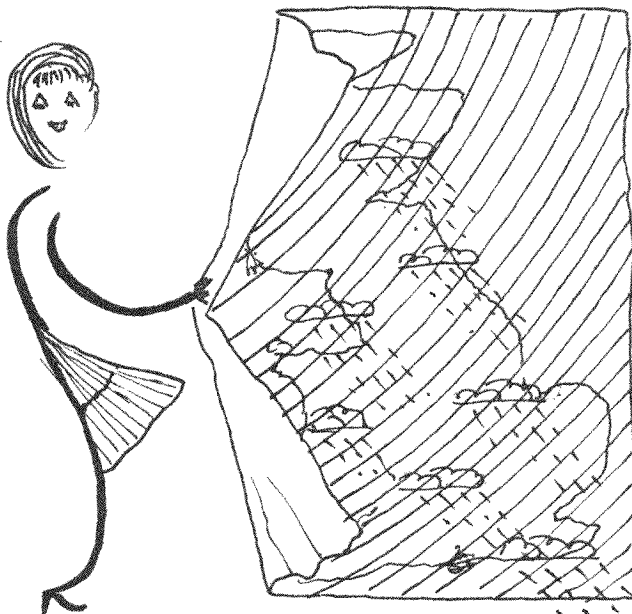


# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**



With the  
exception  
of  
Ipplepen,  
Hale  
and Honeybourne  
where  
there will  
be  
Sunny Intervals and  
cheerful people!

**NEWSLETTER 78  
MARCH 1995**

Hello.

First of all two apologies. Last month one or two of the little pictures went missing on the final copy sent to the printers (the *Daleys*). Gremlins again! They were definitely there when I produced a print for proof reading! I believe that it was something to do with the "print quality" which had been in place when the final print was made. So now you know why there were some odd shaped areas left blank in issue number 77. Sorry about that!

The second, rather more serious, was an error in the telephone number for ACCEO Insurance. It should read **0129 940 1497** which is the number for ACCEO Head Office. There is another number for the insurances, both caravan and household, and that is **0129 940 5489**.

Did you also spot the deliberate mistake? (Just to see if you were awake, of course!) On page 2, I mis-spelled our own surname! Flying Fingers were again the culprit and I didn't notice it (nor did *Sheila* when she did the proof reading.

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## **VALETING**

I received a very nice letter from *Charles Trevelyan* enclosing a sample paint stick for appraisal. Auto-Sleepers can now supply these in the following colours:

Ford Diamond White  
Ford Ivory  
Peugeot Corfu White (Express)  
Peugeot Gris Armee  
Peugeot White (Boxer)  
Rover Slate Grey  
Volkswagen Grey White

The cost, inclusive of postage and VAT is **£3.99** per stick which is substantially less than the one-eighth litre tins which A-S used to supply.

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I've also received a sample of "DRI WASH 'N GUARD" which is apparently a waterless technological vehicle cleaner and have been asked to try it and give an opinion of its merits. I'll let you know how I get on with it when I can try it because it must be applied to a **dry** vehicle and at the moment, what with rain, sleet, freezing fog and the like I'm not sure when that will be!

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## Cross Stitch Patterns

Mainly for newer members, I hold a small stock of patterns representing many A-S vans. These were prepared by *Betty and Joe Jacobs* and are available from me. Just send a note saying which pattern you require and accompany that with two second-class stamps (one for the postage and the other to pay for the photo-copying, envelope etc.) and it will be sent directly. Newer vans may be available later.

I am also indebted to *Betty & Joe* who have let me have pictures of the various A-S models which they have scanned from the latest magazine. For the uninitiated into the complexities of computing this means that I now have a number of pictures which I can use in the Newsletter to illustrate things. My very grateful thanks to them.

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## AUTO-SLEEPER MAGAZINE

*Charles Trevelyan* has also asked whether any member has taken his/her Auto-Sleeper into foreign/exotic parts and could supply an article for possible inclusion in the next edition of the Auto-Sleeper Magazine. This would be something on the lines of that which *Peter Fullick* provided for the recent issue. Now I know that many of you disappear to all sorts of odd places so see what you can do and don't forget to include a few photos showing your van in wherever it was. Please contact *Charles* at The Orchard if you require any further information or guidance.

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### Ross Park Rally

17th-19th March 1995



We have been informed by the Site Owner of Ross Park that he is unable to provide any catering at the site until Easter as he now finds it unviable to employ a Chef or waiting staff at this time of the year although he agreed to provide full facilities initially! The matter has been discussed with him but to no avail. Due to lateness of notification and distance it is unlikely that any alternative provision can be made. The use of the well equipped Barn and Conservatory is still available. It is with regret and disappointment that we have to tell you of this occurrence.

