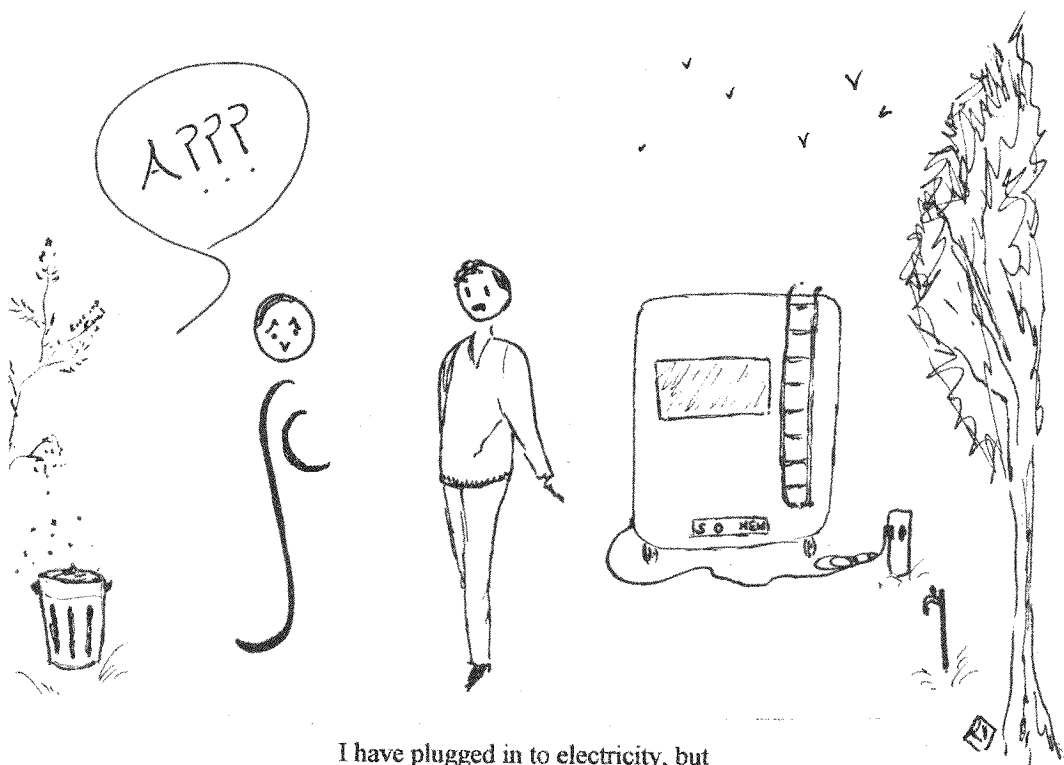


# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**



I have plugged in to electricity, but

WHERE DO I PLUG IN TO GAS?

**NEWSLETTER 74**  
**NOVEMBER 1994**

Hello.

Here it is, 30th September, and I've just turned the heating on because I feel a bit chilly. What a difference from the very hot weather which we had earlier this year. But that is what makes life in this country of ours interesting, isn't it? Where else in the world can the weather be a good topic of conversation? "Whether the weather be fine, or whether the weather be not, we'll weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like it or not!" And quoting that poem - well it was a sort of poem - leads on neatly to:

## POETRY

You will remember that at the Club & Company Rally this year entries were invited for a poetry competition which was run by Which Motorcaravan. I promised that I would include the poems when I had room for them. I now understand that the competition was won by *Ron Lear* who gets a sweat shirt for his efforts. His poem is printed below.

### ODE TO AUTO-SLEEPER

Here is a *LEGEND* of a company with *FLAIR*  
Who create all their products with consummate care.  
The 'customer relations' are friendly and good  
And the value of *HARMONY* is well understood.

Whether for *CLUBMAN* or an *EXECUTIVE* bold,  
They realise the dreams of both young and old,  
With a *SYMPHONY* of products to satisfy all  
From just short and fat to enormously tall.

They have the *RAPPORT* to understand all one's needs  
And should win a *TROPHY* for all their good deeds -  
You may have sworn like a *TROOPER* at your out-of-date toy  
Until a new *TALISMAN* became your great joy.

Maybe you're a *RAMBLER* - or a fisherman true  
With *TRIDENT* and keep-net to spear just a few,  
But you'll be in *RHAPSODY* with your *DUETTO*  
in *RIMINI* for 'just one Cornetto'!

Your aim may be "*RECRO*" in the wide-open spaces  
And the jewel may be *TOPAZ* - just imagine the faces  
Of neighbours all round if just one of these  
Lands up on your drive, complete with the keys!

And that's the *OMEGA* of my little ditty.  
I've not mentioned "Auto-Sleeper" but that is no pity  
Since they need no hard sell or powerful hawking  
'Cos their products are right and "do all the talking"!!

