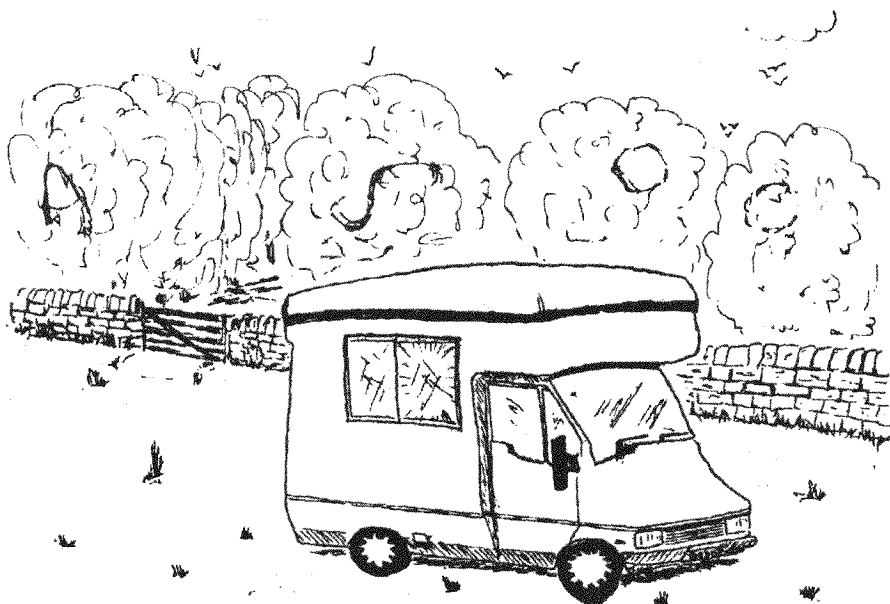


AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB



Can I have a "99" please, mister?
For the 5th time, its NOT an ice cream van!!

NEWSLETTER 113
FEBRUARY 1998

Hello.

I hope that you like the cover picture this month. It is from yet another artist who is either in our Club or in some way associated with it. In this case it was drawn by the son in law of a member and as a result I have had to "adjust" it to get the usual "ASOC" letters into it somewhere. I am pleased that we are getting more pictures in from other sources than our original artists, *Rita Daley*, but with my usual editorial cry "More Please!!"

#####

We are sad to report that we lost Ginny, our much loved and much travelled ginger cat friend, on New Year's Eve. The cause was old age because he was 20 - nearly 21 years old which we understand equates with around 100 years of our time.

#####

Although it is now a bit late, may we wish you all a very happy New Year and safe travelling wherever you go. Thank you for all the cards that *Sheila and I* received.

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Peugeot Boxer - RECALL

Peugeot issued a Recall Notification on the Boxer on 5th December 1997. Quote ---- "It is necessary to check and replace the timing belt tension roller securing stud." Owners to contact their local dealers. The Recall helpline is 0118 945 8484.

Members may like to know these details

Janet Sutterby

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From the Factory

Since the publication of our Press Release I have received quite a number of calls from Club members who expressed concern about the future of the Club and its relationship to the Company. Through the Newsletter, might I assure all members who have such doubts that the Club will in no way at all be affected by the recent management changes at Auto-Sleepers. Subject to your Committee's approval, I will remain as President of the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club - perhaps one benefit of recent changes is that I will be able to give more time to take part in the various Club activities - whilst fulfilling my present role at Auto-Sleepers which of course remains unchanged.

Likewise the Company will continue to support the club as before - certainly we have never under-estimated the value of the loyalty of the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club which has been appreciated by each and every one of us. The Club and Company Rally will also remain unchanged as far as the Company is concerned and we will continue to work closely as always with the Rally sub-committee regarding the organisation of events at Malvern next July.

Both *Anthony (Trevelyan)* and myself will, of course, be remaining at Auto-Sleepers for many years yet, supporting Bill (Cook) and Steven (Riley) in every way possible over the coming months. I can assure you also that they both value the Club enormously and have every intention of being seen at various club activities in the foreseeable future. In effect it is very much business as usual at Willersey and I hope this letter allays any fears of Club members as to the future of the Company. Our role always has been and always will be to produce the best motorcaravans possible, to look after our customers to the best of our ability and not least to nurture and value the close relationship with the Club in the future.

Charles Trevelyan

====ooo000ooo====

Warmth!

