

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB



**NEWSLETTER 111
DECEMBER 1997**

Hello.

Christmas time and the New Year is almost upon us. With this issue of the Newsletter you will find the Pink Renewal Form so that you may continue your membership for another year. Yes, I know that if you pay by standing order and you haven't changed your van it is a bit of what appears to be unnecessary work.



But let me assure you that in the past it has proved most useful (a) where a member has changed vehicle without letting the Membership Secretary know and (b) when a member has passed away and the partner has not cancelled the standing order. Also when a bank has failed to pay an order (and it has happened!) or has paid twice (or more!). So please, take a little time, complete the form and send it back to *Sheila Henthorne*. If you want to post-date the cheque to 1st January 1998 that will be acceptable but the sooner you return the form (and cheque where required) the better. Obviously, you will not get your replacement Membership Cards until either the standing order payment has been notified or your cheque has been paid in, but don't let that stop you from renewing as soon as you like.

Having said all that, have a Happy Christmastime and a safe, secure and prosperous New Year.

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SIMPLE QUESTIONS



A little light-hearted amusement for your benefit, kindly sent in by *Brian Ellis* a long time back but having rested "on the spike" since then! The time allowed to answer all the questions is **THREE MINUTES ONLY!**

1. Do they have a Fifth of November in America?
2. Some months have 30 days, some have 31. How many have 28?
3. You are entering a dark cabin which has inside it an oil lamp, an oil heater and some kindling wood for a log fire. You only have one match. Which do you light first?

4. If the doctor gave you three pills and told you to take one every half hour, how long would they last?
5. A farmer has 17 sheep. All but nine die. How many does he have left?
6. Divide 30 by half. Add 10. What is the answer?
7. Take two apples from three apples. What do you have?
8. How many animals of each species did Moses take into the Ark?
9. You drive a coach with 42 people on it from London at 8.00 am to Watford to pick up 7 more passengers and to drop off 5. Then on to Luton to drop off 8 passengers and pick up 4 more before driving to Edinburgh to arrive 20 hours later. What is the driver's name?

You should have completed this in the allowed time. Did you? And did you get all the answers right? You will find the answers later in the Newsletter!

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I must apologise first for the delay in printing this small item. I received it very much earlier this year and put it on the spike due to lack of space at the time. Then it got buried and has only just surfaced. So here it is:

Visiting Ireland

I was interested in the 33 vans item in the January Newsletter because my wife and I have had many enjoyable visits to Garrettstown. Some have been in my capacity as Chairman of the Mumbles/Kinsale Twinning Association and others have been purely as visitors to that lovely island. If *Barbara & John Cox*, or anyone else, is thinking of arranging a future visit, may I suggest that they approach Mr Alec Maguire. He is the Sales Marketing Manager of Swansea - Cork Ferries and I am sure that he would allow a generous discount for a group crossing as that company does to my Association. His address is 2 North Field Rise, Rottingdean, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 7DR.

Peter Jones

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Windscreen Problems

We purchased our 1993 Symphony last November. We've been highly delighted and satisfied with it. We had a two week holiday in the North Yorkshire Moors and Dales area in September. During the journey home to Worthing I noticed a continual squeaking sound coming from the area just above the windscreen while we were mobile.

I phoned A-S for advice and was told to inspect the external joint above the windscreen, where the GRP roof meets the metal body. I found that I was able to push the GRP shell in by about a quarter of an inch over the centre of the windscreen. Also that it was flexible over about two thirds of the screen width. I pulled back the rubber sealing strip to find that several of the pop rivets which secure the GRP to the cab roof had sheared and that I could get my fingers under the roof in the centre. A local caravan firm have said that they could repair the fault for about £70.00 to £80.00. They would replace the rivets with screws and increase the number of fixing points.

I wonder if this is a common fault with this model and whether anyone else has had such an experience? A-S went straight to the solution but offered no explanation as to the cause. I have not run into any bus shelters or low bridges - I promise you!

David Jones

Perhaps the previous owners had a low car port!

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Insurance

It had never occurred to me, as a retired insurance broker, that people had experienced difficulty in obtaining "unoccupancy" insurance until I read *Ken Critchlow's* letter in Newsletter 110.