#####

You may have noticed in Motor Caravan World a couple of items which you thought that you had read before. You had! I've had a very nice letter from Bob Griffiths in which he apologised for not acknowledging the source of the items. I wrote to him because in one place it had been printed that *Alan Major* works for "AB" whereas what I had said in the Newsletter was that *Alan* works for A-S. But it is good of Bob to apologise gracefully and it at least shows that someone is reading our Newsletter and thinks that some items are worth quoting.

#####

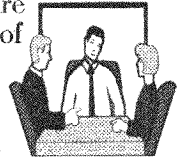
There is also a bit of confusion about the remarks concerning the P.A. system in use at the Club and Company Rally. I've had a letter from *Neville Jelfs* who, as you probably know, provided the sound system in use in the evenings. It was NOT that one to which I was referring. Our problem concerns the main system which is supposed to be able to provide the public address to the whole of the show ground including the Severn Hall and which was in use during the daytime from time to time, together with the use which our Chairman put it to during Saturday evening. At that time we were advised that his voice was booming out in parts of the hall but was inaudible in others. You will certainly remember the way in which *Arthur's* voice made all sorts of odd noises into the microphone. I am sorry that this was not made clearer last month but we still hope to have someone knowledgeable about these things to help us for next year so that when any announcement has to be made it can reach the entire area of the show ground rather than just odd parts and so that any entertainment provided during Friday and/or Saturday evening will not rely on what people have to bring with them.

==== = 000000000 = ====

## COMMITTEE MEETING

Your committee met at Sutton-on-Sea in Lincolnshire on Saturday, 24th September. As usual, the business of the meeting took around five hours to transact. The main discussion centred on the change in Regalia Officer and we elected *Ian Ross* into that post officially. He, with the able assistance of *Stella* and with the help they received from *Pru and Richard Osborne* was able to present a very comprehensive inventory of the stocks of regalia. You will find a note from *Ian* a little later in this Newsletter. Our Ferry Bookings Officer, *Steve Bowler*, told us that he had booked over 100 crossings this year which has pleased the ferry company no end. He will continue to take calls for any ferry booking but may refer members to ACCEO if their offers are better than we can get. *Sheila Henthorne* as Secretary of the Club, told us that our Exemption Certificate is due for renewal and that the matter was in hand. As Membership Secretary she said that enquiries and applications continued to flow in and that the latest membership number issued was over 1900. The total membership at the time of the meeting was 1,190 - vans that is (with two people in each on that makes, er...er...er...about 2,400 odd (very odd!) people), and the number was already out of date because the postman would have delivered more applications since we had been away from home! Our Public Relations Officer, *Cliff Abbott*, is quietly getting on with the task of telling the commercial magazines just what we are doing but unfortunately, with the long lead times some of them require, any "news" for them is old stuff to us. *Bob Williams*, our Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Annual Dinner and AGM sub-committee, told us that the whole task of arranging that weekend had been virtually completed with the exception of the choice of meat for the dinner and the numbers of the hymns for the Sunday morning. We discussed the menu and agreed that we would choose the turkey option but would leave the choice of hymns to the Salvation Army. Then he dropped his bombshell. With sadness *Bob* has had to resign from the committee, from the chair of the sub-committee too and, of course, he and *Monica* have both resigned from the Club. But they will continue to receive the Newsletter to keep them in touch and if they see us at any site where non-members of the Club are permitted to be they will undoubtedly come across and say "hello". With regret but with understanding we had to accept their resignation. [See Chairman's Chat later.]

*John Edden*, the only Rally Co-ordinator who was able to attend, told us that the calendar for 1995 is beginning to fill up. A large number of the members who have previously run rallies have suggested



that they would prefer to allow others to run them next year but, so far, not enough volunteers have come forward. It is to be hoped that more members will undertake this task which, as I have so often said, is **NOT** difficult. So if *YOU* feel like running one, please contact either *John Edden* or *Tony Jones* who will be delighted to hear from you and will give you every assistance. *Tony Jones*, who apologised for his absence, sent a report together with an inventory of the Club equipment. I said my piece as the Newsletter Editor and mentioned that you lot out there are still providing me with items for inclusion (**KEEP IT UP! - PLEASE!!**) and that the current print run, when you include the dealers and the commercial press, the supply for A-S offices and for new members, runs to over 1,200 copies per month. It certainly keeps *Rita and Philip Daley* and their helpers busy! I also said that from time to time I have received requests from commercial enterprises asking whether they could have advertising space within the Newsletter. In every case I have replied that we only take advertising from our own members, in the "For Sale" and "Wanted" categories. I know that from time to time members make comments in favour of this or that commercial business which they feel to be of interest to fellow members. But that is the only type of advertising which the committee felt that the Club should entertain.

--- == ooo000ooo == ---

## CYCLE RACKS



I refer to the letter from *Mark Partridge* in the October edition. It seems that the *Partridge* family and my own have a lot in common when it comes to Auto-Sleepers and bikes. I too went through research of bike carriers for two adult mountain bikes and two child bikes for my Flair. After a series of developments using a car roof rack fitted to a trailer and then four French "trough" racks fitted to the roof rack on the trailer I graduated to a Fiamma 300D.