As newcomers to the world of camper vans *Daphne & I* seek a little help. So far we have managed an enjoyable holiday in France in our 1981 RV50 plus several UK weekends but we would like to continue to use the van during the winter months. This idea is fine where power hook up is available but how do we keep safely warm when no power is available? What do other members do, apart from jumping up and down and rubbing hands? Maybe other readers will have practical solutions. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who has used a "non heated" vehicle. Our telephone number is 0142 484 4676. Many thanks.

Daphne & Keith Garnsey

I believe that many people tend to go to bed rather earlier in the winter months because it gets dark so much earlier. There is always the course of using travel rugs and/or hot water bottles, but no doubt others will have suitable answers.

====ooo000ooo====



Electricity Usage



Geoff Scholey has kindly sent me a copy of a table listing the amperage used by items commonly in use in motor caravans. The table came from a pack given out at a site in Wales and may prove useful to the less electro-technical (if there is such a term!) members.

Portable black & white TV	50 watts	0.2 amps
Small colour TV	90 watts	0.4 amps
Small fan heater (1 kW)	1000 watts	4.2 amps
One bar electric fire	1000 watts	4.2 amps
(NB: each extra bar rates 1000 watts)		
Table lamp	60 watts	0.25 amps
Light bulb	100 watts	0.4 amps
Battery charger	100 watts	0.4 amps
Small refrigerator	125 watts	0.5 amps
Domestic microwave oven	600 watts	2.5 amps
Toaster or electric iron	1300 watts	5.4 amps
Small domestic kettle	2000 watts	8.3 amps
Fanmaster heater - full setting		8.0 amps
Cascade water heater - half setting		8.0 amps

These figures are approximate only and may serve as a guide to what you can use when on site. Remember that you will have to check (a) the wattage of your own appliances and (b) the amperage permitted on the site. Although many now allow 10 amps or even 15 amps in some cases, there are still a lot around where you may only use 5 amps. A

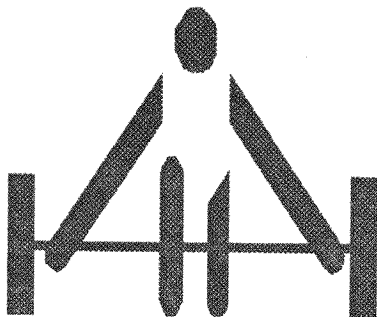
circuit for "5 amps" is not suitable for anything above 600 watts. Also remember that a fast-boil jug kettle rates a much higher wattage and should only be used on 16 amp site circuits. Finally, although it will appear to be over obvious to many, please remember to add together ALL the appliances which you are using at any one time to reach the maximum. Yes, it has been known for a camper to plead that none of the appliances in use was greater than the permitted maximum even though several were in use at once!

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How much do you weigh?

I met *Maurice Payne* of "TIGGERS" at a rally in August and he expressed interest in the fact that I had weighed most of the items that I had put into my 2L petrol Symphony, when I purchased it earlier this year. The reason for this was that I had accumulated lots of odds and ends of camping paraphernalia over the years and my previous

motorhome had a payload limit of 800 kilos which I was never likely to approach. With the Symphony based on the 270 van, the manual provided only mentioned the 320 version, so I did some checking !



According to the plate on the van the Max. gross weight is 2800 kilos, the 270 designation allows for the driver (75 kilos) and oil/water/petrol for engine. The maximum axle load is 1450 for front and rear and in fact that is what the tyres fitted are allowed as well. With the weight of the conversion

the max. permitted payload is in fact 384 kilos, i.e. nearly 8 cwt in old money. This would seem to be adequate for two people using the van but in reality is about the same as your average car! (ie:4/5 passengers plus luggage in the boot).

These were the figures that I came up with for items placed on board:-

Item	Weight in Kilograms
Extra for driver	5
Gas & bottles	17
Electric appliances (kettle, fan heater, iron hair dryer,/tongs etc.)	12
Shovel	1
1 passenger	70
Electric hook-up cable	5
Portable TV	10
Level blocks	8
Kitchen utensils, pots & pans	27
Deck chairs (small)	5
BBQ and box of associated bits	15
Bedding	<u>5</u>
TOTAL SO FAR	180

The above items are usually carried on board at all times, so when used as normal transport, I now know that I can carry 2 extra passengers plus some bits/shopping etc. and maybe 3 extra passengers provided there is no luggage!

However let us continue with the normal load for holidays:-

Clothes	40
Water (14 gallons @ 10 lb/gall)	64
Food	25
Drink	<u>5</u>
Sub total (inc. table above)	314

Thus I have a spare capacity of 70 kilos to play with -- but, I have not allowed for the fact that I have had a towbar fitted, nor have I allowed for my drive-away awning or the bikes and bike rack (initially fitted to the towbar)! So let us see what this leaves me.