*Anne & Don Scaplehorn*

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## RALLY BOOKING

It has been mentioned before and, unfortunately, it has to be mentioned again. People try to book into a rally when it appears in the supplement to the Newsletter and find that it is already full and has been for some time. I had a telephone call from a new member, *Graham Stott* of Northwich, who received his Newsletter and promptly tried to book in for two rallies which appeared therein. In both cases he was told that the rallies were fully booked - and this was at ten o'clock in the morning! He fully understands that when there is a limit to the number of vans which may attend it may not always be possible to accept all those who wish to attend. But he, like your committee, find it difficult to accept that a rally will have been booked up completely in such a short space of time.

May we remind the marshals for each and every rally that although you feel that you should invite all your friends to the one you are running, please make sure that you do **NOT** take bookings before the appearance of the rally in the supplement. This particularly applies if your rally is limited in numbers. If you do, it tends to make things a bit on the "cliquey" side and prevents other members having a fair chance to attend your marvellous rally. I have it on very good authority that one rally which will not take place until March/April/May time was full by around November/December, well before it appeared in the supplement.

We all know how easy it is to succumb to your friends who will say "don't forget to book me into your rally, will you?" But if you will allow other, perhaps newer, members a fair crack of the whip you may very easily find that you will make more friends than ever. Why not make it a rule for yourselves that you will **ONLY** take bookings on the appropriate form and then only after it appears in the supplement? Of course, a telephone reservation may still be made but must be confirmed by the booking form within two or three days. One or two people might take offence but I am reminded of the old adage about whether you should put the milk into the cup or mug before or after you pour the tea in. "Those who matter don't mind; those who mind don't matter!"

*Graham* also suggested that it might be an idea to hold a special rally for those who, like him, are completely new to rallying. Now all we need is a volunteer to find a site and run one!

It is also understood that some members are arranging meets between themselves on various sites and these are not part of the official rally list. May we remind people who do meet like this that, whilst it is

a very good idea and shows that the spirit of friendship certainly exists in the Club, they are not covered by the Club Insurance nor by the Club Exemption Certificate. So please make sure that the meet is on a licensed site or a CL/CS and not on a farmer's field!

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### *Chairman's Chat*

With the last Newsletter you will have received the Booking Form for the Annual Dinner and Annual General Meeting Rally. May I ask you, please, to help our Booking Officer, *Jackie Claxton*, by completing and returning the form to her as quickly as possible to help her complete her records. If you have already sent the form, many thanks.

*Audrey Crouch* has agreed to organise the Raffle at the rally and I would ask you to support her in either of the following two ways - or both ways for preference!

- (a) by selling raffle tickets, and/or
- (b) by donating a prize.

If **YOU** can help by selling tickets, please let *Sheila Henthorne*, the Club Secretary, know and tell her when you will be available. Her address and telephone number is on the back page of the Newsletter. She will then liaise with *Audrey* to sort out a roster and you will be advised when you are required. If a large number of members volunteer to sell tickets then each will only be needed for, say, one hour. *Audrey* will be pleased to hear if you can donate a prize - she can be contacted on 0194 884 0894 or she will be pleased to receive your donation when you arrive at Kettering.

Over the first weekend in February the Club and Company Rally 1995 Sub-Committee met and made further progress with the preparations needed. It has been agreed that Auto-Sleepers Ltd. will undertake all facets of the outdoor entertainment whilst the Club will deal with entertainment in the Severn Hall. The Jelfs/Bennett quiz will be held on Friday evening and a Barn Dance Group and Caller have been booked for the Saturday evening.

The Club Office and Shop will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. The Hobbies Stalls and the Club Stalls (Bric-a-Brac, Bottles, Books etc.) will **ONLY** be open on Saturday. Final details of the actual opening times have still to be arranged.

I hope that members will again support the Hobbies Stalls by



demonstrating or displaying their hobby. I shall be pleased to hear from you (after the AGM Rally is over, please!) if you can demonstrate or display your hobby. These stalls proved a great attraction last year.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Dinner and AGM Rally at Kettering.

*Arthur Irving*

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## **Farewell**

*Maureen and I* planned to change our van this year and looked forward to the new A-S coachbuilts. However, we are both very disappointed in the interior layouts, so much so that we would not buy one. It was with very mixed feelings that we selected one of the Herald range. This obviously means that some time in March (delivery date) we are out of the Club. We hope to meet some of you at trade shows, etc. and who knows, A-S may produce a van that we like next time we change.

In the meantime we wish to thank our many friends in the Club for the pleasure of their company and the enormous fun we have enjoyed over the past six years. Best wishes to you all.

*Maureen & John Edden*

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## **GAS**

Two of our newer members, *Penny & Dave Morris* have a Clubman GL. In their previous non-A-S van they were using Camping Gaz and indeed are still using it at present. They know that they can use 2 x 7kg cylinders of butane in the Clubman but wondered which ones they should get. They were not too sure whether those supplied by Calor would fit into the locker.

I have been able to assure them that the new 6kg propane cylinders do fit into the locker because that is what we are now using and I am sure that the 7kg Calor butane would equally fit in. But as Calor is not available on the continent they wondered if there was a better solution.

