there are a few programmes which I try not to miss. Now, at last, I believe that I have cracked it and it doesn't infringe on other valuable space when on site. It is a hanging tray which hangs freely from the front edge of the top centre cupboard, is in front of the backs of the driver/passenger seats and does not oscillate as, with adjustment of the seat backs, the shelf just touches them. I have made this up with light chain for suspension and, when not in use, it takes up little or not room as it packs flat. It works perfectly.

Melvyn Potter



This seems like a good idea instead of the (bought) shelf to fit onto the back of the driver/passenger seat in place of the head restraint. We bought one at the Malvern rally and that works well too. It also folds flat for storage.

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## **Vaillant Heater and the water pump**

The problem with the water not flowing too well with our Vaillant seems to have been solved by my central heating engineer when he visited the house. The problem was "hunting" by the water pump when the hot water was switched on - the cold was O.K. He found that the water pump needed more pressure and this was achieved by turning the screw on the end of the pump unit with a small Allen key. One full turn equals 5 psi - he turned it four times!

Then he turned to the water heater and replaced the rubber diaphragm which looked a little worn - it had been there for four years. He also cleaned the filters in the heater and on the pump. Finally he balanced the pressure on the pump by reducing the four turns a little and the "hunting" had been eradicated. Incidentally, the heat control on the heater was now quite sufficient at the eleven o'clock position rather than at "full on" - at two o'clock.

*Mike Doody*

Thanks, *Mike*, for a very useful piece of information which may solve problems for many of our members. *Mike* also passed on the address of a very helpful auto-electrical company. He was on his way to Scotland when he suffered an electrical failure. Oakwell Auto Electrical Ltd of Hastings Road, Leyland, Lancashire got him going again in three-quarters of an hour for a cost of £30.00. They checked everything and installed a new split relay. They also recommended that he re-sited the auxiliary battery to a position under the front passenger seat. From the tone of his letter he was delighted with the service and would recommend them to any member.

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## **Cascade Water Heater**

This is a copy of a letter written to Carver and Co who make this heater.

I feel that I must write my appreciation and gratitude to your Company for the excellent service which I received, courtesy of your Mr Alan Jones, during my visit to the Club and Company Rally. While visiting your exhibition van I referred to a difficulty which I had with my water heater. Mr Jones promptly unpacked a new control unit and burner module and accompanied me back to my van. He then fitted

the new parts, completing the work in less than ten minutes. Having checked that I now had hot water when running on gas he left me.

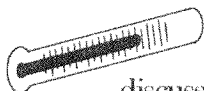
This level of service is exceptional in this day and age and I congratulate your Company in deeming it desirable that customer satisfaction is so important. Please extend my thanks to Mr Jones for his helpful attitude.

*Brian Abrams*

How nice that we continually hear about this sort of service. Too often reports are made of complete lack of service in all manner of products.

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## **RECALCITRANT FRIDGES**



*Paul Edwards* has had a long and fruitful discussion with Electrolux Ltd, having had a similar problem with his fridge heating instead of cooling. Finally, though, he found the solution himself in that the 12v heating element was apparently too close to the cooling coils and was causing a blockage instead of a circulation. He has moved both the 12v and the 240v heaters slightly, has wrapped a large piece of glass fibre around them and filled in the small hole in the boiler insulation. All now appears to be well and he can set off for his foreign holiday with confidence that stuff in the fridge will stay cold.