Towbar	10
Bike Rack	10
Awning	40

Bikes
Grand Total

50
424

This amounts to being 40 kilos overweight and I have not allowed for the leisure loungers that I usually carry for the summer holidays, so do I forget the BBQ or the bikes or the awning? I decided to have a rethink.

I originally had the towbar fitted so that I could have a towbar bike-rack rather than the Fiamma item bolted to the back door, which didn't appeal to me as it could not be transferred (much like my one fitted to the motorhome) without leaving a mess. I realised that the purchase of a small luggage trailer would remove all the weight problems at a stroke, but of course meant that I would be hampered at times with manoeuvrability but as I could leave the trailer on site for outings etc. this did not seem to be a problem

Thus I have transferred the awning, BBQ, and now also the bikes plus the leisure loungers to the trailer. End result - the normal all up payload is around 115 kilos less but with a nose weight of about 15 kilos for the trailer I now have a total payload of 324 kilos, and the trailer is good for 500 kilos!

Needless to say this was useful after a 3 week holiday in France as there was quite a bit of a space available without cluttering out the van. It also came in handy when visiting the hypermarket with items like 4 packs of kitchen rolls etc.!

Given that quite a number of van conversions and also motorhome do not have an over generous payload limit it may pay for you to check yours. If you think that a trailer is the answer be aware of the following problems. It is almost impossible to reverse as:

- a) You can't see it and a Fresnel lens distorts the view and before you know it, it's jack-knifing.
- b) With the medium wheel base there are times when the turning circle is just not enough, usually a little reversing is sufficient to clear the obstruction, but this of course tightens up the trailer and could mess the paintwork up!

Solution: Be prepared to unhook the trailer when any of the above situations demand it, its quicker and less embarrassing.

David Mayne

Having travelled many miles with a small trailer laden with veteran motor-cycles behind me I cannot quite agree with *David*. True, reversing the total unit does take some practice but it can be done. You need to be extra vigilant using both side mirrors and take the necessary corrective action so soon as the slightest sign of the trailer appears. I have seen an "add-on" gadget being used on a narrow trailer which consisted of a pole or plank of wood with some sort of rigid "flag" at each end. The pole was fastened across the trailer before reversing and the flags showed clearly outside the line of the towing vehicle. But it had to be removed before towing in the forward direction - particularly on the highway!

There is another item from *David* a little later on.

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Boxer Battery problems

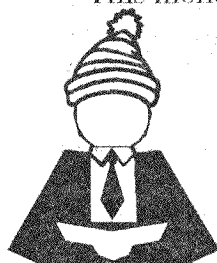
From the Peugeot Parts Department you can get a proper battery cover that fits over the battery after first removing battery connections. Peugeot authorised the fitting of one to my three month old Boxer Symphony. You have to quote the ampere/hour capacity of the battery.

Also check the drain pipe at the rear of the battery tray. Mine was all mangled and twisted and had to be replaced.

Ken Fowler

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Chairman's Chat



This month I am going to expand on a couple of points referred to by *Harry Henthorne* in the January 98 Newsletter, namely insurance at Club events and the thorny subject of the proceeds from raffles at Club rallies being donated to "good causes". I know this may be one of those "Yawn" issues, which will make many of you think seriously about turning to something of greater interest. So I shall do my best to make it lively! Or throw myself on to the computer.

As you know, the Club holds an exemption certificate from the Department of the Environment which permits us the temporary use of an area of land for the purpose of holding a rally without the need to seek planning permission from the Local Authority.

There are, as you will understand, a set of rules covering the use of that privilege in order that they are not abused. This certificate system is rigorously policed now thanks to some groups and greedy individuals who have abused the use of these certificates. If my memory is correct, last year one organisation had its certificate withdrawn as a result of improper use. Which for its members now means no rallies anywhere apart from licensed sites! How does insurance and raffles come into this? (I can hear the cry!) The use of that certificate at a venue places restrictions on us in that; the event in its entirety is for the benefit of the holders of that certificate only! Somewhere deep in the small print of our insurance is the inevitable clause concerning events being run according to the rules of etc. etc. which is a catchall phrase to get out of paying. This is why we, as prudent managers of the Club's affairs, have to insist that not only events using the certificate but also those others using commercial sites are run in accordance with not only our rules but the rules laid down by all the various regulating bodies. Now, shall we look at raffles? Apart from the rules above we also have had a very few occasions when raffles have been run at some rallies with the proceeds being donated to a "good cause". This begs the question of what is a "good cause"? Is it a nationally recognised group? A local, well run group? The local dogs home etc.? We (the committee) have had to make a policy decision in order protect rally marshals, our exemption certificate and members to avoid charges of misuse of moneys collected in the name of the Club. I do know that we have members who would never abuse their responsibilities and who genuinely wish to help others. As far as I know there is nothing to prevent us making a collection for a particular cause. This way it is up to the individual to decide if they wish to support that cause. Also, as *Harry* pointed out, we do ask that as far as possible rallies should pay for themselves. If that is not the case then we, the Club, reimburse the marshals for their loss. We understand that for reasons sometimes beyond the marshal's control it is not always possible to cover expenses. In such an event one rally's profit covers another's loss. We are not attempting to insist that all rallies make a healthy profit. It is enough for us that at the end of the year the "rally account" more or less breaks even.