This has an offset centre suitable for rear opening doors. It is designed for three bikes but as the total weight of the four bikes does not exceed the total limit of 50 kgs the additional small child's bike can be safely strapped on. The rack is removable leaving relatively small brackets riveted or screwed to the vehicle which can be fitted with plastic caps (supplied with the rack) to cover the outward facing metal edges.

Within 100 metres of the first outing, having had the rack installed by a Fiamma distributor, the upper mountings became detached. The four mounting brackets were all secured by self-tapping screws into the

thin metal panel of the door. I put the failure down to a wrenching movement caused by flexing of the lower panel of the door. This was obviously unsatisfactory and I replaced the upper screws with self-seating rivets. It was not possible to access the underside of the securing points to use nuts and bolts as they are on the small area of the door above the window. In order to be confident that the rack would be stable when loaded and not suffer from the flexing of the lower door panel I made brackets from 3mm aluminium which were fitted between the inside of the door panel and the inner strengthening struts. The brackets created a very rigid structure preventing any body deformity and allowing me to make a recent 1500 mile, fully loaded, trip to France with no difficulties. I have noticed a slight drop on opening the door with the rack loaded with a tendency for the door to scrape the bumper. I intend to prevent this by gluing a short nylon strip to the bumper where the inner corner of the door crosses it or alternatively not to use the door when the rack is loaded. I would be happy to discuss the whole matter in more detail if any member wants to call me on 0831 533 410

*Colin Gibbs*

PS Despite the doubts of several specialists I have successfully had lap and diagonal seat belts fitted to the rear seats of the Flair. It really is not the problem that the pessimists in the trade had predicted. I have also had the front seats converted to captain's chairs with the addition of adjustable arms and head restraints in the original material. Full details available on the above number.

#####

I was interested in *Simon Harrop's* query about cycle racks because, as a keen cyclist, I wanted one put on the rear of my Flair. I approached Costwold Motor Caravans who originally sold me the van and they refused to put one on saying that it put too great a strain on the hinged door. I have always found this firm honest and helpful so I must assume that they must know what they are talking about. Anyway, I've given up the idea. I will stick to walking when camping and keep the bike for cycling holidays.

*Eileen Langman*

#####

In response to the question raised, firstly I would agree that three or four bikes on a body mounted carrier is placing quite a strain on the adjacent bodywork so that even if the rack does not flex, I would expect

to see some flexing of the body and therefore bouncing and some localised damage. Secondly the overhang caused by four bikes mounted on a spare wheel carrier may well produce excessive leverage on the mounting unless it is of the chassis/rear bumper type. This overhang, when mounted on a spare wheel, may also exceed the legal distance from the rear lights to the rear of the vehicle.

My solution to this problem, not wanting to drill holes or damage the body of our Talisman, was first to make and fit a tow bar (already copied by a 'neighbour' at the Club & Company Rally) thereby taking the weight directly to the chassis. Whilst I appreciate that not all members will have the facilities to make such an item, it is an answer. Even a towbar mounted rack flexes to some degree but this was cured by fitting a ratchet strap from the outermost bike to the rear ladder. Another alternative may be to split the load, i.e. a couple on the roof and a couple on the back door.

An old camping trailer is perfect for chucking a couple of bikes in with an offcut of carpet between them but again, there's the expense of a towbar and trailer plus it's impossible to reverse due to the width of the Talisman because you can't see it until it jack-knives...and it's too late then!

*Nigel Emson*

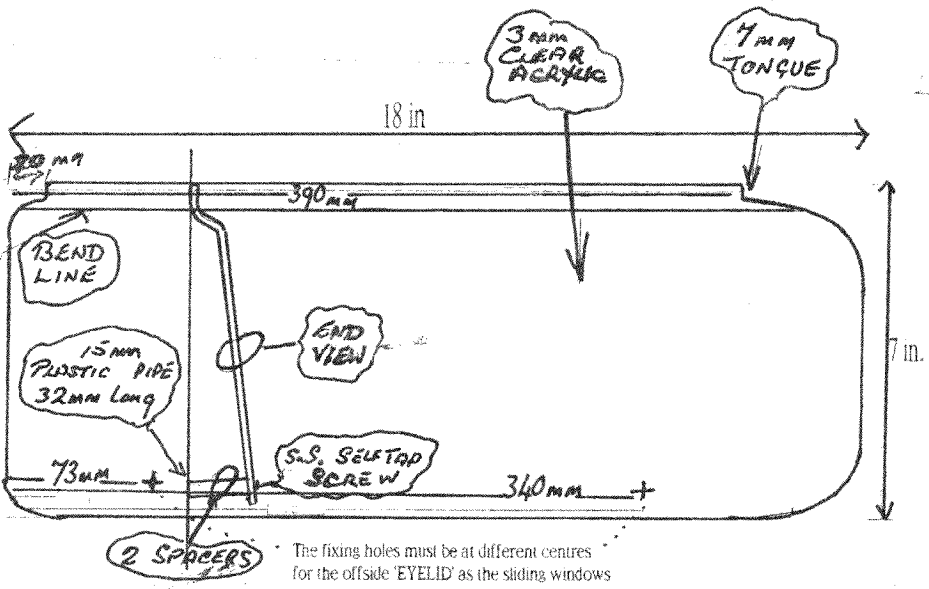
There you are, folks. Differing views on the subject - as usual! Having towed a trailer loaded with up to four small motor cycles for many miles to and from various shows, I will take issue with the suggestion of problems with reversing. You can buy a lens to fit onto the rear window of the Talisman (or in our case with our previous van, the Bedford Clubman) and using this you can see the slightest waver of the trailer and take the necessary corrective action. I recommend the lens for any van so that you can see more of what is immediately behind you, rather than several feet away. I fully agree with the comment about the overhang at the back of the van and I also wonder about the load carrying capabilities. Every van has a maximum weight which can be added to the vehicle and this must include people, bedding, clothes, food, water etc., etc. Doesn't leave too much spare for bikes, does it? From what I have read in the commercial magazines, some vans hardly have enough spare weight capacity for the driver and passenger, never mind food, clothes etc!

--- == oooOOOooo == ---

# EYELIDS!

Here is a subject which may interest our members. A large number of A-S high-top panel van conversions have sliding windows in them. I am sure that their owners are all too well aware of the shortcomings of these windows in the rain. Well, I have come up with an idea that might prove popular. It will not damage the roof by screwing into it and is quite simple to construct.

One needs an offcut of clear Acrylic sheet, 18 inches long, 14 inches wide and 3mm thick. In the Bournemouth area Space Age Plastics Ltd will provide it at a very reasonable cost. The sheet needs to be cut in half to end up with two pieces each 7 inches wide. Clamp one piece to a wooden work bench with a piece of metal, dexion angle could be used. The metal clamp needs to be in from the top edge by 10mm. Now, here comes the interesting bit, take a blow lamp (a friend used a hot air paint stripper) and heat the sheet until it softens. It can then be



bent to a reasonably steep angle. Clamp or wedge a piece of 15mm copper tube under the bent up Acrylic sheet, return the heater and allow the sheet to fall slowly down over the pipe. This can form quite a nice shape if one takes a little care. I have included a drawing because one picture is worth a thousand words. The bent sheet is now shaped as in the drawing which can be done with a junior hacksaw (or even a bandsaw) and file. Drill the hole to suit the stainless steel screws one has bought, 1.5 to 1.75 inch number 8 self tapping screws were used in the prototype.

To fit your masterpiece to the van cut a slit in the top part of the rubber that fills the gap with a sharp knife. Start the cut a short way in from the end and just let the blade go into the exterior side, the profile is hollow. This cut only needs to be the same length as the tongue. Slip the tongue into the rubber, lubricate the outside of the rubber with a small amount of silicone grease and pop it all back into the frame. Drill two small holes in the outside edge only of the window frame to accommodate the EYELID, insert the 15mm plastic pipe spacers you previously prepared and screw the assembly up tight.

There you have it. The windows will not let any more rainwater in and can even be used whilst driving in light rain. They are practically invisible from a few yards away and no permanent damage has been done.

*Dorothy & Jim Shotton*

I think that I prefer the use of the hot air gun rather than the blowlamp because all sorts of "Oooh! Nasty" might happen with the latter. Acrylic sheet CAN melt into blobs of very hot plastic! So if you do try this out, be very careful!

---===ooo000ooo===---

### *Chairman's Chat*

*Bob Williams*, the Club's Vice-Chairman, has sold his A-S Clubman GL and, accordingly, will not continue in that office, nor will he be able to remain as a member of the Club. *Bob* joined the Committee in April 1992 and has been Vice-Chairman for the last year in addition to being the Chairman of the AGM Rally Sub-Committee which has worked hard to ensure that all the plans for this major event in the Club calendar are fitting. Just before leaving the Club he visited Kettering to up-date his Sub-Committee and to see that the arrangements there are well advanced for the 1995 Annual Dinner and AGM.



On behalf of all members, and personally, I thank *Bob* for all his work for the Club both as Vice-Chairman and as Sub-Committee Chairman and our thanks are due also to *Monica* for all the support she has given him in this work.

*Ron Wilson* has taken over from *Bob* as Chairman of the Sub-Committee to ensure that the work for that rally continues without interruption. The Committee has co-opted *Ron* to fill the vacancy and it is good to have him back on the main Committee again.

*Arthur Irving*

====ooo000ooo=====

## THANKS

We would like to thank all the ASOC members from all areas of the country who have sent their good wishes for a speedy recovery via the telephone, letters and an avalanche of cards following *Tom's* recent heart attack. *Tom* is making a steady recovery. It is good to know that so many people care. We hope to be rallying again in 1995. Thank you all once again.

*June & Tom Pycock*

That's what the Club is all about - friendship and caring. So keep up the good work, *Tom*, and get better as fast as you can.

====ooo000ooo=====

## RALLY PLAQUES

After my plea in the Newsletter for someone to take over the ordering of Rally Plaques I was absolutely inundated with offers! I received O N E! A very big "Thank You" is due to *Joyce and Gordon Matthews* who kindly agreed to take the job on as from 1st January 1995. If you are marshalling a rally in 1995 you will no doubt be hearing from them as soon as the first edition of the rally list is finalised.

It is with regret that I have had to give the job up as I enjoyed chatting to the marshals when confirming numbers of plaques etc. Thank you to all those marshals who returned the order book promptly and remembered to confirm numbers required by the correct date. The rally season is now drawing to a close and nearly all this year's plaques have been ordered. I have so far only seen one; perhaps next year we will manage to get to more rallies, but with an active Scout and an equally active Guide in the family, weekends rapidly become over-booked!

May I wish all our friends in the Club a Happy Christmas and enjoyable Motor Caravanning in the New Year (even if it is a bit early!).

*Heather Tidbury*

I would say that she was underwhelmed with volunteers. Our

# Rallies

## *November and December 1994*

**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, Flat 13 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: .....

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: .....

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.

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.

POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT

thanks are due to *Heather* for all she has done.

====ooo000ooo====



*Jeff Worley* has advised me that the New Year Rally at Ilfracombe is **fully booked** and no more applications can be considered.

====ooo000ooo====

## REGALIA

Following the resignation of *Pru Osborne* I have been appointed as Regalia Officer for the Club. Over the next few months I shall be reviewing the Regalia list, deleting some items which are not so popular now and looking for new ideas for the future. Any suggestions for new lines and/or suppliers would be welcome.

I am please to say that I can count on the continued support of *Rose Bevis* and *Kath Beryon* next year. I am looking forward to setting up shop for the first time at the A.G.M. and to meeting many of you there.

*Ian Ross*

New address for Regalia sales is: 33 Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex, RM14 1 DL and the telephone number is 0708 228 075.

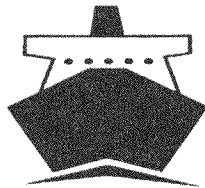
**STOP PRESS** Since this letter was written *Ian* has been advised that *Rose Bevis* has suffered another stroke. Obviously, she will not be able to work as a Regalia representative for some time so we shall be looking for someone to take over. In the meantime we wish *Rose* a very speedy return to full health.

====ooo000ooo====

## Ferry from Bilbao

I thought that it might be worth passing on the following:

For those people returning to England on this ferry, particularly if, like my wife and I, they worry about missing a sailing. About 30 minutes motorway drive from Bilbao there is a delightful fishing village called Castro Urdiales with very many excellent restaurants. On a Sunday parking is just about impossible because the population of Bilbao seem to come there to walk, talk and eat. However, there is a very well run camp site on the outskirts of the town, about 75% residential. There is a swimming pool, shop, etc. but there is only cold water in the clean and modern showers. Come off the motorway from Santander at the Santander end of the town. The camp site is well marked; you turn at the bull ring. A taxi will come from the



town on a phone call, cost about £3.00 to the town.

In the morning get to the harbour before 10.30 am, visit the supermarket, have a final coffee and cake sitting overlooking the sea. Drive on with the sea on your left, follow the motorway signs and in about 30 minutes you will be parked in Santurzi waiting for the ferry.

I hope this information may be of some use. We used the site last year and again about the beginning of August this year. We had a superb meal in a restaurant overlooking the sea. The church is worth a visit too.

*Doug Wilding.*

"Turn at the bull ring" makes it sound a bit like Birmingham, doesn't it? But this is the sort of information which many of our members will treasure as it is based upon recent knowledge. Pity about the cold water showers, though, but maybe we have some stoics in the club who would enjoy them. (Or do I mean masochists?)

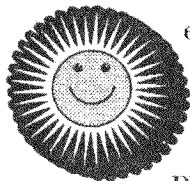
---==ooo000ooo==---

## THOSE FAMOUS ROOF-VENT STRUTS

*Barry Crawshaw* has kindly offered to send in a report on how to obtain and fit these dreaded items. But being rather a busy lad he won't be able to do anything about it just yet. In the meantime he says that he will be "happy to answer any telephone enquiries from members who are desperate". His telephone number is 0241 852 396. But don't be too surprised if you ring and don't get an answer. He has to go out and about quite a bit so he may well be away from home when you try. Just keep on trying until you get him. We shall look forward to the report in due course, with thanks.

---==ooo000ooo==---

## SOLAR PANEL.



On various occasions I have found that our van electricity supply, 2 x 60ah leisure batteries, is not sufficient for a long stay on one site. It seemed that the use of a solar panel was worth exploring. I chose one which offered 10 watts, and it, together with a blocking diode and small ammeter, cost about £140. The purpose of this note is to discuss the cost effectiveness of the exercise.

At 12 volts a power of 10 watts is equivalent to a current of about 0.8 amps. That is what one could expect the ammeter to read under conditions of full sunshine and with the panel being perpendicular to

the incoming rays of sunshine. To achieve this one would have to arrange to keep the panel moving all the time to match the position of the sun. I adopted the compromise of putting the panel flat on the roof where the sun could get at it all the time, and I didn't have to bother about it.

In the south of France, at the foot of the Pyrenees, full sunshine gives a reading of 0.4 amps for a few hours around mid-day on sunny days. Today it hasn't registered anything all day long. It seems that under favourable conditions I can expect somewhere around 4 hours at 0.4 amps, that is about 1.6 ampere hours during the day. Maybe I am being over critical and I may sometimes get as much as 2ah in a day. This would run the food-mixer for about 3 minutes or the computer just a little longer. To borrow an old Fisheries Scientific expression this amounts to the square root of damn all.

I have no quarrel with any of the statements made in the literature, it is just that they apply to conditions of full sunshine and perpendicular incidence that are rarely achieved. I regard this as a highly successful result in that it has given me a clear answer; it is not cost effective.

*Nial Reynolds*

I have often wondered about the use of the various types of solar panel offered for use in cars, vans or houses. One or two seem to be more a type of water heater using the sun as the heating element. But thank you, *Nial*, for a clear description of the whole affair. I shall NOT pop out and buy one of the panels advertised which you can rest on the dashboard and plug into the cigar lighter to keep the battery fully charged!

====ooo000ooo=====

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL OWNERS OF TALBOT/FIAT BASED PETROL ENGINED MOTOR CARAVANS.**

I needed a pair of front tyres for my Harmony and wrote for advice to Sinton Tyres Ltd. of Milton Keynes. By return I received a courteous, extremely detailed reply from Douglas Sinton himself suggesting General Tire Grabber AT's (205R14). I bought a pair (supplied and fitted locally) and discovered that at 35/36 psi (the recommended pressure!) they gave a softer ride than the original tyres and that the vehicle felt very 'sure footed'.

As a site inspector for the Camping and Caravanning Club, I occasionally have some particularly out of the way places to visit and one such came my way this week. On the way to the proposed site I took a chance and went the short way, knowing that a couple of steep climbs

lay ahead. Both had extreme hairpin bends at their steepest parts; both were 1:4 (25%) and the roads had just enough rain on them to make them extremely slippery. Had the vehicle still been on its original tyres I would definitely have failed hill 2 as I was compelled almost to stop 10 yards before the apex of the bend. As it was, only lack of BHP slowed me.

This traction improvement was demonstrated again later in the morning when, on a narrow farm road, I encountered an 'I can't reverse' Volvo. I pulled, very reluctantly, into a grass, mud and grit 'lay-by' to allow "Reverseless Rowena" to pass and was extremely apprehensive about pulling away - the vehicle was on a considerable slope. I need not have feared, 'Llamedos II' shrugged herself out of the mess as well as any rear wheel driven vehicle could have done.

Obviously, time alone will show the mileage they achieve, but at this moment I am absolutely delighted with the performance and, as a matter of interest, the price.

*Maurice Wright*

Thank you, *Maurice*, for some valuable information based upon your experience rather than on 'what it said in the advert'. If anyone wants to get in touch with Sinton Tyres their telephone number is 0908 665 591.

====ooo000ooo=====

## *Our Talisman*

We have owned our Talisman now for just three years and during that time the following feelings have emerged:

We love our van with all its facilities and space; in particular we like the easy-clean glass fibre exterior which always looks good and is completely waterproof. A neighbour had a van made up of flat stippled aluminium panels which was a beast to clean and, because of its square bulk, slowed to a crawl in anything like a headwind. I quite like the 2.0 litre petrol engine, more puff and more refined than the antique design that we had in our previous Ford Flair. However I hate the gear change which often refuses to go into 1st or 2nd when most needed, such as on a steep hill. There is also often severe hesitation when pulling away in 2nd gear which the garage has been unable to cure. As for that ridiculous oil filler cap - the least said the better. In general, I would say that the Talbot engine is marginal in power for this size and weight of van. Certainly no sparkling acceleration and not very good on fuel consumption. The diesel alternative has never appealed to me because, apart from the substantial extra cost, I'm sure that I would not like the noise or that messy, smelly fuel.

The two single beds made up of four separate seat cushions were a problem, being too narrow and of the wrong contour for a good bed. We sorted this out by obtaining two full length, full width cushions from Ultimate Furnishings and now have comfortable beds. Drainage of waste water from the kitchen sink was a problem. It just refused to drain until I found the cause to be an air lock somewhere in the pipework. I now use a small plunger to break the airlock and the water rushes away like a rat down a hole.

It's a pity that we have four different keys to operate all the locks on the van. With the addition of the house key and the alarm zapper, my key bunch makes a very suspicious bulge in my pocket. We suffered for a long time from rear spring creak but in one of the Newsletters I read of the application of motorcycle chain lubricant. This is provided in a spray can complete with graphite and one thin application has removed the squeak completely. We had a stainless steel bumper fitted during a visit to the factory shortly after obtaining the van. Some time later I backed into a tree that wasn't there before and bent one end of the bumper inwards. Recently I backed into another phantom tree and bent the other end in, so the overall result now looks quite acceptable.