So has anyone fitted a gas tank to a Clubman yet? If so, please let me have the details and I will forward to *Penny & Dave*. Or any other suggestions will also be welcome.

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## **Can you help, please?**

Later this year we are planning to spend about a fortnight away in

our Rapport. We mean to travel from Portsmouth to Santander and then across to Portugal. We hope to be touring mainly inland with just a few days on the coast before returning on the ferry. Information and ideas regarding places of interest and good locations will be appreciated together with details of any ferry discounts. But the main question is what do we really need to take with us, other than a Green Card, Warning Triangle, First Aid Kit, Spare light bulbs and Bail Bond via Safeguard Insurance? There are so many different policies and insurance suggestions. Will form E111 cover any medical emergencies?

We also mean to go across to Ireland, outward via Fishguard and return via Holyhead. Can we get a discount on the fares using these two routes?

Any information will be greatly appreciated.

*Ruth Frost*

I'll leave it to our Ferry Bookings expert (*Steve Bowler*) to advise you on the ferry details. And if anyone can offer advice on the other details, please write to 10 Dean Street, Newport, Gwent, NP9 7FD.

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In the same vein *Nora and Ven Venables* "are thinking of taking a touring holiday in New Zealand, North and South Islands. Have any members been there and do they have any useful tips and addresses to pass on, please?"

Please write to *Nora & Ven* at 15 Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, WV3 7JN.

#####

And still on the same theme I enclose a plea for advice which I received from *Rita & Peter Riley*.

"Although we are experienced motor caravanners (30 years) we have never visited Spain. Now that we have recently retired we can put this right and we intend to make a trip by sailing to Bilbao and driving back through France about four weeks later. We shall be most grateful for any ideas/advice on a suggested itinerary please - what should we either miss or definitely not miss etc." Please write to them at 12 Sowbury Park, Chieveley, Nr Newbury, Berkshire, RG16 8TZ or you can telephone them on 0163 524 8766.

I must say thank you to *Rita and Peter* for the donation they sent with this item. But please, folks, remember that there is absolutely no need to cross my palm with a cheque (or cash even!) to get things into the Newsletter. Just send the item along and, if possible, I will include it. As

in this case, I must sometimes edit the piece and I have deliberately left out the dates of the proposed trip for reasons which I am sure you will all feel are obvious.

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## **More on that Recall**

We hadn't really thought much about the Peugeot-Talbot Recall. However, on reading *David Perry's* article in the February issue of the Newsletter and owning a 1990 (H) Rambler we thought that it would be wise to make sure. We had bought our very low mileage Rambler, as its second owners, two years ago and, not having received a Recall letter from P-T we decided to take *David's* advice and call the Recall Help Line.

Yes! Our van was included in the Recall and so we booked it into our local dealers without a letter. No problem! An hour and the work was done - just time for a short walk and a coffee. Perhaps I might be imagining it but in spite of the van being great to drive before its 'operation' it does appear a little lighter on the steering. But no red sticker under the bonnet! A small inconvenience, perhaps, but it was better to be on the safe side and the lady on the Recall Help Line (0173 484 1331) was extremely helpful.

We do not possess a Works Manual for the Sevel van - something we keep promising to rectify and we are therefore a little ignorant of the 'down-to-earth' mechanics. We have read, in various magazines, the horror stories of Cam Belts breaking and causing horrendous damage after 40,000 miles. We have only just upped our original low mileage to 30,000 miles - not yet at the 40 point - but being in the Peugeot atmosphere after taking the van in for the Recall and out of curiosity, we asked the helpful Receptionist the time involved in the operation of changing the belt, in due course. To cut a long story short it appeared, after consultation with the Parts Manager, that the petrol engine does not have a belt - it has a chain! Relief! It takes 2.3 hours to change the tensioner if it gets too noisy. Now, we didn't know that! (Must be amateurs, we hear you murmuring!)

*Maureen and Peter Hunt*

P.S. Is there anyone out there with a Fiat 126 Bis (704cc water cooled flat twin) and who is in possession of a Works Manual? We know that this is a popular car for towing behind the larger vans but the Manual is now out of print and Fiat have no plans to reprint. We would very much like to buy, hire or borrow for photocopying salient points, one of these Manuals (NOT the handbook). Can anyone help, please?

*M & P H*

No, we do not condemn people as "rank amateurs" because all of us, in one way or another, know a lot less than we think we do. And it does no harm at all to admit the lack of knowledge.

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## ROOF MARKING

With reference to page 14 in the December Newsletter members may be interested to know that suitable letters/digits can be obtained from most firms producing plastic signs. See your local 'Yellow Pages' or 'Exchange and Mart' for the addresses and telephone numbers. These items are sold as computer cut Vinyl Letters, made to order in various sizes. I recently purchased a set of six inch high digits which fit neatly across the width of the roof of our Duetto for a cost of £10.00. They are easily fitted (from tall steps!) and mine are in black although other colours are available. alternatively, sets are available by mail order from a Southampton based specialist - see their advert in "En Route".