You will have read also in last month's Newsletter of the change in the Company management. I took the liberty of congratulating the Directors on that change and wished them success for the future. I see this as the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Company. I must admit when we are on the continent *Betty and I* take great delight in pointing out to any who asks that this is a British product designed and built in the Cotswolds by a British company. I recall one time whilst

touring in the Black Forest we had stopped in a village for lunch in a car park when a man came cycling up to us, circled us a couple of times then asked us which company had designed and built our Talisman. He kept saying to us that the van was "Wunderbar, schon", (Wonderful and beautiful) and, after a conducted tour, he went happily on his way impressed by our van. As ever keep smiling.

By the time you read this *Betty and I* are hoping to have taken delivery of our new van and should be on a proving outing to our daughter's home in Normandy. At this time of year we will soon find where the draughts come from! Can I tell you of a little leg pulling of mine with Emily (3), our grand daughter, on Christmas Eve? I knew she was very excited and had been telling us that she would be in bed early. I called them on Christmas Eve at about 8 o'clock and Emily answered the 'phone, as she often does. Quick as a flash I said in my best French "I am Father Christmas". There was a pause and then a sharp intake of breath as Emily shouted out to all "Quick! It's Him! I am going to bed!" She dropped the 'phone and shot upstairs. Christine picked up the 'phone, she knew it was me. (How, I wonder?) And said that Emily had just shouted to her that she, Emily, was in bed now! I have lived on that sharp intake of breath since that call. I suppose it is the innocence at that age I find so pleasing.

Andrew Entwistle

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Vehicle Designs

I read the letter from Stephen Small, the new Design Manager at Auto-Sleepers with interest but also with horror. A-S are well known for their coachbuilts with GRP moulded bodies as they do not leak. Are we now going to join the band of manufacturers who produce motorhomes that leak? I cannot name any, obviously, but have had leakers from three different major manufacturers in the past. I realise companies have to progress but please do not do away with something which is proven and sells because of this.

Heather Whitehead

I do not think that the Company will discontinue the present range but have rather added to it. They too will be well aware of the problems of leakage which have been widely reported from other manufacturers both of motor and trailer caravans and will, no doubt, take proper steps to prevent such events.

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RALLY SUPPLEMENT

February 98

N.B. Please delete the rally at Mold 22nd -25th May from list. This is due to circumstances beyond my control.

Please add the following NEW rallies to your list. 2nd-5th April Wyeside, Rhayader. (Details below) & 10th-13th December The Hollies, Little Budworth, Chester.

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

Site Emergency Tel.No.(J.Miley, Landlord. 01629733233)

Rally Marshals: Doreen & Jock Hammond. Site Fee: £6.00 per night (includes electricity.) Rally Fee: £2.00 (Couple) £1.00 (single). Cheques payable to: Mrs. D. Hammond.

Booking slips to: Mr. & Mrs. F.C. 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 arranged with landlord.

Directions: On A6 between Bakewell & Matlock.

RALLY COMMENCES AFTER 2.00 P.M. ON Thursday. Limit 29 vans.

27th-30th.March Larmer Tree, Rushmore Estate, Tollard Royal, Wilts.

Rally Marshals: Rosie & Terry Ball.

Site Fee: £16.00 per van for weekend. **NO Electricity.** Rally Fee: £2.00

Booking slips to Mrs. R. Ball, 61 Merley Ways, Wimbourne, Dorset, BH21 1QW. Tel.No. 01202 883 050. Cheques payable to Mrs. R. Ball.

Rally is from midday Friday 27th. March to midday Monday 30th. March.

Please do not arrive before midday on Friday. Stay any number of nights.