*Paul* also mentioned a couple of other points. One is the polish he uses which I saw at our Ripley rally. It's called "Premium MARINE Polish with TEFLON" and is marketed under the name of "Starbrite". It can be found in the "Sowester" catalogue but hasn't (yet) been seen in any ships chandlers. He got it by ordering it through a chandler at a cost of £10.99. Having used nothing else on his Trident and being an intermittent washer of the van he finds that his hand (or arm, depending on how he is leaning!) can still slip off if he isn't careful! He has also been investigating an exhaust leak on the VW T4 2.4litre 5 cylinder diesel engine. Looking under the van he has found black soot at the exhaust pipe joint under the cab and near the gear lever mechanism. It is just where the pipework comes down from the exhaust manifold into the exhaust pipe/silencer, just after a bend. At a service, the engineers tightened the pipe clip but said that all T4's suffered from this problem. He has since found that the leak has never stopped and suggests that the clip is of poor design and that the shoulders dig into the pipe which ends up oval shaped. Apart from the fumes, there is a possible MOT problem and it affects the efficiency. He has now sealed the join with Holts FIBREGUM which he then warmed with a blowlamp - well it IS a diesel after all. This prevents the Fibregum from blowing

out when starting the engine for the first time after fitting.

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## Break-downs abroad!

About 30 years ago, being somewhat broke, I bought a 30 year old "Car Cruiser" to tow with my 20 year old Austin (an A.90 I think). After a practice run to Oxford we set off to Austria for a fortnight's holiday. We discovered that the combination had a tendency to snake if I exceeded 35 mph and I have the dubious privilege perhaps of being the only person to be told to SPEED UP (Schnell!, SCHNELL!) on an Autobahn. A fifteen mile stretch in the mountains took us 5 hours to negotiate. (I never bothered with detailed maps.) We had a nice holiday and returned safely.

So I say to all you new, but hesitant, caravanners go for it! A breakdown abroad (and I've had a few over the years) is a pest but not a tragedy. **Do take good maps.** And enjoy yourselves!

*Frank Clare.*

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## New Ralliers and the Talbot Gearbox.

We are relatively new to motor caravanning (4 years) but have managed two Auto-Sleepers in that time. With the second, an Executive, we decided to join ASOC - a good decision. The essence of this letter is to say Thank You. First, to *Vivien & John Price* for an excellent first rally in the Isle of Wight - first for us as members and first for them as marshals. They did well and we should like to thank them and all the other members who made this such a pleasant time (6-13 June) - camaraderie without compulsion. So it was delightful to meet them and our other new friends at the Company Rally in Malvern in July. This was again an interesting experience. We are very new to rallying and looked forward with some trepidation to the prospect of some 450 vans. We needn't have worried, an interesting and lively weekend, meeting new and old friends. Wasn't the weather good, we had to mention that, after all, we're British!

Not being given to writing to magazines may I combine this with a further comment about the dreaded Talbot Gearbox. Our Rambler gave no trouble at all. However, with the Executive we have not been so lucky. 1400 miles on and porridge stirring or Russian Roulette spring to mind. A nasty moment trying to select 2nd on a bit of a hill in heavy traffic brought sweat to the brow and blueness to the speech. But our local Peugeot dealer seems to have cured it within warranty. (Stag Hill Motors, Godalming).

*Margaret & Tony Burkhardt.*

I'm glad that you enjoyed both your first rally and the big one at Malvern. But may I correct an impression which seems to be fairly prevalent among the newer members. It is **NOT** the "Company Rally". It is the Club and Company Rally. The Club is responsible for all the arrangements with the support of the Company. If the Company alone had to make all the arrangements and still manufacture motor caravans I don't honestly think that there would be such a rally - they wouldn't have the time to spend on it.

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## **GEAR BOX PROBLEMS - AGAIN!**

The most exciting, or horrible, thing which happened to us while we were in France was the collapse of the gear box about the time we left Bordeaux. I suspect some of the wine had been too strong for it. It all started with a whine [Ouch! Ed.] in 5th. Then it jumped out of gear. I slammed it back in and all was well for a bit. Then it jumped out and would not stay in, so I drove most of the day holding it in place. The next day things had altered, it was almost impossible to hold it in 5th. 4th was OK, but the other gears whined, growled, screeched and clanged in a manner to strike terror into my heart. I think something had broken and odd bits were gradually being ground to dust. Perhaps I should have called Mayday, but I gathered that if we had to leave the van we had to take all our wine with us (2 dozen bottles of red, 16 halves of white and 10 litres of red!). So we made our way gently, at about 50 mph in 4th. and got home on time. The box is being rebuilt and I am awaiting news of the cost with trepidation! Probably in the £500 - £1000 region!!