The commercial motor caravan magazines often tell us that a particular model "drives and feels like a car" or "not a rattle anywhere". What rubbish! No big van feels or drives like our car (or rather my wife's car!) and we have been chasing rattles, squeaks and thumps ever since we had the van. One particular squeak, rather like a canary, has proved impossible to locate and I now find myself listening for it when it fails to perform.

We don't attend rallies for the simple reason that, being retired, we go away during every other week and stay out of sight at week-ends. Judging by the size of the Club and comparing with rally attendance figures there must be many like us. The odd thing is that, although I often meet other A-S owners during our trips to various Caravan Club sites, I've never yet met another member.

I often look with envy at other makes of van that have a stable door. Ours is either all open or all shut. If open, we have to put a grille up (made from a caravan clothes dryer) to prevent the dogs from getting out while we are snoozing after lunch. On the other hand our door is so much more substantial than those flimsy stable doors on other vans.

I am a member of a voluntary organisation and, during the last ten or eleven years, we have provided three mini-buses to the local community for use by other groups and voluntary bodies. The first was

based on a 2 litre Ford Transit and did 100,000 miles with no major repairs. It finally died from body rot after ten years service. The second is based on a 2 litre Talbot and, so far, has achieved 45,000 miles at the cost of two new gearboxes, four new clutches and is now suffering quite badly from body rot. The third vehicle is based on a 2.5 litre Ford diesel and has so far done 15,000 miles with no replacements other than a new roof resulting from some bright spark driving a high vehicle through a car park height barrier. I only mention these figures out of interest because the engines and chassis are the same as those used for our beloved motor caravans. The Talbot has the worst result and we will not use that make again. It should be remembered, however, that these mini-buses are often thrashed and abused by poor driving.

Would we change our van? I don't think so. We have often looked at other makes and models but have yet to find anything quite so good as our Talisman.

*Pat Johnson*

I agree that we can't expect our vehicles to "drive like a car" but I find that our VW Clubman GL is quite sporty. Obviously we couldn't beat Nigel Mansell from a standing start but we can give many car drivers quite a surprise from the traffic lights. And I don't accept that the modern diesel engine is either noisy or uses "smelly" fuel. Some of the older engines were both noisy and "highly scented" but we haven't found any problem with ours. The comparison between the mini-buses is quite revealing, isn't it? I presume that all three vehicles were driven by the same band of drivers so the comparison seems quite valid. Incidentally, I mentioned the question of stable doors to *Charles Trevelyan* after a similar comment earlier. He replied to the effect that they could only be fitted to vans with straight, vertical sides whereas all A-S coachbuilts are shaped in the vertical plane.

-----ooO000Ooo-----



Awning and Side panels suitable for a Talisman. Will consider roll up Omnistor/Fiamma type or drive-away tent similar to Eurovent/Harrison. Please telephone John Mitchell on 0962 776 563 or write to Tudor Cottage, Crawley, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2PR.

#####

Side and Front Awning Panels to fit Fiamma awning size 2.5 m (F.45) on 1992 Harmony. Please telephone Ann Bowes on 0272 735 844 or write to her at 21 Canowie Road, Bristol, BS6 7HR



VW Clubman GL, 2.4 diesel, power assisted steering. 'J' reg, May '92. 8,300 miles only. Full annual VW service '93 and '94. Superb condition, one owner, non-smoker. Recently fitted with "Tracker" stolen vehicle tracking system. Extras include alarm, steering wheel immobilizer, towbar with twin electrics, spare number plate with electrics, Fiamma 3 metre awning, removable radio cassette, internal Silver Screen, Leros ladder guard, cassette toilet trolley, 2 gas cylinders, 30m electric hook-up cable and plugs, levelling blocks and step. Other equipment available. Van fitted with optional adaptation for wheelchair ramps and fixings. Very reluctant sale for health reasons. £19,500.00. Contact Jill Ardron at Glyne Ridge, 32 Glyne Ascent, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 2NX or telephone 0424 222 108.

This is a repeat advert because the sale was almost completed when the buyers pulled out!

#####

Two Silver Screens, insulated inside fitting. As new. To fit Talbot and Ford Transit. £45.00 each. Telephone Renato Giazzi on 0753 856 809 or write to him at 32 Victor Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 3JU

#####

Ford Flair, 'E' Reg, 2 litre, unleaded petrol. 33,000 miles. Sleeping for four. Two tables, cooker with extractor fan, sink & drainer, water & space heaters, three-way fridge, wardrobe and good storage space. Fully equipped to 'go'. Professionally serviced. Silver Screens included. Two batteries. Security system. Everything works. £10,000.00. Telephone George Chatfield on 0494 562 154 or write to

him at 21 Orchard Close, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP14 4PR.