The whole grounds booked for the weekend, suitable for wheelchairs. Dogs welcome ON LEADS (but not in gardens) Hall available for wet weather use & meetings. There is hard standing for over 50 vans. Toilets available from about 8.00am. to 10.00pm..

Attractions: Licensed bar Saturday night. A meal has been arranged if sufficient interest. Choice of Chicken, Steak & Kidney Pie or Vegetarian @ £8.00 per head for two courses including sweet. Please send money and choice when booking. Send SAE for leaflet on Larmer tree and /or confirmation of booking.

Directions. Situated just off A354 between Blandford Forum and Salisbury. From either direction on B3081 between Shaftesbury and Sixpence Handley. Follow Blue & White sign in Tollard Royal to the Larmer Tree.

Map ref. 943169. Please support this re-arranged rally.

2nd-5th April Wycside,Rhayader C & C Park.

Site Tel. No.01597 810183(Emergencies only).

Rally Marshals:Pat & John Bridge.

Site Fee:£4.50.per night. Electricity:£1.50.per night(19 only).Rally Fee: £1.50

Booking slips to:Mrs.P.Bridge,"Ardwyn",Sun Hill,,St.Harmon,Rhayader,

Powys, LD6 5LH. Tel.No. 01597 870 234.Cheques payable to:P.Bridge.

Attractions:Small well appointed site on the banks of the River Wye,with first class toilets & showers.Approx. 400yds from centre of Rhayader,a small town in the heart of the Welsh mountains,boasting a leisure centre with swimming pool.Royal Welsh Glass factory & Red Kite feeding centre.

A two course meal has been arranged,cost £5.95 + £1.00 extra for tea/coffee.If interested please state preference,Beef or Pork or Vegetarian.

Directions: From Rhayader take A44(470)signposted Llangurig.Site on left in approx. 400 yds. **Limited to 30 vans**

17th-19th.April. A.G.M./Annual Dinner,Kettering Use booking sheet in January Newsletter.Note closing date 31st.March.

24th-26th.April.National Motorhome & Tourer Show,Peterborough.

Rally Marshals:Audrey Crouch & Team..

Complete booking form in MMM or Which M/van.Mark form **ASOC** and return to

address on form.**Closing date to rally with club 27th.March.**Special Club rates:

4 nights £22.00,3 nights £20.00,2 nights £18.00,1 night £12.00.

Complete one of our rally slips and send,with £1.00 Rally fee to:Mrs.A.Crouch, "Sydrey"Syvan Close,Higher Heath,Whitchurch,Shrops,SY13 2TB.Tel.No.01948 840894.Cheques payable to:A.M.Crouch. If you are unable to get a booking form send a SAE with your rally fee and Audrey will send you one.(If you ask for one!)

3rd-9th May Dutch Bulbfields Rally (May 1998) Fully booked.

1st-14th.June 1998.Camping Le Bohat,Brittany,France. Fully booked.

If you need confirmation of acceptance on rally please send SAE with rally slip. Will rally marshals please send rally information to me ASAP(if you have not already done so)if you want early publicity for your rally.

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: Date:

Your name and address (please PRINT)

..... Post code:

Membership No: Phone No: Van Reg:

Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name: Phone:

Please complete both sides of the form!

Rally: Date:

Your name and address (please PRINT)

..... Post code:

Membership No: Phone No: Van Reg:

Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name: Phone:

Please complete both sides of the form!

Rally: Date:

Your name and address (please PRINT)

..... Post code:

Membership No: Phone No: Van Reg:

Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name: Phone:

Please complete both sides of the form!

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

Number of people in your van: Adults Children

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

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

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

.....

Payment MUST accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.

POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT, 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

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

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:-

.....

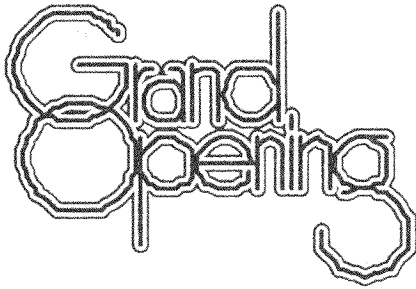
Payment MUST accompany this slip - cheques payable to marshal.

POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT, IF POSSIBLE - PLEASE!

1988 and all that!

I was reminded of the birth of ASOC. when I read *Geoff Scholey's* remarks in January MMM. There were *five* of us, *Geoff*. First, *John Cox*, whose experience with the young VW Club was invaluable in arranging the first group of rallies and guiding us through the constitution. Similarly, *Frank Stinchcombe* had run a Post Office counter whilst *Dilys Stinchcombe* had run the attached shop. They became Treasurer and Regalia Officer - obviously! I had been secretary of a motorcycle club which ran trials and I discovered that "if anything can go wrong, it will." *Philip (Daley)* brought me to my first meeting, and was persuaded to sit in - only to find he had become the Newsletter Editor as he had already written one for the motorcycle club. That was the cast...