But that is not the sort of thing that the members want to hear about, is it?

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## **FLOORBOARDS AND FLIGHT DECK.**

Much has been said about curing the right ankle ache by fitting a support. In our van this takes the form of a board (1/2") 12" wide and the full width of the van. The front edge rests on the van floor. The rear edge has a slight extension to go into the drivers seat base. There is a little leg on the near side to support it. We cannot have an extension into the passengers seat base because that is blocked off with the safe door. There is another leg in the centre between the seats and a small piece of wood screwed to the underside projecting back a couple of inches. This is the support of a second piece of decking which goes between the seat as far back as the rear of the seat pillars. Thus we have a T shaped deck in front of the seats and extending back between them. The rear end is



## **Rallies**

*mid-October, November and December  
1994*

**14th/16th October; A C C E O Annual Meeting Rally, Market Rasen Racecourse, Lincolnshire.**

**28th/30th October; Penybont Touring Park, Bala, Gwynedd, North Wales.**

Site fee: £4.50 per night.      Electricity restricted.      Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs J Greenwood, 55 Park Avenue, Mynydd Isa, Mold, Clwyd CH7 6XR      Tel/fax: 0244 548882

Cheque payable to: J Geenwood

Directions: Approach Bala via A494/A5 from Corwen. On entering Bala turn left onto B4391 at large coach & car park on left, follow road past end of Bala Lake, site is on right just after sharp lefthand bend.

Hardstanding, toilet block, small shop on site. 10 minutes walk to town.

**4th/6th November; Bonfire Night Rally, Pennine View Caravan Park, Kirkby Steven, Cumbria.**

Site fee: £6.50 per night, including electricity.      Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mrs K Benyon, Holmfield Cottage, Bannister Street, Lytham, Lancashire. FY8 5HQ      Telephone: 0253 736 245

Cheque payable to: K Benyon.

Directions: From M6 Junction 38 take A685 to Kirkby Steven; site on right opposite Croglin Castle Hotel. From East take A66 then A685 through Kirkby Steven, site on left opposite Croglin Castle Hotel.

Please bring just ONE show firework per van. Hot dogs and parkin Friday evening. Saturday evening meal being arranged.

**2nd/4th December; Christmas Shopping Rally, Newbridge Caravan Park, Bath.**

Site fee: £5.00 per night including electricity. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs A J Claxton, Flat13 Albany Mansions, Upper Maze Hill, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex. TN38 0YD Tel/fax: 0424 714915

Cheque payable to: A J Claxton.

Optional hot buffet at local pub on Friday evening @ £6.50 per head MUST be ordered (and paid for) if required, when booking.

Directions: Site in Brassmill Lane (just before Murco Petrol Station) on A4 Bath to Bristol road about 1.5 miles out of (Bath) city centre.

**Rally limited to 50 Vans**

**30th December 1994/ 2nd January 1995; New Year Rally, Hidden Valley, Ilfracombe, North Devon.** Not your ordinary weekend rally! Rally fee of £115 per van and two adults ( £75 per van and one adult) includes electric hook-up, dinner on Friday, Saturday and Sunday plus Susan's Famous Brunch on Monday. There will be live entertainment on New Year's Eve and the evening of New Year's Day.

**Full details from:** Barbara Worley, 26 Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 8SQ Telephone: 0935 24049

Rally: ..... Date: .....  
Your name and address (please PRINT) .....  
.....  
..... Post code: .....  
Membership No: ..... Phone No: ..... Van Reg: .....  
Day/Time of arrival .....  
In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?  
Name: ..... Phone: .....

*Please complete both sides of the form!*

Rally: ..... Date: .....  
Your name and address (please PRINT) .....  
.....  
..... Post code: .....  
Membership No: ..... Phone No: ..... Van Reg: .....  
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..... Post code: .....  
Membership No: ..... Phone No: ..... Van Reg: .....  
Day/Time of arrival .....  
In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?  
Name: ..... Phone: .....