[George kindly enclosed a donation with this ad. Many thanks]

#####

Ford Legend GL, 2 litre 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, Fly screens, Mains Hook-up, TV aerial, Radio, Proximeter Reversing Aid, Roof rack with ladder, Shower, Vaillant water heater. V.G.condition. Selling for medical reasons. £15,950 ono. Telephone Melvyn Crapp on 0908 563 795 or write to him at 4 Littlemere, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK8 8DR.

#####

Talisman GL, GRP body, 2.5 diesel, 1986. Sleeps 2+2. New clutch and exhaust recently fitted. Good tyres all round. Usual facilities - shower, hot & cold water, three-way fridge, dead locks fitted plus alarm system, Silver Screen. Rear fument for motor scooter. All in excellent condition and below average mileage. Reluctant sale due to ill health. £12,000.00 ono. Telephone Des Hardy on 0532 537 834 or write to him at 94 Scott Green Crescent, Gildersome, Nr. Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS27 7DJ.

#####

Harmony, 'L' reg (April 1994), petrol, p.a.s., 5,000 miles, bull bar, waste water tank, 2nd battery. £18,250.00 ono. Reason for sale - going slightly larger! Telephone Glyn Roberts on 0654 710 724 or write to Penhros, 2 Llewelyn Road, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 0BT.

[Thanks for the donation - "going slightly larger" - does that mean "putting on weight"?]

#####

Eurovent Autovilla free-standing awning 11' x 8'. Cost new £421.00. Used only three times. £200.00

Silver Screens for VW T2 for front cab plus all around inside windows on suction pads. £80.00

Camping table - never used. £10.00

Stainless steel rear ladder guard for VW T2. Made by Auto-Sleepers. Cost £91.00 last year. £45.00.

For any of the above, please telephone Jackie Cooley on 0323 491 763 or write to her at 26 Hurdis Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 2SP.

#####

Rambler. 'H' reg. 2 litre petrol. 24,000 miles. Extras include twin swivel front seats, fresh and waste water tanks, second battery, Omnistor awning, Maxview TV aerial. Excellent condition. £12,800.00 or would part exchange towards Legend 1989-90, 2-berth, low mileage. Please telephone Brian Aerts on 0354 53 817 or write to him at 170 Norwood Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8JN.

*Brian* is, at the moment, our newest member having sent this advert in with his application form. But by the time you read this others will have joined!

#####

Eurovent Autovilla annexe, 11' x 8'. Side-fitting or free standing. Used for VW UHT. £160.00 ono. Telephone Mrs Hopkinson on 0926 511 179 or write to Jo Cranswick, c/o Cider Mill Cottage, Poolspringe Farm, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8JJ.

Note: Mrs Hopkinson is in Kenilworth. She is selling the annexe for Jo who is currently free from the impediment of a fixed address!

====000000====

## GET WELL SOON

Just to let you know that *Gerald Coggins* was taken into hospital just after the Hidden Valley rally. I understand from *Margaret* that he is now making progress but that it is likely to be a little while before he will be his old self. On behalf of all members we wish *Gerald* a very speedy recovery and a sincere hope that it will not be too long before this lovely couple are re-united at home.

====000000====

TAILPIECE. From the Hymer Club by way of ACCEO Matters, to both of whom we render thanks. The story is of a motor caravanner and his wife who heard sounds outside their van one night and thought that someone was trying to steal petrol from their tank. They were too afraid to investigate but next morning found a siphon hose, a petrol can, a metal cap and a pool of vomit beside their van. It appears that the thief had mistaken the cap of the sewage holding tank for that of the fuel tank and had tried to start the siphon with his mouth! What a sucker for punishment!!



We send our congratulations and best wishes to *Angela and Charles Trevelyan* on the birth of *Henrietta*, a sister for *Piers*, on 14th October 1994. She weighed in just over the 7 lbs mark (or whatever that may be in grams).

And that's that! See you next month.

Your Editor  
Harry Henthorne  
144, Devonshire Hill Lane  
London, N17 7NH  
Tel: 081 808 9112

\*\*\*\*\*  
Any item appearing in this Newsletter may be freely used by other publications. Please acknowledge both Author and Source.  
\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Committee Members:**

Cliff Abbott	Public Relations Officer	0151 608 0857
Steve Bowler	Ferry Booking Officer	0121 745 8369
John Cox	Vice-President	0283 712 394
Rita Daley	Vice-President	0121 706 1816
Philip Daley	Vice-President	0121 706 1816
John Edden	Rally Co-Ordinator	0827 65 850
Sheila Henthorne	Club Secretary and Membership Secretary	0181 808 9112
Harry Henthorne	Newsletter Editor	0181 808 9112
Arthur Irving	Chairman	0114 236 5698
Tony Jones	Rally Co-Ordinator	0793 763 032
Ian Ross	Regalia Officer	0708 228 075
Janet Sutterby	Minutes Secretary	0507 462 449
John Tidbury	Treasurer	0235 525 730
Charles Trevelyan	President	0386 853 338
Ron Wilson	Chairman,ACM Sub-Ctee	0933 55 658