I would doubt the wisdom of displaying a sign advertising such a device - do thieves bother to read notices stuck on doors and/or wind-screens? However the mark on the roof cannot be seen by a thief unless he carries a stepladder but police could easily spot the vehicle from the air, motorway bridges etc.

## FLASHERS!

Having purchased our Duetto in August 94 and not having a need to be on the road after dusk until October I was somewhat surprised to be flashed by numerous oncoming motorists. At first I assumed that they were all ASOC members acknowledging our membership. But after several such evening events I drove to my local friendly garage where, to my amazement, the headlight beams were found to be very considerably out of focus. One wonders how this arose on a vehicle so shortly out of the factory. Surely Fords should check and set the beams or perhaps A-S or the dealer on the pre delivery check. The moral of this story is that if you buy any new vehicle be sure to check your headlights and don't assume that those "flashers" are friendly Club members - as I did!

*Reg Whinney*

I must say that I have noticed that any vehicle which has wrongly aligned headlights always seem to be the newer ones - when they go through the MOT they have to be corrected!

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## Obituaries

We have just learned of the recent death of *Roy Barsby* of Peterborough. Our sympathies and condolences go out to *Gillian*.

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*John Sutton* tells us that his wife *Dorothy* died on January 8th. She had been receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy for three years in the treatment for lymphoma. Our sympathies go to *John* who will be continuing the various activities which he enjoys.

#####

*Les Johnson* also wrote to advise that while on holiday in Portugal in January *Audrey* suffered a heart attack and died. He sends his thanks to two other members who, quite by chance, were at the camp site at Albufeira and who supported him and gave him comfort at such a time. These were *Dandy & Bill Burnett* together with *Margaret and Phillip Midgeley*. Again our condolences are offered, and it is heartening to learn that the friendship of the Club continues wherever it is needed.

#####

An Ex-member of the Club, *Gerry Woolley*, has written to tell me of the death of another member who recently moved over to a different make of van. *Bill Clarke*, who was well known to many members, died suddenly very recently. We send our sympathies and condolences to *Barbara*.

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### “Dateline, Caerhun CL.”

Waiting for the younger generation to descend from their mountain eyrie to collect us. Caerhun is a useful CL. It is in an old walled garden and so well sheltered from the wind. There are electric points, and something of a perimeter track which makes it an all-weather pitch. At £3.00 a night, plus £1.50 for electricity it suits our needs quite well. While waiting I thought I would jot down a few thoughts about MPC; such an important point to many of us. We, too, often get around 26 mpg in France, and only 22 in England. It is not because French roads are smoother, they aren't. It is simply a matter of driving technique.

One of our regular trips is from Market Harborough to North Wales. Much of it is done up the M6. I used to try to maintain about 62-65 on the motorway, which meant that I was in the inside lane most of the time, but had to pull out fairly often to pass things. A few months ago I decided to reduce my speed to about 55. This meant that I could stay happily in the inside lane, most of time with 100 yards or more of

## Rallies for March and April.

**17th - 19th March; Ross Park, Ipplepen, Newton Abbot, Devon.**

Your rally Marshals: Anne & Don Scapehorne.

Site fee: £6.50 per night. Electricity: Included. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs G Hooper, "Hunters Moon", 12 Wrefords Close, Exeter, Devon. EX4 5AY

Telephone: 01392 213 417

Cheque payable to: G Hooper.

Attractions: Hardstanding. Dartmoor & Torbay within easy reach. Food available Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday lunch.

Directions: A381 from Newton Abbot towards Totnes for about 3 miles. Turn right opposite BP garage (site signed). Site in about 150 yards. Please notify if bringing a dog/dogs.

**24th - 26th March; Fell End Caravan Park, Hale, Milnthorpe, Cumbria.**

Your rally marshals: Andrew & Betty Entwistle.

Site fee: £11.50 for the weekend. Electricity: £1.30 per night. Rally fee: £2.50 (Includes charge for electricity in hall).

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs A Entwistle, 8 The Dell, Mytholm, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. HX7 6DP

Telephone: 01422 843 057 Closing date 10th March.

Cheque payable to: A Entwistle

Attractions: Excellent site in Lake District National Park. A Bring & Buy sale will be organised if sufficient interest. Pic & Peas on Thursday evening (6.30 pm) charged at cost - order when booking, pay on arrival. Satellite television hook-up available @ 75 pence per night.

Directions: From Junction 35 of M6 take A6 northwards; just after Esso filling station on left turn left and follow signs to Fell End Caravan Park.

**Restricted by site to 40 vans.**

**31st March - 2nd April; Ranch Caravan Park, Honeybourne, Evesham, Worcs.**

Your rally marshals: Tim & Fiz Goodfellow

Site fee: £4.25 per night Electricity: £1.75 per night. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs T Goodfellow, Chiltern Heights, Plowden Park, Aston Rowant, Oxon. OX9 5SX.