We had 37 enquiries when we went to Cotswold Hoburne Caravan Site to arrange the Inaugural General Meeting for approximately 100 vans, and arrange for a buffet lunch and evening meal. The manager didn't take us seriously but went through the motions and showed us 100 pitches in one group which would be "entirely at our disposal"... The area which Auto-Sleepers Limited would have for a display of vehicles and sale of spares was nearby. It couldn't be better. *Charles Trevelyan*, on behalf of the company, offered to foot the bill for the Saturday buffet. He didn't know it would cost over £2000.00.



Unfortunately, after sending out membership application forms and questionnaires, plus the booking form for the IGM, I soon had the 100 pitches reserved and was lucky to get 100 more. They were just enough allowing for our total ignorance of the number of members with pets. The site do not accept pets, we therefore had a group of members at Cirencester and other nearby sites. A mistake we have never made again, it caused a lot of hassle.

This wasn't the only problem. When we arrived to "set up our stall", there were a number of caravans with awnings and furniture sitting on "our" pitches. People were asked what time they would be leaving and indignantly refused to go. Also, the area which had been

earmarked for Auto-Sleepers had been dug up and taped off. We needed to put the marquee and Auto-Sleepers' display at the end of our reserved area, so making us short of a few more numbered pitches - and we had marked all the envelopes with the pitch numbers.....!

Also, we found that everyone wanted a few words with all of us, and we didn't have a meal, including breakfast, without someone popping over for a word. By lunch time on Saturday *Frank, Dilys, Philip and I*, in the marquee, had lost our voices. *John and Barbara Cox* were by the entrance gate and having their own problems. Happily, everything ran smoothly, with a lot of paddling underneath, and I collected four plates of buffet in the boot of my car to sneak back and have in the peace of our motorcaravans to give us the strength of get through the IGM. It was a very happy and very memorable event.

A year later, at Billing, the Manager had gone to Malta for a holiday and no-one knew we were coming. Nor had anyone ordered the marquee and food for about 800 people. Most of the staff had gone home because the week-end after Easter is quiet. The pitch area was odd shapes and had the usual caravans with awnings and needed marking, and it was tipping it down with rain. *Clive Jenkins* had everything organised beforehand but was now faced with the awful possibility of cancellation and greeting everyone with the news. Luckily, the man at the reception desk was the site owner, and he moved very fast. Within an hour a marquee was being erected and no-one knew of the disaster which had been averted - although the gale and rain were still with us and it made the marquee very interesting! We did note for the future, no more marquees. Anyone who remembers will know why we hang on to Kettering and wish we could find other places as good.

Rita Daley

Having been present on both occasions we know what *Rita* means! But what she hasn't said is that she is artistic and started "doodling" with a pencil and the letters ASOC. This led first to "Rita's Little Man" and soon after to the cover pictures for the Newsletter. If you care to count, you will be amazed how many she has produced for us. In addition, she hasn't mentioned the work she and *Philip* put in to print, fold, envelope and post the Newsletters for several years!

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Symphony 270M/320M

Like *Peter Hacking*, I too noticed the very choppy ride on my petrol 270M Symphony. This is especially noticeable if you sit in one of the rear seats and makes for a very queasy ride. Its also obvious that the rear suspension is virtually solid due to the addition of the "extended bump stops" whilst the front end is normal. I have to admire *Peter* for doing a mod to make the ride better and of course one could opt for an air-ride system to maintain the rear height. I wonder if the problem is brought about by using a system for the 320M chassis which is not suitable for the 270M. Obviously the spring rates are different for both models, as are the tyres. I was wondering if anybody has any knowledge on the actual differences between both models as I would like to replace my tyres with some that have a bigger load margin. I have also spoken to another 320M owner that had Air-rides fitted but was unhappy with the noise from his tyres and planned to change to another sort (i.e. not commercial tyres) to alleviate that problem. Also has anybody got any ideas on what the law says if the vehicle is overloaded according to its MGW but has been modified to cope? There must be quite a number of vehicles around like that and quite a few will be motorvans.

Answers in a letter please to the Editor!

David Mayne

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Losing a friend - Part II

Recently our telephone rang and a voice said "Nothing to worry about. South Yorkshire police here. We think we may have found your motor caravan. Would you be willing to identify it?" My reply was "Yes! When?" "Now", came the reply, "we will send a car for you". So two very nice P.C's in plain clothes came in an unmarked car and collected me. We travelled some 30 miles to a Police Stolen Vehicle Compound - various things were discussed during this fast drive. "Did the Auto-Sleeper have a towbar on it?" "No". "Well, this one has" - so I began to wonder if it really was ours. As soon as I saw it I knew it was Rachel II although it had been cleverly disguised. It was parked with about 400 other vehicles including 38 ton lorries. You name it, everything was there. Even another panel van Auto-Sleeper, perhaps a Symphony?

The sides of Rachel II had been re-sprayed to cover up the logos and names. It had been re-registered with a personalised number. All the windows had been either re-etched with the new number or new windows fitted. New front headlamps, of the later type, had been fitted because the original ones had been etched. A towbar had been fitted but everything, all the extras we had put on, had been removed and the van put back to standard. Even the nearside map pocket on the door had been taken off. Finally, they had re-named the van "Free Spirit". What a cheek!

But, clever as they were, they left on the gold line around the top of the van. As the bike rack brackets were home made - which I had polished so many times - I knew it was "our" van straight away. All the locks had been changed but the police had some keys. My heart pounded as we entered hoping that it wasn't a wreck but it was just as we had left it. We had a look round. I made a statement and we left. I arrived home some 4 hours later. *Tom* wondered what had happened - he was at work whilst all this was going on. The police did ring him to say they had got me and not to worry. What a laugh!

The weather was very cold and foggy so the next day, Saturday, we discussed this at great length. *Tom* said "That van will freeze up. It has got all the water on board. Ring the police and see if I can go and drain it all off and winterize it". We thought it was too complicated to try to explain what to do. It was also a good excuse to see it again, even though it wasn't our property any more. We met the police who escorted us in our replacement van, Rachel III, to the compound again. *Tom* did the necessary to make it safe for probably a long stay on this bleak park. It proved quite a good thing for the police. They found extra evidence to tie this vehicle up with others recovered in the area.

It seems that there is a whiz kid who can crack any alarm and will steel anything to order for £500.00. It is then passed on to a fence and ring who obtain and old Talbot van (if that's the make they steal) transfer the registration document to a personalised number and then it is disguised. The worst thing the DVLC did, said the police, was to re-register vehicles with personalised plates.

This was discovered because someone saw their stolen car parked on the fence's drive and informed the police. The fence was then arrested together with his brother and this led to 8 other vehicles being recovered including ours. The fence had been using our van. We found

his sunglasses, suntan oil, old chairs etc. He had fitted the towbar to pull his ski boat.

We feel happier knowing what happened to our friend but we do not want it back. We shall be keeping Rachel III. We have done quite a lot of jobs to her.

A final word of warning. The thief is still at large and although the police know who he is they have not been able to nail him - yet!

Dorothy Huntingdon

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Reversing Aids

Charles Trevelyan sent in details of a television camera and monitor system which can be fitted to a van to aid reversing. The price appears to be in the region of £375.00 to £500.00 plus VAT and carriage and there is a sting in the tail which suggests that a minimum order may apply. Apparently the Company have fitted such systems to some models exported to Japan and have found that they prove most effective. *Charles* suggested that it "may be of interest - particularly to the more elderly Club members". Have we got any "elderly" members? Most people appear to be young tearaways in their 60s/70s/80s but definitely NOT elderly!

If anyone would like details, contact your Editor.

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Rallies

Somewhat late in the day (!) two first-time ralliers would like to say how much we enjoyed the weekend in West Mersea last October. Because of family commitments this was the first opportunity to rally since purchasing our first campervan in May but it made the wait worthwhile. We were made so welcome by *Inge & Jack Britton* and *Pat & John Bridge*, the marshals. Also by *Maggie & Philip Midgley* among many fellow members. We look forward to next year's programme!

Gill & Bill Hopkins

#####

Having just returned from the New Year festivities at Hidden Valley, we would like to thank *Sandra and Bernie Wisely* for all the hard work which made the rally such a success. The food, as usual, was well up to the standard one expects, excellent and far too much of it! Well

done, Susan, your Christmas pudding was wonderful. The entertainment each evening was very good and the Caroline Berry evening was superb.

Beryl & Don Walker

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Security

Having recently suffered from the unwanted attention of the criminal fraternity, I read about *Dorothy & Tom Huntingdon's* plight with some sympathy. In my case the outcome was an irritating nuisance with no lasting harm done. The first thing that we did when we bought our new Clubman was to have an alarm system fitted. We selected the "Strikeback" system with two extras that I believe to have been our salvation. These were a "Siren from Hell" and a pager.

The day after the alarm was fitted we set off on a tour of France to run in the vehicle. All went well until we were visiting Les Baux in Provence. We had been away from the Clubman for only a few minutes when thieves struck. They broke the washroom window and climbed in. But when the alarm went off eye witnesses saw them flee at a pace. It was the "Siren from Hell" that saw them off and the pager that alerted us that something was wrong. We had to replace the window and frame but it was covered under the windscreen section of our insurance and our claim was handled very efficiently by Comfort through whom we are insured. No other damage was done and nothing was stolen.

Whilst an alarm cannot give total protection, I am now convinced that a good system will deter all but the determined. The louder the siren the better, especially if it deafens the intruder once he gets into the vehicle. The pager gives us an added feeling of comfort although it is a shock when it does alert you that something is wrong! It is also a pleasure to receive, as a Club member, an extended warranty without charge.

Bob Morris

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Thanks

Many thanks for the donation received from *Terry Best*. He bought a swivel platform from *David Thornton* through an advert in the Newsletter and agreed to make the donation.

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Obituary

George Greenwood passed away on 22nd December 1997. Our condolences and sincere sympathies are offered to his wife, *Barbara*, and his family.

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WANTED

Safari room for 3m Fiamma awning. Height of box 2.3m. Telephone George Parker (evenings) on 0175 226 1488 or write to 10 Sefton Avenue, Plymouth, PL4 7HB.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

One or more wheel trims for Renault Trafic. 14" type with 13 holes around the edge. Telephone Keith Wilkinson on 0193 926 0321 or write to Rannoch, Prescott Fields, Baschurch, Shrewsbury, SY4 2EL

#####

As very new motor caravan owners, after 40 years towing, we would like to find a folding cycle to fit in our top box. Contact Roger Gittings by phone or fax on 0152 686 1587 or write to 7 Field Road, Billingham, Lincoln, LN4 4EA. Any advice members may have regarding good or bad buys would be welcomed.

#####

Wanted for Boxer Symphony. Silver Screen for exterior use. Also Bicycle rack. Please phone John Rex on 0117 968 1503 or write to 6 Withey Close East, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS9 3SZ.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

1990/91 Ford Legend GL. 2 litre petrol. Must be immaculate with fairly low mileage. Tel: Peter Jeffery on 0175 236 5396 or write to 63 Weston Mill Hill, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 2AR.

Thanks for the donation.

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FOR SALE



1993 Talbot Express Talisman GL, 2.5 TD, p.a.s., 4 berth. 20,000 miles in excellent condition. Fitted with all original items of equipment plus 3-speed cooling/extractor fan, removable overcab locker, Maystar alarm, Fiamma awning with front and side curtains, 2 bicycle carrier, insulated Silver Screen, extra propane cylinder. Vehicle is fully serviced with MOT until January 1999. £21,500.00

ono. Telephone John Onslow on 0170 732 8771 or write to 28 Hand-side Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6SF.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Hope Rack-n-Roll Scooter carrier complete with lighting board. Suitable for virtually all scooters or bikes up to 250cc. £200.00. Telephone John Catley on 0175 724 8085 or write to Ingledane, Station Road, Riccall, York, YO4 6QJ

Thanks for the donation.

#####

NR Awning "Raleigh de Luxe" model. Colours Brown/Green. Free standing or vehicle side rail attachment. Fits Talbot Express Harmony. Floor side 11' 3" x 6' 3". Height 6' 7". Used twice, so as new condition. (Vehicle sold). Bargain £299.00. Also set Harrison made side screens. Complete, unused, made to fit Fiamma F45, 2.5m sun blind. Drop 2.35m (7' 8") from side rail (VW Clubman GL). Surplus kit to make full enclosure. £160.00 ono. Telephone Roger Yeatman on 0120 248 5063 or write to 173 River Way, West Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2QN.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

One set of 14" wheel trims. New, never used. Will fit 14" rim depending on depth the wheel is dished. Will also fit Mazda and Nissan Cars. £15.00. Telephone Keith Wilkinson on 0193 926 0321 or write to Rannoch, Prescott Fields, Baschurch, Shrewsbury, SY4 2EL.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Top Box Carry Unit. Complete with two fixing brackets for rear mounting and all nuts, bolts etc. Very good condition and we will even throw in the disabled logo FOC! Cost new £350.00 fitted. £100.00 ovno. Telephone Betty & