

# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 88  
JANUARY 1996**

Hello.

Welcome to a new year and I hope that you all have a happy, successful and safe one. First and foremost, an error occurred in the last Newsletter. A slight touch of myxamafingers! The CORRECT telephone number for *Barbara Cox* is 0128 371 2394 as shown on page 20 and not as shown on page 12. My apologies to *Barbara* and also to the unfortunate owner of the number which was printed.

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Thank you to everyone who sent Christmas cards and to those who sent their renewal forms in promptly to *Sheila*. It does help her to spread the load after she returns from her full-time employment each day. Just a few observations. One or two people said that they couldn't find their membership cards and so couldn't give their number. But if you look on the label on the envelope in which you receive your Newsletter you will find your number there on the bottom at the right-hand side. And some people still haven't realised that the membership number applies to BOTH people. Several seem to add one to the number on the cards for their partner. But that could cause confusion because the next number in the series belongs to another family or couple. Some comments have been received that the form is rather un-necessary as nothing has changed since last year. But in fact it is necessary because people change their vehicles or their addresses or telephone numbers without reporting back to the Membership Secretary and this is the only way to keep the details up to date. In addition, if you pay by Standing Order, it enables *Sheila* to check that the payment has been received. Mention has been made of the Club using Direct Debits instead of Standing Orders. This, while a good idea for a business, is not so good for a Club run entirely by voluntary workers. The additional information which would need to be kept, and kept up to date, for each member and the sending out of the debits each year would cause far too much work. The Standing Order Mandate only needs to be completed by the member and sent to his/her bank and the rest, in theory anyway, follows automatically without the Club having to do anything further. So unless you feel like taking the job over and changing the system we shall stay as we are! If you haven't already sent in your renewal form, will you please do so now? Thank you.

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Way back in 1995, whenever that was, I received a letter from *Viv Lewis* which repeated many of the observations made by others about the Los Gallardos camp site, and the rally, in Spain. I was asked to supply a list of the discs which our computer can read. This is easy. Any 3.5

inch disc which has been prepared on a I.B.M. compatible computer can be read. When it comes to the actual word processor in use, I am currently using Ami-Pro but can read discs written by WordPerfect, Word, Word-for-Windows, LocoScript and several others. Of course, any file which is in ASCII with a suffix of .TXT is easily understood. (If that is all nonsense to you, don't worry. I can still accept printing, typing, joined-up writing or scribble on paper, parchment, cardboard or plastic!) Going back to the Spanish Rally - although there is no official rally there in 1996 members were invited to join *Betty & Geoff Scholey*, who will be spending time there as usual, by booking direct with the site. A letter from *Geoff* tells me that some 20 vans have already booked and although it is NOT a Club rally he will ensure that our reputation stays untarnished!

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I hope you enjoyed the A-S magazine that came with the December Newsletter. How many errors did you spot? We noticed a couple of photos had been reversed - the first one of the Executive because the letters on the number plate looked wrong and the door was on the wrong side! Incidentally, did you know that there is a new "Legend" on the long wheelbase Ford chassis? It is apparently around 20' long and has a rear dinette and bed. An overcab bed is available as an extra. Some folk with children may find this an attractive proposition. I don't know the price of it - but you could always ask!

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## ***Thank You***

I would like to take this opportunity to thank on your, and my, behalf *Marjorie Hulme, Eileen Matthews and Ellen and Denis Oxley* who have helped pack the Newsletter during 1995. *Marjorie and Eileen* have been helping for a number of years but the *Oxleys* have only recently been dragged in and I particularly want to thank them for their help with the December mailshot. Because of an illness and close bereavement *Philip and I* were shattered before we began so our friends were asked to label the envelopes. When they brought them back they had their sleeves rolled up ready to start packing. All four have made the job much easier and their company made it more enjoyable.

*Rita Daley*

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## Green Cards



*Phil Daley* has told me of an item in the Daily Telegraph for Friday, 8th December 1995. Apparently, in reply to a question from the Kent West Euro M.P., the European Commissioner, Mario Monti, has stated that it is illegal for British insurance companies to charge for the issue of a Green Card or for insurance abroad in the Community. It seems that if you are covered with comprehensive insurance for Great Britain you are still covered comprehensively wherever you may go in the Community without even requesting a Green Card. Perhaps you

should check with your own company if they start asking for an additional premium or charging for the card.

One thing worries me slightly. It might happen that because the companies cannot legally charge for the cards they might be tempted to put the cost of insurance up for everyone!

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## TOP BOX - With a difference?

*Joe Jacobs*, whose letter I quoted in part last month, said that he had a bad time with sciatica early in 1995 which prevented him from storing *Betty's* wheel chair in the 'Luton'. So off he went to Hayes Leisure in Darlestone and got them to fit a 1 metre wide Top Box Carry All unit to the rear of the Talisman. It only took a few hours to fit and that included the removal of the oven to enable the fixings to go through the complete rear of the van, rather than just the outer skin. Now he only has to lift the chair to waist height and it is possible to store other small items there as well.