In all probability Motor Caravan Insurance also causes problems to some and in the hope that it may help, may I make the following suggestion? If you and your spouse are 50 years old or over **and** you have a maximum No Claim Discount (4 years) **and** the vehicle is used solely for Social, Domestic and Pleasure purposes, i.e. no business use then apply to Provincial UAP, via the AA if preferred (membership not necessary) for a "Nett Premium Policy"

As the name suggests, there is NO N.C.B., therefore you cannot

lose it! And the premium will stagger you. I pay £136.00 - by instalments for a full comprehensive cover on my Harmony. Excesses are normal and claims procedure the best. Needless to say I have no connection (other than as a satisfied customer) with either the company or the AA.

Maurice Wright

I know that it is well worth while shopping around for insurance. I did and turned to Comfort Insurance as the brokers for Norwich Union. My cover, fully comprehensive but for the London Area where I live and with all sorts of cover including gas explosion or fire in the van and cover for the contents etc. only costs me £219.00 at present. But no doubt *Maurice* will agree that like most things these days the costs will rise in the future. However, be warned! Some insurance quotations appear to be for "motor vehicles" in the general term. It is always well worth while to check on specific insurance for a "motor caravan" or "motorhome" to get cover for the things which don't (or perhaps shouldn't) appear in cars.

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Elevating Roofs

Even if our car port would accommodate a higher vehicle, we would choose an elevating roof version. In the hot weather (pleasant thoughts if you are looking at snow!) we like to raise the roof. Not as entertainers at an ASOC rally but by leaving the sides down we have a cross-flow of air. This is **NOT** a procedure authorised by A-S but we have never had the roof come down on our heads although it has nearly taken off! With our RV50 we once stopped for a rest and raised the roof. Then later I drove off at up to 70 mph with the roof still elevated. I shudder every time I think about what might have happened when in fact all that did happen was a very slight elongation of the front strap.

Anyway, I decided it should not happen again, so I fitted a fluorescent plastic strip to the front securing catch such that when the catch was not secured the strip hung down as a warning sign. It worked! Nevertheless I asked A-S to put an extra twin cable to run from the dashboard to near the front roof catch in the Rimini. I also asked for extra wires to run from behind the dashboard to the rear of the van at roof level and for a small table top which would fit between the front seats. I am pleased to say that A-S willingly met my requests made via Bromley Motor Caravans.

For the "roof up" warning system I used a 12v piezo buzzer and a micro-switch, both from a radio shop. I fitted the switch to the front vertical of the roof opening so that it pressed against the roof lining when the roof was fully secured. Then using the extra wires I wired it to the buzzer which was fitted behind the dashboard. This was then connected to the ignition key controlled supply which originally had supplied the radio. It works, and sounds loud and clear if I turn on the ignition without fully securing the roof.

William Copsey

Many years ago I did a similar thing with a "Romany" that I was then using. Having stopped, early in the morning, for a cup of tea I moved off again with the canvas and metal roof fully in the up position. It took me a little while to realise that it was up because the warning light wasn't working!

At the start of his letter to me *William* kindly gave me "full editorial powers to throw it in the bin or modify it as you so wish. You will not hurt my feelings nor lose my membership." I'm so glad that he had the patience to wait until now to see a bit more of his missive in print!

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And from the same massive missive:-

MISCELLANEOUS!

We have always found a need for a 'basket' in the front into which we can stow small items of shopping, maps etc. With the RV50 it was easy to fix a wire bicycle basket securely to the front bulkhead. But with the Rimini there is a semi-circular removable bulkhead giving access to the distributor which not only makes it more difficult but reduces the space available. Also one is restricted in width when the front seats are slid forward.

What I have done is to suspend a small plastic tray from the two screws that secure the front fascia. Then just below that I have fixed a plastic basket by bolting it to the bolt, after removing its plastic cover, which holds the bulkhead. Not too robust but adequate for lightweight objects with current maps in the tray, the larger books of maps are handily stored behind the nearside seat.

Inside the forward door of the crockery cupboard, towards the top, I have fitted a 9" x 3" x 3" plastic trough which is large enough to hold two

cups or three glasses. This makes it easier to get to them when in frequent use.

I like the secure catches on the cupboards and drawer but should you forget to push it right in on the drawer and then turn a corner quickly you are liable to find the drawer and its contents on the floor! What I have done to prevent this (I haven't yet found a cure for memory loss!) is to screw a metal plate (4" x 2" x 1/8") vertically near the centre of the inside of the back of the drawer with one half-inch No.8 screw which goes through an off-centre hole in the plate. Such that the plate projects above the drawer opening height, preventing the drawer from coming right out. You can, of course, rotate the plate to a non-protruding position if you need to remove the drawer. I leave you to work out the positions of the hole in the plate and where to fix the screw. I used a "heavy" metal plate and an off-centre hole so that should the screw become loose the weight of the plate would keep it in the protruding position.

A simple alternative is to put a piece of 1/4" diameter rod into the top of each side of the drawer, say 1" from the back, such that they protrude about 3/16". Then, when open, the drawer tips down at the front and up at the back and the rods catch the back of the surround. To remove the drawer, just lift the front end and out it slides.

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Driving Licence Changes

The following announcement was made in the November/December 1997 issue of BALANCE (the British Diabetic Magazine).

The Second EC Driving Licence Directive (91/439) comes into effect on 1st January 1998. The directive is set to change the driving entitlements of some people with Diabetes. Currently anyone holding a valid driving licence can drive any vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes in weight, such as minibuses and light vans. But from 1st January next year people must meet the higher health standards that currently apply to LGV and PCV drivers if they wish to drive vehicles between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes.

Originally this change was only to affect people taking their tests after 1st January 1998. However the DVLA has just informed the British Diabetic Association that it will also affect those who have to renew their licences after this date. As all people on insulin have to renew their licence every three years this directive has a direct impact on their driving

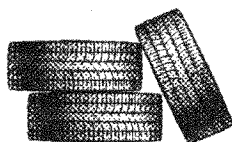
entitlements. Therefore the new legislation will, within three years, prevent all people on insulin from driving vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

Rosie & Terry Ball

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Tyres Again

Dorothy and I very much enjoyed the German rally run by *Sandy and Bill Burnett*. On the way back we were stopped at traffic lights in France by someone tapping on the window to say that there was something wrong with our rear tyre. Having heard of previous members' experiences *Dorothy* locked the door! However, in this case it was genuine; a large patch of the rear off-side tread (in good condition) was separating from the tyre. The tyres were inflated to the recommended pressures on the chassis plate (i.e. 54 lbs front and 65 lbs rear). But on close inspection the rear offside tyre actually had a maximum pressure of only 55 lbs moulded on its walls. ALL the rest were 65 lbs.



Later, after weighing the van and checking with Michelin, they recommended pressures of 50 lbs and 56 lbs. We have now changed, as recommended by them, to Michelin XC4S with pressures of 45 lbs and 52 lbs. My recommendation is that you check your vehicle weight on a weighbridge and contact your tyre manufacturer, carrying a copy of their recommended pressures with you. Also look closely at the maximum tyres pressures on EVERY tyre.

Now a plea. Does anyone have any sets of ASOC Newsletters, before July 1993, that they could loan us to read, please? Our telephone number is 0132 923 1259 or you could write to 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants., PO16 7UF. Thanks in advance.

Baz Wellard

In early May 1988 the *Wellards* will be running a rally near Gosport in Hampshire. The site is adjacent to the beach so you may be able to see some power boat or yacht racing. It is near Alverstoke for shopping (300 yards!) and there is a lot to interest rally goers. So watch out for the full details in the rally supplement later and pop along to try their first rally as marshals.

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Diesel Power

Regarding *Maurice Payne's* letter in November. Whilst I agree that the VW T4 engine will take anything thrown at it, I'm not sure about constantly "putting the boot in". The following figures were from my Trophy T4 2.4 diesel:

0 - 5,000 miles. Average 31.20 mpg; best 38.19; worst 27.27 (first fill). 5,000 - 10,000 miles. Average 33.20; best 38.05 (touring Scotland); worst 29.30. 10,000 - 15,000 miles. Average 32.87; best 42.20 (touring Scotland); worst 27.77. 15,000 - 20,000. Average 32.87; best 39.45; worst 29.95.

All I can say is that my best figures were always achieved with a "light" right boot. Readers may draw their own conclusions.

Bob Brindle

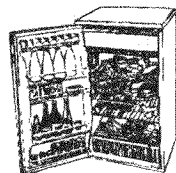
I haven't kept such detailed statistics but I'm getting 28.79 miles per gallon after 35,500 miles. I don't expect to break records as we have to drive quite a lot in London and use the van to go shopping too.

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Cycle Racks and Refrigerators



Just a line or two to say thank you to *Bill Hewlett* regarding Trophy cycle racks. He has given me confidence to have one fitted. I would also like to thank the people who telephoned regarding my refrigerator trouble. I can now report that thanks to *Mr Trevelyan*, Electrolux supplied a complete new cooling unit free of charge. They wanted a minimum of £50.00 to fit the unit but I wisely decided to have it done by an experienced motor caravan dealer. I say wisely, because my local A-S dealer, Todd's of Lostock Hall, fitted it free of charge.



Like *Bill* I have also had trouble with the larger blinds. I was once given the name of a nylon/plastic lubricant but I'm afraid I have forgotten it. I know it works because the man who told me about it lubricated mine. So if you are out there, *Arthur*, please be a good fellow and remind me of the product name.

I cannot close without mentioning *Maurice Payne's* letter in the November Newsletter . I think it's a wind-up but it has got me. If he is sincere, then I say he hasn't got a motor caravan, he has an MG Midget that think it is a motor caravan. I use my fifth gear as I used to use fourth before we had five gears. Like our Editor, I get along in fifth over 30 mph. My Trophy is my everyday car. I have been to Italy, Spain (3 times) and Portugal. My average is 37 mpg which compared to *Maurice's* is close on two free trips to the Mediterranean on my 38,000 miles to date.

John Johnson

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FROM THE FACTORY

I should like to introduce myself to you all. I am the new Design Manager here at A-S. I started with the Company in June of this year and I hope to develop some exciting new models and features in the future to make your motor homes even more fun!

I am 38, married and am presently renovating my lodge house in Staffordshire in my spare time. I have lived there for four years and before that I lived in the Peak District where I thoroughly enjoyed the marvellous walking country surrounding me. Besides walking with our two dogs and DIY. I also enjoy ski-ing and equestrianism. I am a professional design engineer and commenced my career with I.M.I. Later I moved to one of the subsidiaries designing drinks dispensing equipment. After about five years I moved to a division of R.T.Z. in Sheffield where I designed garage forecourt equipment, from tyre pressure gauges to roll-over car washes. Following the successful introduction of a number of new products I moved into a whole new sphere....the caravan industry.

I was Design and Development Manager for Avondale Coachcraft. There I was responsible for designing many new vehicles including the elite "Land Ranger" and a limited range of Romany touring caravans, both of which proved to be extremely popular.

Here at A-S we are currently developing a new range of motor homes, being constructed with laminated panels. These will be launched at The Caravan and Outdoor Leisure Show at Earls Court in December 1997. Conventionally, A-S have made a model or prototype and then drawn the parts to allow suppliers to produce components and

RALLY SUPPLEMENT

December 1997

NEW RALLY Christmas Special at the "HOLLIES"!!!!

11th-14th December (3 nights), The Hollies Touring C.P., Little Budworth, Cheshire. Site Tel.No: 01829 760414.

Rally Marshals: Brenda & Don Sampson. Site Fee: £2.70 per unit per night. Electricity: £2.00 per night (32 available). Booking slips to: Mr & Mrs D Sampson, 5 Churston Road, Childwall, Liverpool, L16 9IS. Tel.No: 0151 722 9379. Cheques payable to B M Sampson.

Attractions: Newly built clubroom, well stocked farm shop/garden centre. Herb garden/pub meals 600/800 yds. Other pubs with food within 2 miles.

Saturday night - Country & Western, £1.50 per person. *If interested please send money with slip.* American supper, come prepared. Use of club any other time free. Bring your own alcohol any time. Shop on site - well stocked, selling class specialities, greengrocery and provisions. Pick up your own Christmas tree to take home. Buy two and branch out! (Don's, not mine). There is a possibility of a trip to Chester. If interested please indicate on slip. Bring your surplus motorvan bits & pieces for a Bring & Buy sale.

Chester 12 miles, Tarporley 4 miles, Little Budworth 2 1/2 miles.

Directions. West on A49 towards Tarporley. Site is two miles on left after passing A556 and half a mile before the A54. Site is at rear of Hollies Garden Centre.

30th December - 3rd January. NEW YEAR'S RALLY, Hidden Valley, Ilfracombe.

For full details please telephone Sandra & Bernie Wisely on 01271 46400 or send SAE to Mrs S Wisely, 12 The Laurels, Roundswell Village, Barnstaple, North Devon, EX31 3QY.

12th - 15th February 1998. Grouse & Claret, Rowsley, Derbyshire.

Site emergency Tel.No: (J Miley, Landlord) 01629 733233.

Rally Marshals: Doreen & Jock Hammond. Site fee: £6.00 per night (includes electricity). Rally fee: £2.00 (Couple), £1.00 (Single). Booking slips to: Mr & Mrs J Hammond, 5 Bracken Wood, Off Skip Lane, Walsall, WS5 3LH. Tel No: 0121 358 6823.

Attractions: Use of clubroom & boiler; bar meals in Grouse & Claret; Chatsworth Park & Garden Centre/Farm shop; Mill & Craft centre. Bus stop outside site - buses to Matlock & Bakewell for shopping. The area is a walkers paradise. Extra nights can be arranged with the landlord.

Directions. On A6 between Bakewell & Matlock. RALLY COMMENCES **AFTER** 2.00 P.M. on Thursday. **LIMITED TO 29 VANS.**

Please note that the 1998 Spanish and Dutch Bulbfield Rallies are both fully booked.

New Rally, New Venue. 1st - 14th June 1998. Camping Le Bohat, Brittany, France.

The site has full facilities including those for the handicapped. Shop, bar restaurant, heated swimming pool, boules, table tennis, bicycles for hire, walks and beach close by (3 km). Plenty of things to do and places to go as there are many places of interest close by. The site is used by the Camping and Caravan Club for overseas rallies. Cost approx. based on a stay of 14 days, subject to exchange rates and 1998 site fees -2 people £10.47 per night incl.elect (10 amps), £8.74 no elect. 1 person - £8.42 per night incl.elect, £6.48 no elect. *If interested, please contact Dennis Oxley as soon as possible on 0121 705 4006*

I would like to thank all rally marshals and ralliers for their support this year and wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Good Rallying New Year.

Please note that ALL information, ie dates, rally bookings and rally details for the Newsletter, should be sent to the Rally Co-Ordinator;

*Neil C. Rogers
3 Appleby Close,
Aldbrough St John,
Richmond, North Yorks,
DL11 7TT.
Tel/Fax. No: 01325 374 540*

*Local Assistants: Jerry Haxton (01 483 223 476) Woking, Surrey.
Jeff Worley (01 935 424 049) Yeovil, Somerset.
Ray Whiley (01 603 452 593) Norwich, East Anglia.
Bob Brindle (01 777 711 588) Retford, East Midlands.*

Rally Supplement prepared by Neil Rogers, 3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough St John, Richmond, North Yorks.

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?

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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!

X-----

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

Number of people in your van: Adults Children

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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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.....
Payment MUST accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.
POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT, IF POSSIBLE - PLEASE!

assemblies. I am now in charge of changing this to a new culture of planning, specifying, designing, drawing and then producing a set of parts to those drawings. This should allow for a more cost effective design to be produced which will be right first time and thus create a more rapid time from concept to production.

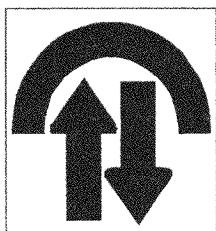
Anyway, this is a brief resume of myself and my career and I look forward to meeting you in the future.

Stephen Small

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Club Rally Signs

Our (reasonably tame) Chief Marshal, *Ben Mansfield*, is concerned for the whereabouts of some of the Club's signs, banners etc. If any of our rally marshals has any item in their safekeeping, will they please get in touch with *Ben* as soon as possible. He needs to do some stockchecking so that the committee can decide whether we need to order new items or not. His telephone number can be found, as always, on the back page.



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Running a Rally

I noticed the in the October issue of the Newsletter the comments about running a rally. I have been organising them on a regular basis for the past eight years. In previous Newsletters the comment was that rallies were organised solely for the pleasure of members. Therefore they were not expected to show a profit but of course must pay their way. No way would I state on my forthcoming rally particulars that I intended to run a raffle and then presume that most of the members would bring a prize. I have no intention of adopting this policy. I either run the raffle my way or not at all. We are not a profit making club.

Audrey Crouch

I think that *Audrey* has missed the point slightly. Nobody suggests that you should ask people to bring prizes. You just find that they do - sometimes embarrassingly so. Nor is the suggestion that rallies should make a profit. But the committee has found in the past that many rallies have made a loss because certain items have not been taken into account

when deciding on what surplus should be returned to the Treasurer. It has been noticed that there is an appearance sometimes that the marshals have spent rather more than necessary so as to "break even" on the rally income without realising that the plaques have to be paid for separately by the treasurer and there should have been a slight surplus to cover these. In addition, if any rally should make a slight surplus it helps to cover those where a loss is unavoidably made.

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My Twelve Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
"I'm glad we bought a fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree."

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard

As we tucked into our turkey, a most delicious bird.

On the third day we entertained the people from next door

The turkey tasted just as good as it had the day before.

Day four, relations came to stay; poor Gran is looking old,

We finished up the Christmas pud and ate the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas outside the snow flakes flurried

But we were nice and warm inside for we had our turkey curried.

On the sixth day, I must admit, the Christmas spirit died.

The children fought and bickered. We ate turkey rissoles, fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince

When he sat down at the table and was offered turkey mince.

Day eight, and nerves were getting frayed, the dog had run for shelter,



I served up turkey pancakes with a glass of Alka Seltzer.

On day 9 our cat left home. By lunch time Dad was blotto.

He said he had to have a drink to face turkey risotto.

By the tenth day the booze had gone (except our home-made brew),

As if that wasn't bad enough we suffered turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, the Christmas tree was moulting,

The mince pies were as hard as rock and the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day my true love had a smile upon his lips,

The guests had gone, the turkey too, and we dined on fish and chips!

Chris Jago sent this amusing contribution in way back last January but, as I said at the time, it was a bit late for Christmas so I would hold it over. Here it is for you all to enjoy.

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Chairman's Chat



Christmas is fast approaching and if you, like me, have yet to complete your list of work that must be done in 1997 then there will be a few tasks to carry over into the New Year. Mine are due mainly to circumstances beyond my control, honest! I may think there are few but knowing *Betty's* interpretation of that word then I accomplished few, if any, of my "approved" list.

Now that I have mentioned the festive season may I make a plea that you have a safe and happy celebration. I know that over the Christmas Festivities tragedy will strike some families. Putting on my "Fireman's" hat, I hope you will heed my plea, for the risk of fire in homes is greatly increased for a number of reasons. We all happily decorate our homes with various decorations strewn all around, trees covered likewise. When did you last check the lights for the tree for frayed or broken insulation and bulb holders cracked or brittle? Oh yes! Have you checked the fuse? I will bet that the fuse in 99% of homes will be a 13-amp fuse instead of a 2 amp one. The fuse, to us laymen, is the weak link in the electrical chain. If the fuse is stronger than the wire it is protecting then you can guess the outcome. Come to think of it, again I'll bet that most of you will have a 13 amp fuse in most of your electrical appliances. As a rough guide 13 amp fuses need only be used in appliances that use heat of sorts e.g. electric heaters, washers, irons and so on. Most of the remaining appliances, TV, video, music centres and suchlike require 5 amp fuses. Most of the other appliances e.g. clocks, reading lamps, etc. need a 2 amp fuse. If in doubt you can always seek advice from a qualified electrician or ask your local Fire Brigade for advice and leaflets. You may think that this is a tall story but, unfortunately for one man and his landlord, it is the honest truth. First, a question. How many adapters can you physically have working from 1 (one) 13 amp socket? Go on, guess! 15, 20, 25? Well, I have honestly found one with 28 electrical appliances of one sort or another! A veritable tree of adapters. The occupier of this very small terraced house called us because he was worried about the blistering paint on the skirting board in his downstairs room. When we investigated his fuse box the fuse was a 6-inch nail which he himself had inserted because the ordinary fuses were continually blowing. Good thinking! I can't remember all the appliances he was running from this one socket so I'll

list some of them. Electric fire (3 bars), table top electric cooker and oven, TV., kettle, toaster, clock, reading lamp, fish tank (with heater, pump and lights), iron, washer, spin drier, vacuum cleaner, etc. I know his landlord was none too pleased when the Electricity Board condemned not only this house but also all the rest of the terrace and cut off the supply. None of us would do any thing like that, would we?

Finally may I wish you a happy and enjoyable Christmas from *Betty* and myself. Oh yes, don't forget to smile. I wonder what will be in my stocking this year?

Andrew Entwistle

It isn't surprising that people put too many adapters into one point now that there are so many electrical gadgets about. And so many gimmicky adapters, too.

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Symphony Suspension

After many years of trailing with many different caravans we decided it was time to 'upgrade' to a motor caravan. The thought of anything larger than a panel van, at least to begin with, was beyond my confidence and accordingly in March this year I presented myself to a dealer and discovered how easy it was to trade in a car plus trailer van in exchange for an almost new Symphony. Having now travelled eight thousand miles in it, in as many months, I feel almost comfortable driving the beast and have only had one 'occurrence' when I reversed into a tree.

Whilst being quite satisfied with it generally I was surprised at the firmness of the ride, particularly as the vehicle is never used in its unladen mode. Having a back problem doesn't help and I was confidently expecting the driving position to be better for me than a car. My wife confirmed my assessment of the suspension when she announced that she was going to have to consider purchasing a sports bra!

Choosing a nice warm day I decided to examine the underside of the Symphony and was surprised to see that Aeon spring assisters had been fitted above the rear leaf springs. I spoke with A-S rep at the Peterborough show who assured me that they would not have modified the base vehicle and that the assisters had probably been fitted with the towbar which I had removed. (See 'For Sale' later!) My next move was to examine a standard Boxer van, rather to the amusement of the owner,

to find it had standard buffer limits fitted, so I wrote to A-S this time. Their reply indicated that the assisters were indeed fitted as part of the conversion to improve the ride quality but there seemed to be no objection to their removal providing standard buffers were inserted. Certainly as it was the rear suspension was virtually solid, but I decided to make haste slowly. After several thousand miles I decided to examine the effect of removing the assisters. I found that the rear end of the van dropped by only about an inch which wasn't going to cause me any problems with van attitude. Aeon's may be shocked to hear that I then cut their massive assisters in half, discarding the lower halves (but keeping them in case I had to bond them back on). This left a clearance of several inches between the leaf springs and the remaining half of the assisters. The results have been dramatic. I can feel that the rear spring actually operates now as well as the dampers. There are far less rattles in the van and travelling on non-motorway roads is vastly improved.

The vehicle is petrol engined but this lighter power unit would hardly affect the rear end. Incidentally, I was concerned initially regarding fuel consumption but having carefully kept records from day 1 and admitting to being easy on the accelerator, I have been pleased that the average over 8,000 miles has been 27 miles to the gallon.

Peter Hacking

====ooo000ooo====

NEW VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS.

In 1967 the motor manufacturers successfully persuaded the authorities to change the registration so that the year letter changed on 1st August, then a slack time for business. Now it is the time of peak demand. So the letter "S" will come into force in March followed by "T" on 1st September 1998. The new system of two changes in 12 months is intended to spread the demand more evenly.

The current series will run out in September 2001 and it is to be replaced by one using four letters, two digits and a final age identifying letter.

Geoff Scholey

Having seen what some people do with the current letter/number arrangements (ELVIS for example) the mind boggles at what they may do with four letters!

====ooo000ooo====

Spare Wheel Storage

Our Trophy is fitted with a commercial frame towbar. This is fitted to the existing holes on the chassis frame where the spare wheel was positioned as original equipment. The towbar frame extends beyond the toilet room pod by 7 inches with 10-12 inches ground clearance. The spare wheel and its carrier can be re-fitted under the towbar frame with very minor adjustments.

The towbar has a big free bonus. It is a very solid protector to the toilet extension. After all, no vehicle radiator would like a solid towball shoved in its face, would it?

And for all the "Boy Racers", here is the last word which I quote verbatim from the VW handbook:-

Quote: The automatic gear box control unit is equipped with two driving programmes. 1. Sport programme 2. Economy programme. The programme is selected Automatically depending on operation of the accelerator pedal. The Sport programme is selected if the accelerator pedal is operated rapidly. In this case the accelerator pedal need not be depressed to the point of kick down. In the Sport Programme full use is made of the engine power reserves through delayed changed to higher gear. Unquote.

Allen Wakeling

Having had a solid frame towbar on the previous two vans and the Hope Safe-T-Bar on the present Clubman I can agree with *Allen* on the safety angle. It is surprising how many drivers keep well clear of my tail - perhaps I should take something for it!

====ooo000ooo====
WANTED

Has anyone got a handbook for a 'C' reg T1000, please? Telephone Jean Greenaway on 0127 346 1995 or write to 9 White Lion Court, Ship Street, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5DY

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FOR SALE

For Sale - but a bit different!

How about a two week non-motoring holiday at the Carlton 5 star hotel in Madeira in October? A complete rest in a luxury apartment which sleeps 4. 2 bathrooms, kitchenette, balcony overlooking sea and harbour. £680.00 all in. (Unable to use next autumn.) Flights can be arranged extra. For full details ring Vivian and Sid Barlow on 0155 882 4075 or write to 9 Ger-y-Llan, Cwmifor, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 7BU.

Thanks for the donation

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FOR SALE

VW Trophy, diesel 2370cc, 1994. 2 berth. Low Mileage. Shower, toilet, fridge, oven/hob. Recent new tyres. Bike rack, alarm, drive away awning. £19,500.00. Tel: Wendy Madge on 0162 687 2778 or write to Hillfield House, Lower Rocombe, Stokeinteignhead, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 4QL.



Thanks for the donation.

#####

Boxer Executive, 2.5 TD, P.A.S., electric front windows, 2 berth. June 1997, 2,300 miles approx. In built Fantastic fan, Fiamma top box, fitted "Status" aerial and booster, awning light, Thatcham immobiliser and alarm. Non-smokers, no pets. Still under manufacturer's warranties. To include interior fitted Silver Screens (cab area only), 2 x 7 kg Propane cylinders. Immaculate condition. Genuine reason for sale. £28,500.00 ovno (for quick sale). Tel: Frank Thompson on 0140 581 7068 or write to 44 Palm Grove Court, Thorne, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN8 4EB.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Romero, 4,500 miles, September 1996. Petrol. Top bed conversion, plenty of space. Space heater, 2nd battery, tow hitch and step, dual electrics. With us from new. Hip trouble forces sale. Offers

over £18,150.00. Telephone Hugh Thomas on 0155 483 2701 or write to New Lodge, Burry Port, Carmarthenshire, SA16 0TD.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Raleigh awning, 3 metre, free-standing. £150.00. Honda generator 650. £250.00 ono. Portable folding wardrobe, new. £20.00. Phone John Rutter on 0132 726 1242 or write to 9 Membris Way, Woodford Halse, Daventry, Northants, NN11 3QZ.



Thanks for the donation.

#####

Clubman (diesel engine), 30 mpg with all the usual A-S items plus cruise control, Fiamma awning, Fluxgate compass, spot lights, Silver Screen, roof fan, mobile phone aerial, alarm and pager. Vehicle is 'M' registered. £23,000.00. Telephone Alfred Campbell on 0130 967 4898 or write to Happy Return, Nelson Road, Forres, Moray, IV36 0DR.

#####

Tow bar for Peugeot Boxer. As new and easy to fit. £80.00. Telephone Peter Hacking on 0162 351 2612 or write to 2 Westfield Close, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts., NG17 1EA.

#####

NR awning, used with Duetto for 5 days only. Free standing or attached to guttering. £250.00. Also external Silver Screen £30.00. Both items will also fit an A-S similar to the Duetto. Please ring Doreen Dent on 0132 531 6060 or write to 1 Midfields, School Aycliffe, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 6QJ.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Insulated Silver Screen for Talbot Express. Internal or external use. Only used occasionally by us on 1989 Talisman GL but we propose to update. V.G.C. £50.00 (inclusive of P&P if required). Tel: Allan Sharratt on 0162 686 3948 or write to 6 Barton Terrace, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 9QH.

#####



Talbot Harmony 1993 'K' reg. 25,000 miles. Shower, cassette loo etc. Excellent condition. £15,950.00. Telephone Adrian Newitt on 0129 673 0951 or write to 22 The Island, Steeple Claydon, Bucks, MK18 2NU

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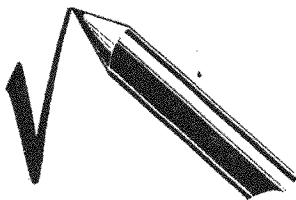
Three Chantal Rooflights plus a few spare 'stalks'. Nothing required for these but suggest a contribution to Club funds. Also, 30 litre gas tank kit, originally supplied through ASOC, £75.00 o.n.o. Contact John Scott on 0124 438 1035 or write to 48 Shepherds Lane, Chester, CH2 2DQ.

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ANSWERS TO THE SIMPLE QUESTIONS.

1. Yes, it comes between 4th and 6th November.
2. 12
3. The match. How else would you light the others?
4. Half an hour - hence "one every half hour".
5. 17 - 9 live and 8 dead.
6. 70. (30 divided by one-half is 60!)
7. 2 "You" took two!
8. NOAH built the Ark, not Moses.
9. "You" drive the coach - so what's YOUR name?

How did you get on?



Your Committee would like to wish you the usual compliments of the season and for you all to have a very happy New Year. We would like to thank the many of you who have taken the trouble to say that things are going the way you like. We are glad that we seem to be doing the right things to please most of the over 3,000 people now members of this Great Club of ours. Enjoy yourselves in 1998 - already!

For my part, may I say thank you to all those who have written to me to say that they like the Newsletter. I'll try to get better next year!

Your Editor
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