Telephone: 01844 351 668

Cheque payable to: T Goodfellow

Attractions: Good site, clubhouse, bar, meals, shop. Vale of Evesham, Tewkesbury, trains to Worcester.

*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!*

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: .....

Directions: Honeybourne lies on unclassified road (Ryknield Street) between Bidford on Avon and Weston Sub Edge. Site clearly signed south of railway bridge.

45 van limit.

7th - 9th April; The Rural Life Museum, Old Kiln, Triford, Farnham, Surrey.

Your rally marshals: Sylvia & Al Gatehouse.  
Site fee: £3.50 per night Electricity: NO Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mrs S Gatehouse, "Cestna", 21 Eashing Lane, Godalming, Surrey. GV7 2JZ Telephone: 01483 422620

Cheque payable to: Mrs S Gatehouse

Attractions: The Museum itself, Frensham Ponds, Garden Centre with Tea

Room - possible Cream Teas - please state if interested.

Directions: Take A287 out of Farnham (s.p. Frensham/Hindhead) turning left

opposite "The Mariners" P.H. From South: A3 to Hindhead; turn left at cross

roads traffic lights onto A287 (s.p. Frensham/Farnham) turning right opposite

"The Mariners" P.H. From London: down A3 to Hindhead turning right at

traffic lights then as above. Site approx 1½ miles from "The Mariners" on left

just past Garden Centre.

Limited to 20 vans

21st - 23rd April: Annual Dinner and A G M, Wickstead Park, Kettering, Northants.

Rally marshals: Ron & Marjorie Wilson

For full details see special notices sent with Club Newsletter.

28th - 30th April; National Motor Home & Tourer Show, East of England Show Ground, Peterborough, Cambs.

Our rally marshals: Audrey Crouch and Team.

Complete booking form in MMM, marking it clearly "A-S O C" and send to

NMTS, The Maltings, West St, Bourne, Lincs PE10 9PH (note closing date).

Complete one of our rally slips and post it with £1.50 rally fee to:

Mrs A M Crouch, "Sydney", Sylvan Close, Higher Heath, Whitechurch, Shrops.

SY13 2TB

Cheque payable to: A M Crouch. Telephone: 01948 840894

No arrivals before 3pm Thursday.

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

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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

clear road ahead of me. This made driving much easier, I had time to look at the scenery as well as the road. It also gave me around 26 mpg. I have made this a regular practice now, not only on motorways, but on the other roads. Driving a bit more slowly and a lot more smoothly, increases the number of miles per gallon quite significantly. We all know this, but are reluctant to believe it! Interestingly enough the journeys take very little longer, and the greater mental freshness at the end is an enormous bonus.

When you come to think of it, a speed of 55 mph does enable one to cover 55 miles in an hour, 110 miles in two hours or even 220 miles in four hours. To me that is quite a reasonable day's run, in fact our normal touring run is about 150-200 miles. A motor caravan is a holiday vehicle, and enjoying the journey is an essential part of the holiday."

*Nial Reynolds*

I like the optimistic statement that "55 mph enables one to cover 220 miles in four hours!" All too often, it seems, that one is lucky to cover even 150 miles in four hours at the given speed because of various traffic and other hold-ups. There was a 15 mile tail-back on the M.25 last week! *Nial* has also told me that he has retro-fitted (a lovely expression!) a Thetford Cassette Porta-Potti into his Rambler. More of that will be the subject of an article later.

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## **Photographic Competition**

"Dear Rita

I was very happy to receive your letter informing me that I had won the 1994 Photographic Competition. I hope that in some way during 1994 we have helped the Club, not only in this competition but also with the small contributions which we made to the Club and Company Rally (*Mary's* Clowns and my calligraphy).

This is our first year as members (but not as motor caravanners) and you have given us lots of encouragement to continue with the same activities in this current year.

I will be very happy for you to add the photo to your collections, especially as you say it may please future ASOC members. I hope that many will enter the 1995 Competition and I would like to encourage anyone who does by assuring them that my photo was far from professional but to get it I did have to act quickly.

*Rick Lockyer*

So you can now all get your cameras out, put some film in and see what you can do. There will be more details about this year's competition later. But for the photos just remember that there must be an Auto-Sleeper in the picture.

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## The Best Policy



I believe that the following incident, which took place last Autumn while on holiday in France, deserves a wider circulation that the few friends to whom I have recounted it so far. We had parked the van a few miles from the camp site at a small beach near Royan then took the tandem from the back and had a day cycling around the Cote du Sauvage. On our return, we sat on the beach in the late afternoon sun to read for an hour before returning 'home'. A quiet spot: just a child with grandmother paid a brief visit.

The following morning we planned a ride from the site. I searched the van for the cycling 'musette' which is a small bag carried over the shoulder. At length realisation dawned - I had left it on the beach! What was in it? A new camera (goodbye to my retirement present) and all our francs. I thought that my back was the safest place for these valuable and I was furious with my negligence.

A hurried scan of the insurance documents. Yes, £200.00 would go some way towards a replacement camera but...it only applied if care was taken, not for crass stupidity. Well, report it to the police: first drive to the beach to check the name of the road leading to its. A quick look on the beach? It was only some 18 hours later.

There, held down by a stone on the rock where we had sat, written in English but French style writing, was the following message: "Your money and camera are to the police station in Royan". I was overjoyed; I think not so much for my restored property as much as my restored faith in people's honesty. I eventually located the correct police office, attached to the Marie. Here, a glance at my passport and my property was returned. The officer was about to destroy the note but I rescued it to go beside the photographs that I would never have taken.

One sad point. There was no record of the name and address of this kind person. I would have loved to write and to send a small token of my thanks for rescuing my property and for showing me that there are

still honest people around.

We think that our bicycles are too important to us to be carried outside the vehicle. Therefore we require a van that has access for lifting them in and sufficient room inside. The Rhapsodey, and previously the A-S Commer with rear doors and a wide central aisle could cope easily with the tandem or two singles. When working in the van or when the bed is down the bikes go outside (overnight they are covered and locked to the front bumper). This seems a far better solution than a rack or trailer.

*Eric Austin*

I believe that, in the main, people are honest. But as usual it is the minority that reflect upon the majority - and usually it is only the minority about whom we hear.

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## **Breakdown Cover**

After being camping enthusiasts for the last 30 years using a car and tentage and having travelled world wide we decided to become a member of the elite motor campers. Last July we became the proud owners of a VW Trooper, our very first campervan. Prior to this purchase we owned two Ford cars, both of which had RAC Breakdown cover. We sold one of the cars but the other still had 6 months breakdown cover but this was for the car only and did not cover the van. So we decided to join the AA, having had many years trouble free motoring with them. This, therefore, double covered our car. On 8th February 1995 we were contacted by an RAC representative (Peter Cramp, 0145 420 9444) asking why we had not renewed our car cover through them. I informed him of our reason that we wanted both vehicles covered so had gone to the AA. He then told me that the RAC automatically covered new VW vans of this size FREE for three years as long as we had it serviced by a VW dealer. He went on to say that they cover Renault, Nissan, Toyota, Volvo and maybe others. It is possible that cover may be available for second hand vehicles and purchasers should enquire.

As newcomers to the campervan world we would have expected the vendors to have had this information available. After all, it is a bonus to them as it is paid for by the vehicle manufacturers! On making enquiries of the dealers from whom we purchased the van we were informed that they were not aware of the package until just prior to Christmas 1994 when another purchaser had asked the question. We understand that

VW have now advised all the vendors that this package exists.

Members may not be aware of this scheme, we do not know when it commenced so there are, perhaps, vehicles purchased in 1994 or earlier who may be covered and have not received the information.

For any further details please do not hesitate to contact either us or the RAC contact mentioned above.

*Norma & Roy Freeman.*

Their telephone number, if you wish to talk to them, is 0197 770 2539.

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## FUEL CONSUMPTION

I own a VW Clubman GL with a 2.4 litre, 5 cylinder diesel engine; I purchased the vehicle new in January, 1993 and it has now completed 16,000 miles. From new, I have kept a careful record of fuel consumption, calculating the mileage per gallon on each filling of the tank. A copy of these figures is enclosed.

The overall average consumption is now 26.5 mpg which is a little disappointing as I have seen other owners of similar models quoting 31-33 mpg. However, what I find very puzzling is the variation in the mpg figure from tankful to tankful of fuel, the highest being 34.9 and the lowest 21.6. At each filling I endeavour to fill the tank completely and, while I do not expect an absolutely constant figure, I would not expect such a very wide variation as I am getting. I have never experienced a similar range with other cars or previous motor caravans that I have owned.

I wrote to Volkswagen - in July, 1994 - seeking their comments on my consumption figures, particularly on the wide variation in my 'tank to tank' results. They replied saying that the overall consumption was within the range that they consider normal for a coachbuilt motor caravan and that the variation is due to differing weather conditions, terrain and road conditions. I also passed on the consumption figures and VW's comments to Auto-Sleepers and *Charles Trevelyan* suggested the figures might be of interest to some Club members. If you find room to publish these, or a summary of them, in the Newsletter I would be very interested to hear the comments of other Clubman owners, particularly on the variation I am getting - which I find difficult to ascribe purely to driving conditions.

Fuel consumption figures are commonly quoted to one decimal

place, broadly implying an accuracy of around one part in 250 to 300 (0.3 - 0.4%) for the common range of consumption (25 to 30 mpg). Most of us calculate our figures from the volume of fuel purchased - indicated by the filling-station pump - and the distance travelled - indicated by the vehicle odometer. My local Trading Standards Officer tells me that the maximum error for filling-station pumps is 0.5%. The police inform me that there is no legal standard for the accuracy of odometers; for speedometers the maximum error is plus/minus 10%. I have been given to understand that the accuracy of the odometer is likely to be similar to the accuracy of the speedometer and that, although the error may vary from model to model and from vehicle to vehicle of the same make and model, the error of a particular odometer is relatively constant, possibly changing slowly as the instrument wears with age.

When travelling fairly long distances on major roads across Spain last year it was not difficult to check recorded distances against map distances. This comparison suggested that my odometer was reading about 6% low which, if true, would improve my average fuel consumption figure to around 28.1 mpg. My feeling, therefore, is that owners' figures for fuel consumption are useful for indicating changes in engine performance and, hence, the possible need for servicing (although in my own case this is somewhat problematical due to the wide variation I am observing). A comparison between different vehicles, however, is not very useful unless more is known about the reliability of the data, particularly distances travelled, used in the calculation of rates of fuel consumption. Any comments from other Club members?

While on this subject, recent correspondents to MMM have commented on the apparent improvement in fuel consumption when travelling on the continent. For what they are worth, I enclose my figures for three motor caravans - all Auto-Sleepers - which certainly seem to support the claims made in MMM. I cannot offer any explanation but as my vehicles include both petrol and diesel engines the suggestion that the difference is due to continental petrol having a higher octane rating than UK petrol is not the complete answer.

*Jack Dawson*

PS: February ASOC Newsletter, with enquiry from *Pat and Tim Allen*. I fitted Clim-Air deflectors to the cab windows of my VW T4 (Clubman) about a year ago and, so far, have experienced no problems. I find the deflectors very useful not only while driving but also when 'camping', as they permit the windows to be opened an inch or two for ventilation even when it is raining.

MILES	Ave.MPG per 1000 miles	Vehicle	Year	Total Miles	Overall mpg	UK mpg	Continent mpg
2,000	27.5	RV50	1986	3311	27.1	26.6	27.6
5,000	29.2	RV50	1987	4526	25.5	24.3	26.3
10,000	25.1	RV50	1988	5139	24.6	24.3	25
15,000	29.5	RV50	1989	6823	23.8	22.5	25.5
16,000	28.3	Harmony	1990	7126	23.5	23.1	23.9
		Harmony	1991	6423	25.3	24.1	26.4
		Harmony	1992	4363	24.2	23.2	25.2
		Clubman	1993	6877	27.00	26.00	27.6
		Clubman	1994	9468	26.2	25.2	26.8

These tables have been abbreviated from those sent in for reasons of space. I've been keeping a record with our Clubman GL on the T4 base which also has the 2.4 litre diesel and I must say that our figures tend to compare well with those shown. At 11,022 miles we were averaging about 27.11 mpg and now, with 17,999 miles on the clock it seems to be around the 27.31 mpg. We haven't been abroad with the van and a lot of our mileage is done into, through and around London which must account for some differences but I would have thought that mine should be the worse.

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### COMPANIONSHIP

In his letter *John Sutton* "would be interested to know if, within the Club, there are any other members who are on their own after losing loved ones. If so, do they travel around Europe or the UK on their own or do they join up occasionally with other members?" From my own experience I can say that, like many other people, I carried on and became a member of the "Loner Group" of the Caravan Club. In this group, and there is a similar group within the Camping and Caravanning Club, it was possible to continue in the company of like minded people who, for one reason or another, were on their own. And within our own Club I know of several people who are on their own and who travel to various rallies and all parts of the country and continent. Sometimes they will be on their own, sometimes they will travel in company. I have recently been asked by one lady member if I could

supply the name and address of another lady who was travelling solo so that they might, perhaps, arrange to travel "together", each in her own van to attend any rally.

If anyone would like to write to *John* to tell him of personal experiences, please send your letter to your Editor for onward transmission. You may not get a reply for a little while as *John* has, of course, many things to sort out. But please write, I'm sure it will help him.

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### *Ode to the RV 50*

Owners of the SYMPHONY will always have our sympathy,  
While those LEGENDS in their RAMBLERS deserve a trip to RIMINI.

The RECRO and OMEGA move together in HARMONY  
And the TROOPERS with their TRIDENTS have TALISMEN to be  
lucky.

The EXECUTIVES with their FLAIR should always win a TROPHY  
And the 'Auto-Sleepers CLUB'-MAN always shines significantly.

The TOPAZ and DUETTO will always be the best  
'Cos the RAPPORT of their owners is better than the rest.  
The active in their SPORTSMEN can get around quite swiftly  
But none can match the cosiness of our nifty RV 50!  
(Sorry, I haven't got the name of the poet in this case!)

#####

### *Auto-Sleeper Travels*

On a holiday in RIMINI with our EXECUTIVE CLUBMAN  
It's great to be in HARMONY with the van - our TALISMAN.  
The RAMBLER is a good friend, worth a TROPHY of his own.  
The TOPAZ is a LEGEND, what is more - a precious stone.  
With the AUTO-SLEEPER community in a RECROspective mode  
It's a marvellous opportunity to travel every road.  
They SYMPHONY DUETTO is music to our ears.  
And the RAPPORT is ever planned to keep us sweet for years.  
The TRAFIC really is a whiz and our troubles soon will mend.  
The alpha and the OMEGA is the beginning and

THE END!

*Meg Andrew*

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Just two more contributions for the poetry at the last Club and  
Company Rally

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Melvyn Crapp, who had a Legend for sale and has now sold it, kindly sent a donation for Club Funds. Many thanks.

**FOR  
SALE**

#####

1992 'K' reg. Rimini (Renault T1100, 1700cc, 5 speed) Elevating Roof 4-berth. 3 way fridge, 2nd battery and charger, blown air heating, fly screens, swivel cab seat and small table. Full alarm system. 15,000 miles. Full Renault service history, immaculate condition. Used as a day van only by non-smoking couple. £12,500.00 ono. Wheelchair access ramps also available. Please telephone Rita and Roy Jones, on 0182 975 1686 or write to them at 53 Old Coach Road, Kelsall, Tarporley, Cheshire, CW6 0QX.

Thank you for the donation received with this advert.

#####

Harrison Safari Room (front and sides) to suit 3 metre Fiamma Rollaway awning. £170.00 ono. Contact Margaret Deaville on 0168 456 7408 or write to her at 27 Green Lane, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire, WR14 4HT

#####

Simonspeed "Airide" pneumatic suspension suitable for Peugeot-Talbot chassis. Greatly increases stability. Less than 2 years old. Sale due to change of vehicle. £250.00. Please telephone Pam Davies on 0170 548 4972 or write to her at 4 Southbrook Road, Havant, Hants. PO9 1RN. Simonspeed have indicated that they could test and fit this suspension at the Peterborough show if required, no doubt at a charge.

#####

Fiamma 2-bike cycle rack to fit VW Transporter type vans. Used once only. £65.00 ono. Also trailer lighting set £15.00 ono. Telephone Penny and David Morris on 0172 271 8341 or write to them at Crossways Cottage, Homington, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4NG.

These are very new members and are apparently unclear whether there is a charge for adverts in the Newsletter. May I say, yet again, that there is **NO CHARGE** at all.

#####

Ford Legend coachbuilt. 2.5 litre diesel. 'E' reg. 31 mpg. Excellent condition and regularly maintained. Usual facilities in A-S coachbuilts plus Omnistor roll-out awning. Many extras. 56,000 miles. Reluctant sale due to recent illness. £14,500.00. Please telephone Eric Brook on 0145 787 4072 or write to him at 49 Chew Brook Drive, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancashire, OL3 7PD. £150.00.

VW Trooper 'H' reg. May 1991. 1.9 litre. 5,600 genuine miles. As new condition. I very careful non-smoking owner with no pets. Radio/cassette with four speakers. Immobiliser and alarm fitted. Fiamma 3-cycle carrier, tow-bar, side fitting awning, two gas bottles. £12,700.00 Please telephone Steven Green on 0121 355 4067 or write to him at 36 Ebrook Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B72 1NY.

Many thanks for the donation received.

#####

Silver Screen external windscreen insulation to fit Fiat Ducato cab or similar. Used once only. Sale due to change to A-S VW. £40.00 delivered. Please telephone Tony Freeman on 0138 487 7397 or write to him at Kynnton Cottage, Dunsley Drive, Kinver, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY7 6NB.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Complete set of upholstery in brown/beige velour for Renault RCX (possibly fits other Renault A-S models). Quite good condition. £75.00 ono.

Top Box. approx 32" x 40" x 15". £65.00 ono.

Folding Step, plated steel. £12.00

Please telephone John Chennels on 0175 352 0417 or you can write to him at 10 Lower Cippenham Lane, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 5DF.

(No, I haven't left an 'H' out, it really is Cippenham. And Slough, too, is now in Berkshire.)

#####

Silver Screens to suit VW T4 Chassis Cab/Mirrors. Used 3 times only. £60.00

Brand new, never used, Kustum "Over" mats for VW T4. Black, trimmed blue. Auto-Sleeper Logo. Cost £40.00 - Accept £20.00

Stainless steel bumper for VW Clubman, almost new. £15.00

Ford Transit Mark 3 soft ride front springs and bottom arms. £15.00. Rear step £10.00.

Please telephone Rosie or Terry Ball on 0120 288 3050 or write to them at 61 Merley Ways, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1QW.

Thank you for the donation.

#####

Safari room, brown & cream, to fit OMNISTOR LIGHT retractable awning for A-S Rambler GL 2.6m wide. Unused, complete with carrying bag. £150.00. For details ring Shirley or Idwal Jenkins on 0138 372 8122 or write to 7 Alness Grove, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 7XH.

Here we are again at the final page for this month. Please keep those items rolling in - without them I couldn't do this job!

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Dinner and A.G.M. at Kettering

Till then, look after yourselves and drive carefully

Your Editor  
Harry Henthorne  
144 Devonshire Hill Lane  
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Tel: 0181 808 9112

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