He sent me a picture of the result and I must say that it is very impressive and fits neatly on the van. So there's an idea for others to copy, perhaps.

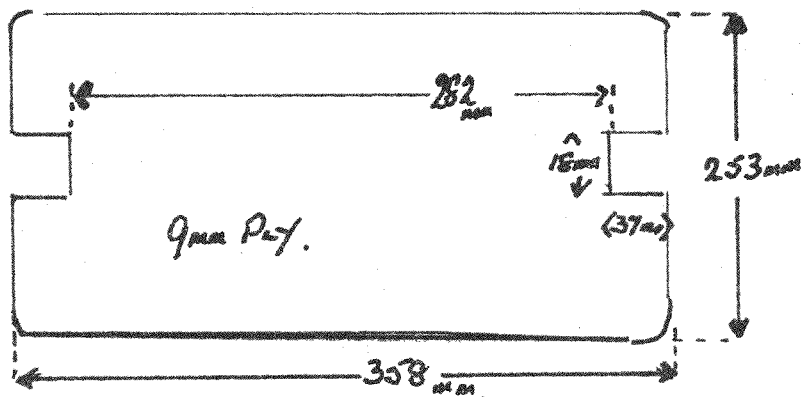
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## A TABLE - ALSO WITH A DIFFERENCE

When sitting on the side seats of our Clubman enjoying a cup of coffee/tea or something better, where does one put their cup or glass without having to erect small tables, have extra long arms, or just balance them on your lap. The sketch below gives dimensions of a

special table. One only needs a piece of, say, 9mm ply cut to shape and with a slot cut into each end. Here a word of warning. These slots must be cut accurately to shape and size if the table is to be steady with no wobbling. I hope it helps someone - we used ours very satisfactorily all through our last German/Netherlands holiday.

*Mervyn Potter*



My only comment is that this looks, from the photograph *Mervyn* sent, as if it works very well indeed but what happens if, like us, you slide the front seats forward, lower the arm rests and insert the cushions provided, I don't think that the table would fit then. But for a brief stop if you don't want to balance anything on the arm rests this is a good idea.

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**HELP!**

I also have recently bought a 1984 Renault Trafic based A-S. I did have some documentation with this van including an old Owner's Handbook which wasn't much use. I bought a more up-to-date version at the local Renault centre for £1.50 but this was no better. Plenty of description of the base vehicle but nothing on maintenance. I couldn't decipher the type of engine fitted or what the tyre pressures should be.

In view of the recent cold spell I asked the Renault centre to check the anti-freeze. They charged £40.00 plus to drain and replace "coolant". Surely there must be a cheaper way?

I would appreciate any information or a manual on maintaining this vehicle and I hope that someone out there can help me. My address

is 10 Sefton Avenue, Lipson Vale, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 7HB if anyone would like to write or you could telephone me on 0175 226 1488

*George Parker*

Most of the time these handbooks have only a limited range of suggestions. They remind me of the days when almost every handbook seemed to suggest "pump up the tyres, fill with petrol and if anything else is needed take the vehicle to the dealer". Even pumping up the tyres is fraught with problems - as we have seen in the very early issues of the Newsletter. Perhaps as good a suggestion as any is to have the vehicle weighed when in loaded trim (including the occupants!) and then have a word with one of the tyre distributors who may be in a better position to advise. As far as the anti-freeze is concerned, any reputable accessory shop will probably be able to provide a suitable liquid and also a gadget to check how good (or otherwise) your present coolant is. But if anyone has any good ideas on this subject you can either send them to your Editor for inclusion in a later Newsletter or contact *George* direct.

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## ***In the same vein***

As new Club members and motor caravanners (6 months!) we would like any information on the Renault Trafic. We need to know what to look out for and what to be aware of. It is the 1100 model with the 1721cc engine. Also is there any way to stop the passenger seat from creaking when in use? I have tried several things but to no avail. No comments on the occupants weight, please! I have suggested that this may be the problem and can tell you that I am now recuperating!! We hope someone can help, it is a most annoying noise.

*Dorothy & Keith Wilkinson*

I suppose the hardest thing is to discover exactly what is causing the squeak. Is it the seat springs, the runners or the mounting?

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## **Power Steering**

Owing to advanced ages and difficulty with steering we recently took the plunge "pocket-wise" and had power steering put onto our irreplaceable automatic 1990 Legend. We are delighted with the result which was carried out with the kind help and assurance from Bristol Motors at Southampton at a cost of £1,615.00. I have spoken to the member who enquired in the Newsletter and told them about it.

*Beryl Douglas*

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## SPANISH SITE

We stayed at Camping Puerto de las Espumas in the Sierra Nevada early last year and found it a super site. We thought you might like to mention it in the Newsletter.

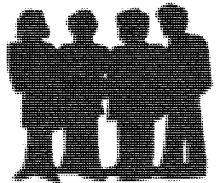
*Rosemary George*

*Rosemary* included a "Prices List" (sic!) prepared by Marcos Antonio Gomez Pelaez who calls himself "Person in Charge" For high season, 1st July to 15th September, Christmas, Easter and all weekends, the prices are 400 pesetas per adult, 300 per child under 12, 500 per Autocaravan and 200 for electricity per night. During the high season FICC members and other associations receive a 10% discount. For the low season there is a total 30% discount but if camping for longer than a week the weekend will be counted as low season.

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## 1995 - Oh! What a lovely Year!

Thanks to the great efforts of many marshals, also helped by the good weather, we have had one of the best motorhome summers ever, made many new friends and have had some good amusing times. It would appear, looking back, that we seem to have discussed everything under the sun from aardvark, through fuses, retirements, turbos and wood, to zymotic!



We would also like to thank the committee and make one suggestion for their consideration. Could "van plaques" be made available, similar to the rally plaques, that could be put in the van window? These would need to be a few sizes larger than the rally plaques but would contain the same symbol with either forename and town, or forename and surname but not all three for security reasons. This would then perhaps help all our failing memories to connect names to faces.

*Dorothy and Baz Wellard*

The committee has thought of something like these plaques before but unfortunately the cost would be rather prohibitive. There is the point that if you see the van with a name in it and then see the occupants somewhere else you won't necessarily connect the faces to the names. that's why the committee decided a long time ago to get the name badges going which have become a great success. If you want to make a plaque

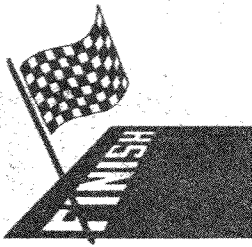
for your van it is reasonably simple with a bit of suitable plastic or plastic-coated board, some press-down letters from a stationer somewhere and perhaps one of the Club's "peely plastic" badges. I know it's easy - I made one but have now lost it!

And if you consult the Reader's Digest - Oxford Complete Word-finder you will find that you missed out on the discussions. Zymurgy comes after zymotic! It could be most interesting, too, because it is the branch of applied chemistry dealing with the use of fermentation in brewing etc.!

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## Brands Hatch

We have received notification that the Brands Hatch Motor Caravan Jamboree will be held from April 12th - 14th 1996. Admission to the rally will be £16.00 for the weekend per unit, with a 50p discount for pre-booked tickets for Club Members who quote their Club membership number when booking. You could apparently stay from Thursday until Sunday. Bookings to John Barrett, 127 West Dumpton Lane, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 7BH. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to Motor Caravan Jamboree. Mention if you need a



site in the disabled area, the number of tickets you require for the Jamboree exhibition and your Club name and vehicle registration number. You can also order milk, bread, papers, Calor, Gaz and Propane.

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## Complaints

It would seem, from letters which have appeared in the Newsletter, that a small number of members are unhappy about how they are treated at rallies. They seem to expect to be "hand fed" and receive "red carpet" treatment. Are they not expecting a little too much? We think so.

All the moans about "first timers" at the Club and Company Rally being ignored seem a little odd as generally we have found that everyone chats to everyone else. We tend to be loners but still manage to converse with many others and have enjoyed all four C & C (even if the Spitfire

failed to arrive this year!) and quite a few 'Show' rallies but sadly have never been able to volunteer our services in any way. But we do appreciate the efforts of the committee and their helpers for providing us with some very enjoyable events.

Would all those who wish to complain take note that our Club is organised entirely by volunteers who must work extremely hard to bring these large rallies to fruition. If there are those who think that there is room for improvement, then let them 'stand up and be counted' and volunteer their services. No doubt they would be welcomed by the overworked 'few'. But from past experience in other clubs it is always those who moan the most who do the least!!

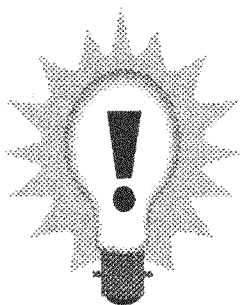
*Irene and Alan Chennels*

There was a PS to this letter but I think I had better leave it out!

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## **Fridge Problems Again**

In the December Newsletter *Bob Measom* raised the matter of fridge performance and a possible solution. Like *Bob*, I was not happy with the performance of the fridge on the Talisman. I also make good use of a solar panel so avoid electric hook-ups but need the fridge to work efficiently on gas.



Some years ago I purchased a kit to provide additional cooling in a similar way to that described in *Bob's* article. The German manufacturer was 'Comet' and the kit comprised a cooling fan together with a thermal switch, this latter being mounted on the cooling fins near the top of the fridge. In use, whenever there is excess heat at the back of the fridge, the fan is switched on automatically. There are, of course, two sources of heat at the back of the fridge. The first (unavoidable) is the heat extracted from the fridge interior which is dissipated by the cooling fins. The other source is the gas burner or electric heating element, depending on the energy source in use. If the chimney is well insulated, any heat from this source should not affect the need for ventilation behind the fridge. In practice, the two electric heating elements serve to conduct heat from the gas chimney into the space behind the fridge. It seems to be this, rather than the heat from fridge interior, which is the main cause of the

temperature rise.

Last winter, when servicing the fridge, I took the opportunity to insulate fully the top portions of the two electric heating elements and to refit carefully the insulation surrounding the flue. These steps seem to have improved the performance of the fridge to such an extent, that, in the summer of 95, the cooling fan has hardly cut in at all.

In the light of this experience, my advice to anyone wishing to improve fridge performance would be first to improve the insulation. If that is not sufficient a fan may well help. (The Comet kit cost nearly £30.00; *Bob's* fan from Maplin is a good deal cheaper, though I cannot find the thermal switch listed in their catalogue.)

*John Scott*

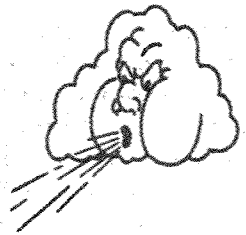
Perhaps *Bob* will be good enough to advise the part number of the thermal switch in case others want to try this out.

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## Third Relay / Fans / Solar Panels

Third Relay. I was interested to read in the December Newsletter (No.87) about David Perry's worthwhile explanation of the function of the third relay for the purpose of EMC compliance. My one concern is that those without too much technical knowledge in the electrical department may be confused by his descriptions of the first relay and second relay when trying to tie these in with R1 and R2 in his diagram. Without wishing to add further confusion I think it appropriate to mention that the text in his letter (para.2) referring to "the first one", in fact, relates to R2 in the diagram (the split charge relay) and in para.3 the text talking about "the second one" relates to R1 (the fridge relay). That should throw them all! *David* goes on to question the EMC status of the fridge but since this is a purely resistive load, not subject to any thermostat or other automatic switch on the 12v. side of things, I can see no problem here.

Fans. I was also interested in *Bob Measom's* idea (the next letter) of fitting a computer fan to cool his fridge in hot weather. The idea reminded me of the time when I first used the fan above the cooker in my Symphony - I thought I had become the target for a low flying aircraft! The fan noise was so obtrusive compared with the calm ambience of everything else that I resolved to change it. It is in



## Forthcoming Rallies.

**31st January - 4th February; Stanmore Hall Touring Park, Stourbridge Road, Bridgnorth, Shropshire.**

Your rally marshals: Gill Hardwick/Bob Brindle

Site fee: £6.30 per night including electricity. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mrs G Hardwick, Rose Cottage, Chestnut Lane, Barton-in-Fabis, Nottingham. NG11 0AE Telephone: 01159 830 193

Cheque payable to: G Hardwick

Attractions: Adjacent to Midland Motor Museum. Near Severn Valley Railway, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Cosford Aerospace Museum. 1½ miles from historic market town of Bridgnorth (bus service). Excellent Big Name shopping in Wolverhampton (bus service). Full facility, award-winning site with heated toilet/shower block and facilities for the disabled.

Shop on site for day-to-day provisions. Satellite T.V. hook-ups (extra cost).

Directions: 1½ miles from Bridgnorth on the A458 Stourbridge Road.

**15th - 18th February; Valentine's Rally, Grouse & Claret Public House & C. P., Rowsley, Matlock, Derbys.**

Your rally marshals: John & Irene Maltby

Site fee: £5.00 per night (including electricity) Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr J F Maltby, 28 Lansdowne Avenue, Newbold, Chesterfield, Derbys. S41 8PL Telephone: 01246 558 224

Cheque payable to: J F Maltby

Attractions: Chatsworth Hall & Gardens, Matlock Spa, Bakewell. Private room for exclusive Club use.

Directions: From Junction 28 of M1 follow signs to Matlock then North on A6 towards Bakewell. Site approx. 6 miles at Rowsley, on right after sharp bend and signs for Chatsworth.

**22nd - 25th February; Grouse & Claret Public House & C. P., Rowsley, Matlock, Derbys.**

Your rally marshals: Don & Brenda Sampson

Site fee: £5.00 per night (including electricity) Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs D Sampson, 5 Churston Road, Childwall, Liverpool, Merseyside L16 9JS Telephone: 0151 722 9379

Cheque payable to: B M Sampson

Attractions: Chatsworth Hall & Gardens, Matlock Spa, Bakewell. Private room for exclusive Club use.

Directions: From Junction 28 of M1 follow signs to Matlock then North on A6 towards Bakewell. Site approx. 6 miles at Rowsley, on right after sharp bend and signs for Chatsworth.

**YOU MAY NOT BOOK THIS RALLY IF YOU ATTENDED THE VALENTINE'S RALLY**

**1st - 3rd March; St. David's Day Rally, Tredgar House & Country Park, Newport, Gwent.**

Your rally marshals: Brenda & Malcolm Edwards

Site fee: £6.00 per night including electricity. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs M J Edwards, 31 Pine Grove, Lighthouse Road, Newport, Gwent. NP1 9TA Telephone: 01633 817 328

Cheque payable to: M J Edwards.

Directions: Follow Tourist signs (White on brown) from Junction 28 of M4. Entrance to touring site through car park.

**Limited to 28 units.**

**7th - 10 March; Eastham Hall C.P., Lytham, Lancs.**

Your rally marshals: Kath & Norman Benyon..

Site fee: £7.50 per night including electricity.

Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mr R Brindle, 43 Welham Grove, Retford, Notts. DN22 6TZ

Telephone: 01777 711 588

Attractions: Saturday: Pre-booked theatre trip to see "Phantom of the Opera on Ice" at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool. Coach provided. Theatre tickets £16 each, MUST be booked and paid for by 31st January.

Cheques payable to: R Brindle.

Directions: A584 to Lytham - on entering Lytham, at first mini-roundabout turn right over railway bridge to next roundabout. Turn right again, s.p. KIRKHAM. Site ½ mile down the road on the right.

**Limited to 50 vans**

**15th - 17th March; Fell End Caravan Park, Hale, Milnthorpe, Cumbria.**

Your rally marshals: Andrew & Betty Entwistle.

Site fee: £8.64 per night (van & two persons) including electricity. Extra adults £1.59 per night, children (over 7, under 15) £1.18 per night

Rally fee: £2.50 (Includes charge for heat in hall)

Booking slip to: Mr & Mrs A Entwistle, 8 The Dell, Mytholm, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. HX7 6DP Telephone: 01422 843057

Closing date 28th February

Cheque payable to: A Entwistle

Attractions: Excellent site in Lake District National Park. Pie & Peas on Friday evening (6.30 - 7 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 45 vans.**

**21st - 26th March; Hidden Vally, West Down, Ilfracombe, North Devon.**

Your rally marshals: Barbara & Jeff Worley.

Site fee: £3.00 + £1.50 for electricity. All pitches hard standing with electricity & TV point. Rally fee: £1.50

Booking slip to: Mrs & Mrs B Worley, 26 Houndstone Park, Gunners Lane, Brympton, YEOVIL, Somerset. BA22 8SQ Telephone: 01935 24049

Cheques payable to B Worley.

Meal in clubroom on Saturday evening. This is a "stretched" weekend rally, members may book for the whole period or the weekend

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In an effort to spread the load we now have some local representatives who may be contacted for help, guidance or general support regarding rallies and the running thereof. Budding rally marshals may wish to contact them initially. They are:-

SOUTH	JERRY HAXTON	01483 223 476	(Woking)
SOUTH WEST	JEFF WORLEY	01935 24049	(Yeovil)
SOUTH EAST	STELLA ROSS	01708 228 075	(Upminster)

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The Rally Supplement is prepared by Phil Daley, 46 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands. B92 8BQ. Telephone: 0121 706 1816

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!*

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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: .....

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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, IF POSSIBLE - PLEASE!



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:-

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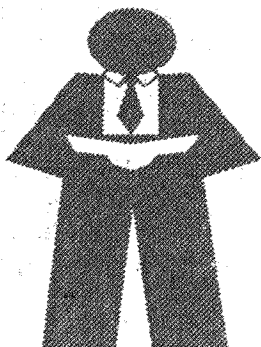
fact very easy to do and like *Bob* I also used a computer fan which I found in my junk box. One point of comment I would make here is the that the existing fan (and its replacement if fitted in the same location) does a good job of extracting steam and kitchen fumes from above the cooker but while the air is nominally vented to the outside circular grille there is nothing to stop the fumes from entering the insulation cavity between the inner and outer skins of the roof. I eliminated this potentially unpleasant possibility by fitting a sleeve between the two skins which I achieved by removing the external grille and fitting the sleeve from the outside.

Solar Panels. Having, as earlier readers will be aware, fitted a 10 watt solar panel to the rear toilet wall of my *Symphony*, I warmed to *Bob Measom's* account of his experience with a 30 watt panel on the roof of his *Talisman*. I concluded during the latter part of this season that I would extend the scope of my solar activities and purchased a 40 watt Solarex panel from Sporti at the Bath & West Show in September, also with the intention of fitting it on the roof. I have not yet installed it since I could see no point in letting it sit outside throughout the coming winter unnecessarily. I will report again after acquiring experience with it next year. Incidentally, I telephoned *John Read* (p. 16) and had an interesting chat with him. I also noted your comment about solar panels that can be placed in the windscreen and plugged into the cigarette lighter socket. It is important to consider the limitations of some of the smaller panels which, if plugged in to the cigarette lighter socket, would do nothing to recharge the second battery where it is needed. Remember, Watts is 'watt' it's all about!

Brian Abrams

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## *Chairman's Chat*



I have been researching and up-dating information being sent to the 'first-timers' going on the Second Dutch Bullb fields Rally 1996 (now fully booked and with a reserve list!). I have been pondering on what advice to give about Green Cards (International Motor Insurance Certificates) which are issued by your motor vehicle insurers and list the countries for which they will extend your motor insurance cover. Some insurers categorically state that there is no need for a Green Card whilst others, including my own insurers, say that it is highly

recommended for driving in Europe and is compulsory in some countries. Broadly speaking for most members of the European Community it is recommended and for the rest of Europe is compulsory. My insurers do, on request, issue a Green Card, usually free of charge, for up to 90 days in any one year. They advise that full cover will apply for the period shown on the card in the countries notified and agreed by them including transit (other than by air) to, within, and between the agreed countries. Needless to say I always apply for a Green Card.

There are additional problems for some countries including Spain which needs International Driving Licences, Bail Bonds etc., but I know nothing about these items. However I am sure that there are members who have detailed knowledge and will be prepared to assist other members, through the Newsletter, to know some of the problems.

When using camp sites abroad you will also require a Camping Card International (Camping Carnet) which provides third party cover for the driver and passenger(s) on the camp site. It also serves as proof of identity to camp site owners in lieu of a passport. In some countries, e.g. Denmark, it is essential whilst in others it is considered the norm for a foreign camper to have and to produce one when booking-in at a site. BUT NOT in Sweden.

In 1995 the Swedish Camping Site Owners' Association (SCR) introduced a "Svensk Camping Kort" which is acceptable in over 300 Swedish camp sites. But they will NOT accept a Camping Card International. From hard experience I know of the problems having landed in Stockholm from Finland in the evening and then driving to Bredangs Camping on the outskirts of Stockholm. There I was told, at 8.30 pm, that my Camping Card International was not acceptable and I must purchase the Swedish Camping Card before I could use the site. I pointed out the purpose of the Camping Card International to no avail and I had to pay 49.00 SEK (about £4.50) and received a temporary "Svensk Camping Kort" which was demanded at all the other Swedish Camp sites we visited. I was told that a permanent card would be posted to me at home within a few days. Some time after we arrived home I wrote to Bredangs Camping asking for the permanent Kort. Eventually I received a letter from SCR enclosing an unvalidated Kort and telling me that on my next visit to a Swedish Camping site I must pay 49.00 SEK to have it validated. I replied asking for a properly validated Kort and didn't receive any reply. A further letter was sent to SCR demanding the return of my 49.00 SEK or a properly validated Kort and in the middle

of November, at last, I received one properly validated. If you intend to visit Swedish camp sites this coming year, please ensure you either obtain a Kort before you go or be prepared to buy one at the first site you visit. It is being said that Norwegian camp site owners are planning to introduce a similar system.

I have written to three other Clubs to which I belong about this and the Caravan Club are very interested in the problem. No doubt they will make some comments in a future edition of "En Route".

Happy motor caravanning to you all in 1996

*Arthur Irving*

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## A THANK YOU LETTER

I am writing to thank you and all your members for all your support in aiding my first year running my own business. I am sure that many of your members gave my new business the kick start that it needed. Since my previous letter printed in your August issue the flood gates opened and an incredible amount of members have either come to Poole or have taken advantage of my nation-wide door-to-door fitting service for awnings and other motor caravan accessories. I would therefore like to express my gratitude to all the Club members that I have met both recently and over the past years.

Wishing you and all your members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

John Rose and Family

This letter arrived just too late for the December issue. But I'm quite pleased - see the next letter!

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I was recently recommended to the services of John Rose from Poole for the fitting of an Omnistor Awning and Safari Room. With full confidence I can pass on that recommendation to others having now experienced John's expertise in his specialities, first class service at one's own premises, all at a most economic rate. Truly 100% satisfaction supplied.

*Ken Critchlow*

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## ENGINE IMPROVEMENTS

In the November issue of the Newsletter there was an article on engine improvements to "gutless Transits" from *Alan Chennells*. Also in

MMM over the years I have seen various ideas on how to make our little houses on wheels go faster. Our Legend is a diesel (not turbo) so perhaps we have a little more "guts" than the petrol version. But one must realise that these vehicles are commercial working vans and when converted into a motor caravan are fully laden all the time.

Anyway, what is wrong with going down through the gearbox and chugging up the hills in 2nd gear? It gives the driver time to enjoy the scenery. We never "cruise" at the legal limit on motorways. Our Legend is happy (and so am I) to purr along at 44 - 60 mph in the nearside land. This gives one an almost clear road ahead as everyone else overtakes and disappears into the sunset, like the Executive did to *Alan*!! Most of us are retirees so if we don't get there on the appointed day, so what? Just find a nice C.L. and get there tomorrow!

Perhaps all these frustrated motor caravanners had fast cars before they became motor caravan drivers and were used to "0-60 in 10 seconds". We had a Commer Wanderer (1725cc Hillman Hunter engine) for 15 years before we bought our Legend. It might do 50mph with a following wind and we used to talk to it when going up hills. So our Legend is a Rolls Royce to us.

If this item appears in the January issue the van will, with 73,000 miles on the clock, have potted down through France, chugged over the Pyrenees with lots of second gear (even first gear at times) giving the driver time to look at the beautiful mountains. Just to take us to our camp site in Murcia to soak up some winter sunshine.

No matter how one tries, all the improvements in the world will never change a motor caravan into a Ferrari. So sit back, take your time and enjoy the drive. I think that the emblem of the Motor Caravanners Club says it all. It's a SNAIL and he also carries his house on his back!

Happy, gentle driving in 1996 to everyone.

*Arthur Fairburn*

PS any improvement that gives, say, 10 more miles to the gallon would be much better!

Having worked our way up from the old Morris J2 roughly converted van (top speed, with luck and impossible to talk, around 40 mph!) I tend to agree with *Arthur*. It was Robert Louis Stevenson who said that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.

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# PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION



Well done! Entries are coming in thick and fast. Mandy, our charming postwoman, is groaning under the weight of entries combined with our massive income of Christmas cards.

By the time you read this it will all be over and the entries safely stowed away in my safe until the hour of judgement. This, I understand, will be some time in March when the Committee meets again. So please have patience and rest assured that your entry has been received and is in safe hands. Thank you.

*Nial Reynolds*

I hope it isn't like one of my very safe places - which I can never remember afterwards!

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## Tyre Deterioration

On the question of tyre deterioration due to age and weathering it is not readily possible to assess the most economical and safe point to discard existing tyres for replacements, especially when only small mileages have been undertaken. As a form of insurance policy, I had some awareness several years ago of a metal wheel insert to be placed within the centre grooving between the shoulders as a prevention of losing the tyre off the wheel and thereby enabling sufficiently safe steering to bring the vehicle to a halt. I think that the name of the insert was, possibly, "Tyron", presumably meaning that the tyre stays on. But I have seen nothing lately of this product. Did the idea not catch on? Is the producing firm even still in existence?

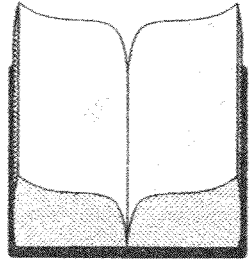
*Ken Critchlow*

This letter has also been sent to the Caravan Club for possible inclusion in En Route. I too seem to remember, vaguely, such a product but nothing further about it. I wonder if it is like the very narrow wheel which some car manufacturers provided as a spare - sufficient for a few miles only and at slow speed. The latter didn't catch on because "They" decided that it did not suit the laws of this country!

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## Dealer Directory

While on holiday recently I had a small problem with my camper. Nothing that I could not repair myself if only I could get the part. The problem is, how do you find a dealer when you are over 150 miles from home? The farmer on the C.L. was in his 80s so not too much help. The motor clubs could help, but only with parts for the base vehicle. Talking pages gave me two numbers and an outline address. Have you ever tried to take directions and use a map in a telephone box? Believe me, it is not as easy as being at home and using a table! In the end I bought another copy of MMM (I already had one at home) and found an advert with a map in the county which I was visiting. My question now is, has anyone thought of making a directory of Motor Caravan dealers, with maps, to cover such an eventuality? In the meantime I have got a scrap book and have started to make my own, county by county. It is surprising how many adverts don't give a very basic map. The majority seem to assume that you know the area or are local.



*John Dimmer*

This sounds like a good idea. As you will have seen, *Neville Jelfs* of A-S is trying to compile a fact sheet in a similar manner to that suggested. I wonder whether *Neville's* skills include cartography - or even drawing maps!

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## CARAVAN CLUB

Several members have told us at rallies that they have felt unwelcome both on Caravan Club sites and at CC Centre rallies. There have also been similar comments in the Newsletter. However, one can only speak as one finds. We were Caravan Club members for eight years in our towing days. During that time we used 52 different Club sites, staying a total of 355 nights and visiting some sites on as many as 9 different occasions. We were still working for nearly all of this time and as our van had to be stored nearly 15 miles from home we had not been able to rally with our local centre. We never had any complaint about our welcome at a Club site.

After retiring, when we no longer needed to have a car each for work, we decided to buy a motor-caravan which we could keep at home on our steeply sloping drive. ("Very flat, Norfolk!" as Noel Coward once said.) Since buying our Rambler GL we have continued to use Club sites (a total of 27 visits since November 1993) and we have been no less warmly welcomed at all of them. In fact, almost without exception, the wardens have taken care to point us towards a level pitch. The only exceptions being where we have had a hard standing. We joined the Norfolk Centre and began rallying with them as well as this Club. Our first Caravan Club rally was the 1994 National at Tatton Park where we asked to be pitched with the Norfolk Centre without then knowing any members. We were made very welcome there - our first contact with the Centre was whilst staying on a Club site en route to the rally when another (towing) member saw our pitch number on the windscreen and came across for a long chat. We have been made equally welcome at every other Centre rally we have attended to date including the Centre's 900th. We have even been told to put "motorvan" on every rally booking slips so that the marshal can find a level pitch for us.

In 1995 we booked CC and ASOC rallies in equal numbers. We find no difference in atmosphere between the two. The only difference is that it's easier to find our van on a Centre rally field since there are usually no other Auto-Sleepers!

*Ray Whiley*

Attitudes have changed, over the years, but for some tuggers it needs to change a bit further yet. Years ago the Caravan Club wouldn't accept us motor caravanners as members. When they finally did let us in we tended to be treated rather like poor relations, although often enough our 'outfit' cost as much or more than theirs! But I can echo what *Ray* has said about the vast majority of site wardens. We have been received in a very friendly fashion and offered the best available, reasonably level, spot on which to pitch. My only real complaint is about a warden on a site belonging to the other club who, although we had booked for two nights, casually allowed a vast trailer pulled by a latest-registration Range Rover to occupy our pitch and then had the temerity to suggest that he "might" be able to find us another one! And he tried to say that he couldn't guarantee an electric point, for which we had also paid. He did manage it, but with very bad grace.

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## Radio Reception

In the October Newsletter *Rita Daley* mentioned the publication "London Calling" for those touring overseas. I have now received the 1996 issue of the "Radio Listeners' Guide" which is published by PDQ Publishing of Abingdon. This shows, very clearly and comprehensively, the frequency of every radio station in the UK. It also gives an idea of the range of each one. I first bought a copy a couple of years back when I discovered it and had got a bit fed up trying to find the frequency for, say, Radio 4 where we happened to be. If you want a copy, telephone 0186 582 0387 for information. I believe that they offer "Three copies for the price of two", so you could be lucky. It cost me £4.50 inclusive of P&P.

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## Obituary

*Eric White*, member No. 100, died in October 1995. Our sympathies and condolences are extended to Mary (his wife). She tells us that she intends to continue motor caravanning as she would find it difficult to contemplate any other type of holiday having enjoyed so many wonderful holidays over the years.

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## Help originally Sought but now Offered

*Sheila* received a letter from Roy Boyle regarding the fitting of the window blinds to a 1990 Renault Rapport. He bought a set having seen similar blinds fitted to the Recro and Rimini. He asked whether any member had actually fitted them and could help. Having found that they could not be fitted A-S took them back. But Roy saw in the copy of the Newsletter which was sent to him that we have the cross stitch patterns available. His wife is a keen cross-stitcher (is that a good phrase?) and if anyone would like a cross stitch pattern made up for them ready to frame she would be willing to do it for them. Please contact them direct for prices on 0192 640 2822 or write to Windborne, 401 Birmingham Road, Budbrooke, Warwick, CV35 7DZ.

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Omnistor Safari Room, 3.00 metres, in Grey horizontal stripe, £150.00. Telephone John Scott on 0124 438 1035 or write to him at 48 Shepherds Lane, Chester CH2 2DQ.

**FOR  
SALE**



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Pair of front seats and set of cushions for a Ford

Legend GL 1989, finished in pink "Scilly" design. Offers invited. Please telephone David Elsegood on 0161 430 5184 or write to him at 1 Longwood Close, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 4LR.

#####

Rambler, 1990, 'G' registration. 48,000 miles. Petrol. Removable Panasonic radio/cassette. Porta Potti. King-size bed conversion. Immobiliser. Complete history. In excellent condition. £11,950.00.

Eurovent Side annexe approximately 8.5 feet by 5.0 feet complete with ground sheet, curtains etc. Hardly used. £350.00. Please telephone Barbara or Jim Riddett on 0181 941 1314 or write to them at 3 Broadmead Close, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 3RT.

Thank you for the donation.

#####

Talisman GL (Blue). 1989. 2.0 litre petrol. 48,000 miles. One owner from new. Full Talbot service history and receipts. Stainless steel exhaust. Cassette toilet, double glazing and blinds/flyscreens etc. Many extras - telephone for list of full specification and photos by return post. A genuine and reluctant sale. £14,700.00 (regret no offers). Telephone Sue or Barry Brown on 0173 735 9985 or write to them at 8 Heathdene, Burgh Heath, near Epsom, Surrey, KT20 6AW.

#####

Sensible offers wanted for automatic Amethyst diesel with Fiamma Awning and private number plates. This van, purchased in June this year, has done less than 1,000 miles. The sale is only due to my wife suddenly becoming severely handicapped. Part exchange considered for an automatic Auto-Sleeper which has been converted, or is capable of conversion, for disabled use. Please contact Max Sayles on 0124 656 6866 or write to him at 76 Yew Tree Drive, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 3NB.

#####

Symphony 1994 'L' reg. 2 litre petrol. Power steering. 11,200 miles. Waste tank. Drive-away awning. Extras. Immaculate. £17,500.00 ono. Telephone Neil Linacre on 0162 375 2602 or write to him at 32 Lime Tree Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts, NG7 8BJ.

#####

Fiamma 2 bike rack for Volkswagen T4 (e.g. latest Trident). Only used once, set-up ready to fit. Sale due to change of van. New price £140.00 - sell for £100.00 ono. Phone John Nielsen on 0187 256 0111 or write to him at Sunnyside Cottage, Greenbottom, Truro, TR4 8QN

Many thanks for all your comments received on the back of the pink renewal forms. (When I said I like to look at your pretty pink forms, I didn't mean those!) The remarks will be collated and reported to the Committee for consideration. It does seem that the Club is running in the way that the vast majority want it to. With your help and constructive criticism long may it continue. As usual, I will reiterate my cry for items for the Newsletter. If you don't send them in, there won't be a Newsletter! At the moment you're doing well - please keep it up! Have a safe and happy 1996, please!

Your Editor  
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