*Please complete both sides of the form!*

Is this your first A-S O C rally? Please tick box YES  NO

Number of people in your van: Adults  Children

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, **if available**:

Electricity: Yes  No  Saturday night meal if any: Yes  No

Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If 'Yes', please specify:-

.....  
Payment **MUST** accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.

POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT



Is this your first A-S O C rally? Please tick box YES  NO

Number of people in your van: Adults  Children

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, **if available**:

Electricity: Yes  No  Saturday night meal, if any: Yes  No

Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If 'Yes', please specify:-

.....  
Payment **MUST** accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.

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Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If 'Yes', please specify:-

.....  
Payment **MUST** accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.

POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT

supported by a suitable bit of wood. The space under this deck is most valuable as a store for tools etc.

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## **IF A JOB'S WORTH DOING IT'S WORTH DOING BADLY.**

This is a most important philosophy that shocked me to the core when I first heard it from a very competent scientist. Perhaps the significance will become clear as I go on. We did not like the very serviceable but drab carpet in our Rambler, so we thought about re-carpeting it. We all know that the carpet is about the first thing to go into a van, and the furniture is built on it. So to do a re-carpeting job properly one has to start by taking out all the furniture. This is clearly not possible, so one cannot do the job properly. So we did it badly. We found a cheap length of suitable carpet. We measured the flight deck and cut a T-shaped piece to cover that. The centre aisle was covered with a second piece. This is an awkward shape. I took out the centre table support socket. Then I took a length of carpet about 30" wide and 9' long, folded it down the middle and put it roughly in place. I found where the table socket hole was, cut a hole in the carpet and screwed the socket back in place. That held the carpet securely while I fitted it all round in the usual way. It turned out to be an easy way of fitting a difficult shape. If this carpet does not last at least we will have a template for doing it again in a better quality. The bit from the centre across to the near side door was filled in in a similar manner and joined to the main part with carpet tape. The various left over bits gave us a good supply of mats. Obviously it is not quite as good a job as it would have been if we had taken the furniture out, but it was certainly well worth doing.

*Nial Reynolds*

What a lot of wine! Wot! No oil? And if *Nial* could drive "gently, at about 50 mph" one wonders just what speed he would have been doing if the gearbox had been OK! I like the idea of "doing a job badly" because that's how all of mine seem to turn out! But there is another way of getting new carpet - you could always buy a new van!

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## *Chairman's Chat*



Members planning to go to the Continent in 1995 will be pleased to know that P & O European Ferries, for the Dover/Calais crossing, are pegging the 1995 prices at this year's rates. However, they expect to increase their rates on other routes by three to five per cent, according to an item in the Daily Telegraph. Perhaps, when the Chunnel announce

their prices, P & O European Ferries will think again, as they did this year. A couple of months ago *Phil Daley* wrote on ferry fares from Aberdeen to Lerwick and how they compared badly with fares on some southern routes. P & O Scottish Ferries run a service from Scrabster, near John o' Groats, to Stromness in the Orkneys two or three times a day and another service from Stromness to Lerwick twice a week. If the Sunday sailing is used from Stromness the crossing is in the daytime and by not having to take a cabin the fare is considerably less. All the passenger fares on these two crossings are subject to Government subvention and Senior Citizens enjoy a 10% discount. Passenger fares are quoted for single journeys but the fares for motor vehicles are quoted either for single or return journeys and by taking the return fare a great saving is made.

It is well worth while staying for a time on the Orkneys, before going on to the Shetlands, and *Winifred and I* found a good way of seeing the Islands was by taking a tour or two with David Lea's Co-Orkney Coach Tours. David Lea was an R.S.P.B. Officer and he personally conducts the tours and is very knowledgeable about the Islands.

Last month with the Newsletter I included a letter regarding the Regalia Officer and I now write to say that the Committee have appointed *Ian Ross* to that post. He is now in the process of taking over from *Pru Osborne* and the new Regalia arrangements will be fully advised in the next Newsletter after he has had time to settle in. We are most grateful to *Ian* for agreeing to take on this work and to know that *Stella* will be most supportive to him as *Richard, Charlotte and Matthew* have been to *Pru* during her time as Regalia Officer.

The Editor 'phoned asking (telling!!!) me to get this 'Chat' down to him a.s.a.p. so that the Printers could print the Newsletter before they go off into Europe again. It is early September, warm and sunny - at least where we are, but soon the cooler nights will be here and the winter preparations on the Auto-Sleeper must soon start, e.g. checking the anti-freeze; knowing how to drain off the water heater and the water tanks; bringing in the bedding and other items. It is better to be safe than sorry - being sorry can also be expensive if things should go wrong.

*Arthur Irving*

Thank you, *Arthur*, for (a) obeying my simple whim and getting the Chat down here quickly (even though I had to wait until mid-day on Monday for it!) and (b) for reminding everybody about "Winterizing" (there's a horrible word!) their van. When you get your Club Calendar for 1995 you will find that a reminder has been inserted on this very subject. Yes, you will be getting a calendar again - *Sheila and I* have just spent the weekend with *Rita and Phil Daley* and between us we have printed and collated over 1,200 copies. The run was for 1,260 copies

which is (where's that calculator?) 15,120 sheets of paper. Now they are all quietly sitting in the van waiting to be stapled together, but NOT all in one block! It may seem a bit early to be preparing calendars for next year but these things don't just happen. It does take us some work and time to get them ready for you. So don't rush out to buy a simple calendar for kitchen/study or other needs, wait until December and see what you get.

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## HELP!

I own a 1989 Legend 2.5 litre diesel and it has got to last for ever! Or at least until "Old Father Time" says that I must stop. I do most of the basic servicing myself and early this year I tried my hand at replacing a leaking water pump. The only service manual that I can get is for a petrol Transit, no one seems to produce a service manual for the diesel engine.



The water pump exchange went very well and I found that the timing belt was very easy to get at when the radiator and cover were removed. My last timing belt change cost me around £80.00 and if I can get hold of the information on how to secure the pump pulley, camshaft pulley and crankshaft pulley in the correct position plus the tension needed on the new timing belt I would make the change over myself! So if anyone out there has a manual on the Ford Transit (NOT turbo) 2.5 diesel engine I would be willing to pay what it costs for a copy of the relevant information.

Earlier this year I had cassette blinds fitted in the Legend so now I have the roller insect and "night blinds" to fit the large side windows which are surplus to requirements. If any Legend owner could make use of these please give me a ring. (A contribution to my diesel tank fund would not be refused!)

One last thing. I have found a way of keeping the waste water tank "sweet"!! Pour a small amount of "Jeyes Fluid" down the sink waste pipe followed by a small quantity of water. Of course with the drain tap on the tank closed. Result? No more nasty smells and the Jeyes aroma even filters up into the "bathroom". And it lasts for a few weeks, even after the tank has been emptied a number of times.

*Arthur Fairburn*

The telephone number for *Arthur* is 0246 852 799. He wrote to me on a very nice letterhead paper with the words "The Good Life" prominently at the top and a picture of an American R.V. in a "desert" landscape. Pity it wasn't an A-S van! What a good idea to overcome the waste tank problems. I know our Chairman has had a new tank fitted with a HUGE bung in it so that he can clean the thing right out at the

year end. But if the Jeyes can overcome such problems, it's a case of "Many, many thanks, *Arthur F*" and "Eat your heart out, *Arthur I!*"

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## R.V.HIRE IN THE U.S. OF A.

I have just returned from a motor caravanning trip in the north west of North America and found TWO Newsletters! I would like to refer to page 7 of the August issue about "kamikaze flies, paint-chipping stones etc" to say nothing of jet-plane sized mosquitoes! The mesh which North Americans put on their vehicles is very effective. It is very easily cleaned at the wand wash (car wash to us Brits). They are removable and in the car wash is a clip for mats which also takes the screens and they can then be jet-washed very easily. The whole camping scene over there is much easier and more convenient than here because such a large number of people spend much, if not all, of their lives travelling the length and breadth of the continent.

But we had an unpleasant experience with a rental company. We booked, and paid for, our trip in England as we had done on a previous occasion. Last time we were very satisfied with a rental company in Calgary called "Go West". This time we wanted to drive out of Edmonton on a five week trip to Yukon and Alaska. The company with whom our reservations had been made was "Canada Campers" who also have rental bases in Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton. They failed to produce a vehicle for the date we required and had booked. Not only that, they were ill-mannered, telling us of their company problems, they failed to provide any sort of compensation except the obligatory hotel bill payment and refund of a day's rental. When a vehicle was produced the following day, an "upgrade to a better vehicle", it had a cracked windscreen, was not of the type we had carefully selected knowing that it was the best workhorse for the job and it was over a day late. There were other things wrong, e.g. we needed to put oil in at our second and third petrol stops, there were no curtains for the front of the van, no ladder to the over-cab bed (my friend and I are both well past 21!) etc. etc.

In short, if you are booking a trip out of Canada make sure you do not use this firm. Our hotel advised us that they had had several guests who had experienced similar difficulties. Also employees of the firm were leaving or being sacked. The vice-president was personally responsible for the bookings, and over-booking, policy. We learned that he too had been sacked after we returned.

Apart from all this, it was a great trip. North America is a good place for motor caravanners or "R.V.ers" as we are called there. Most camp grounds are excellent with something for everyone from the fully

serviced sites (we had a private bathroom at one site) to the more primitive but scenically beautiful state/provincial camp grounds.

I shall be pleased to pass on information if anyone is interested and/or to offer advice. The people are great and it's a good job that we knew this or we could have been put off by the rental company. Happy motor caravanning!

*Linda Loughnane.*

If you want more information, please contact your Editor in the first instance. We have now learned that these rogue companies exist wherever there is a market for virtually anything. But when your holiday depends upon what you are offered it always seems to be worse.

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## FLORIDA

We have received details of American motorhome hire in the state of Florida. Apparently the units are equipped with everything in sight. You can stay for "three nites free at a Real Dude Ranch" or stay at Fort Wilderness at Disney World. Vans are 20' (6 berth) or 28' (8 berth) and cost from \$689 for a seven night rental with 500 free miles. There is an extra of \$50.00 per person per week for "Bath, bedding and cooking needs" but all insurance is apparently included. If anyone wants more details, just send a S.A.E. to your Editor and you will be sent a copy of what we have got.

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## CYCLE RACKS - OR NOT?

I recently had an Omnistor Carry-All 3 cycle rack fitted to my new Trident in readiness for our family holiday. It was fitted by a reputable firm. This type of rack is advertised as needing no drilling to attach and the tailgate can still be opened. It is recommended for my model of van.

On removing the rack for cleaning I was very distressed to find two sizeable dents and scratches to the tailgate hinges where the top clamps are fitted. This was one week after fitting. I am currently in negotiation with the firm who fitted it and the debate is whether it is the design or the fitting which is at fault.

Has anyone else had any experience with this rack and vehicle - good or bad? Does anyone know of any other type of rack for my vehicle which does not involve drilling into the bodywork as I fear that this could be a potential source of future trouble.

*Simon Harrop*

I have no experience of any form of cycle rack but it does occur to me that if such a weight is resting on or against the bodywork it must "bounce" a bit while travelling. I guess that only an absolutely rigid

fastening to the chassis and/or body would prevent that. But can anyone help *Simon*, please?

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Something which may be of use to other members. I have at last worked out how to carry a tandem on the back of the VW Trident. It's just a simple mod to the standard Fiamma rack and it worked very well in France this year. I can send photos to anyone who is having this problem.

*Dave Thomas*

You'll find *Dave's* address and telephone number in the "Wanted" section a bit later on.

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## ADVICE WANTED



May I use the pages of the Newsletter to seek members' help and experience? We have a Renault Rapport and would like to fit a bike rack to carry two adult ATBs and two small child bikes (still with stabilisers). We have looked at the racks intended for estate cars that clip over the top of the door, are steadied by legs which rest on the door itself and are then held in place by straps but it seems likely that the weight of the bikes bouncing along the road would cause the rack legs to dent the door. Another alternative is the Rhode carrier which is designed for Land Rover Discovery type vehicles and "hangs" on the rear mounted spare wheel. It is not clear that one of these would actually fit the wheel on the back of the Rapport and even if it would, we are worried that the extra weight would be too much for the rear door. We have also considered specialist racks such as those marketed by Hornchurch Motor Caravan Centre Workshop but they tend to be manufactured for each specific van and fitted by the manufacturer. All the companies we know of are too far from Glasgow to be economically viable. Does anyone have experience of the Fiamma rack that is, I believe, bolted to the door without the wheel? Can it be removed? Is the door and its hinge strong enough?

Another problem that we have had concerns the steady of the rear door holding the wheel. This is a short metal arm with a plastic fitting on the end which slides in a slot in the door. The plastic fitting can be compressed to pass through a restriction in the door slot and then holds the door open. This compression puts a strain on a "wing" of the plastic fitting and twice in the last four years this wing has broken and the plastic fitting has had to be replaced. This involves taking off the interior trim, groping about in the door to get the broken bits out and putting a new plastic bit on. Renault, of course, only sell the fitting already connected to the metal arm at about £11.00. Has anyone else

had the same problem? Does anyone know of a solution?

*Mark Partridge*

I do wonder what strain is put on any vehicle when a carrier of any sort is fastened to the bodywork rather than directly to the chassis. I don't recall ever having seen a carrier which would take four bikes, even though two of them are smaller, unless you include trailers. So over to the membership; someone is bound to know.

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### **WANTED**

I've recently discovered that one of my wheel trims has "disappeared". I wonder if any member may be able to sell me a couple or know where I may be able to purchase them, if they are still available. It's for a VW Trident 1989. I think they are the standard wheel trim, plain but with the word VOLKSWAGEN stamped adjacent to the valve. Please contact Dave Thomas at 20 Brummel Drive, Creigiau, Cardiff, CF4 8NX or telephone 0222 891 856.

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### **Silver Screens**

When we changed our van from Talbot to VW base vehicle we had to buy a new Silver Screen and because we wanted one which would not take up a lot of room we chose the new diamond patterned "Continental". I was quite pleased with its appearance but the front of most panel vans is straight without any protection from a Luton and the guttering is designed to dump the water down the windscreen or rear corners. Not good for a very wet night and little diamond shaped punctures in the Silver Screen. We drained the water out of ours in the shower compartment and later hung it over the wing mirrors and bonnet where it quickly dried. I spoke to Mike Parker soon after our return and he agreed to exchange it (plus a small cheque) for one of the older versions without any sewing punctures. When I asked why he had brought out this "Continental" model he explained that competition demanded that a less expensive screen should be in his range. However, in my opinion if you can afford the plain model it is well worth the extra, will absorb far less water (if any) and will squash down into quite a small parcel so the size is no problem.

*Rita Daley*

I have often found that the little strips of Silver Screen which go along under the VW mirror brackets seem to attract and retain the water which has otherwise drained to the bottom hem of the screen. This item also reminds me that I cannot understand why the "designers(?)" of the VW and of other vehicles too have arranged that there is a reservoir under the windscreen and the bonnet to collect the rainwater.

Sometimes when we move off we leave a trail of water which has collected overnight and more than once I have wondered if I have left a tank tap open!

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## A CAUTIONARY TALE

I usually change my own engine oil and filter halfway between dealer services. I knew, from my previous 10,000 mile service invoice, that an oil filter was about £17 for my petrol engined T4. When the parts department of the same dealership charged me about £7 for the filter I was worried that I might be fitting an incorrect part to my still-under-warranty vehicle. The explanation was that things had changed and the new part, with its slightly different part number, was now the correct item to fit. Fine, except that when I removed the old filter fitted by the dealer it had the new, cheaper, part number on it. It is difficult not to draw the obvious conclusion but the dealer did refund the difference, with his apologies.

*Geoff Watson*

It certainly makes you wonder, doesn't it?

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## FOR SALE

I have the following new and unused items for A-S Coachbuilts for sale:

- (a) Double-glazed window for rear door
- (b) Single sliding double-glazed window for side windows.
- (c) Flyscreen for top air vent.

No reasonable offer refused. Telephone Reg Rogers on 0784 454 400 or write to him at 11 Broomfield, Octavia Way, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 2QD.

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Ford Legend GL, 2litre petrol, June 1989, 25,000 miles. All the excellent features praised by John Hunt in August MMM. 4 berth, Alarm, 2nd Battery, Blown Air Heating, Cooker, Cruise Control, Double-glazed, Flush toilet, 3-way Fridge, Flyscreens, Mains Hook-up, Radio, Roofrack with ladder, Shower, Vaillant water heater. V.G.condition. Selling for medical reasons. £16,250 ono. Telephone Melvyn Crapp on 0908 563 795 or write to him at 4 Littlemere, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK8 8DR.

(A donation kindly sent with this ad.)

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Bedford CF 250 A-S Hightop 1982 "Y" reg, 2.3 litre petrol. Sleeps

2+2. 41,000 miles, 4 owners, 12 months MOT, new tyres all round. Oven, Grill, double burner, 2-way fridge, sink (pumped water), Toilet compartment, shaver point, electric hook-up, heater, Rear awning, Nudge bar. No rust, Ziebarted from new. Excellent condition inside and out. £6,000.00 ono. Please telephone David Bell on 0703 464 860 or write to him at Evergreen, 1 Scaton Close, West End, Southampton, Hants., SO13 3NT.

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Executive on Peugeot Talbot chassis with 2.5 diesel engine. February 1992, Power Steering, 11,300 miles only. Full spec. plus alarm system, Omnistor awning and Safari Room, Silver Screen, Rear Spring Assisters and front seat swivels. £19,500.00. Telephone Keith Robinson on 0946 725 497 or write to him at 83 Fell View Park, Gosforth, Cumbria, CA20 1HY.

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Auto-Sleeper curtain size 55" x 25" ex T4 Trident/Trooper side sliding door. Matches the blue/grey interior of '92. Brand new and without press studs. £10.00

I also have a ZIG Water Level gauge sensor (this is the item which goes into the top of the water tank to measure the water level) which is surplus to requirements. It is brand new and has 18" long probes which can be shortened if required. It is known to be suitable for the T4 Trident and Trooper. £ - NIL - or just the cost of postage - it's gathering dust in my garage. Telephone Geoff Watson on 0455 291 801 or write to 1 Ferrers Croft, Barlestone, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 0JL.

Geoff wants his best wishes passed on to *Keith Govey and Jack Orme* following the successful sale of items via the Newsletter.

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## Winningen Rally, Germany

Very many thanks to *Anna & Don Johnson* who organised and marshalled this rally and to *Sandy & Bill Burnett* who assisted and kept us from going astray. After last winter's floods, which completely submerged the site and virtually destroyed the restaurant, it was remarkable that the site was open and fully operational for this year. The rally coincided with the local wine festival so that plenty of tasting was to be had. Oh! Where does one put all the wine-tasting glasses in an Auto-Sleeper?

*Tony Jones*

(Simple answer - Wash Up and use them again! - Ed.)



# CHEERS!

This month I have included the slightly revised telephone number below. Most numbers will have an additional "1" in them but some towns (cities?) will have a completely new coding. When you send in your renewal form later this year, please make sure that you give *Sheila Henthorne* your correct dialling code. Meanwhile, don't forget to take care of your van for the winter. See you around.

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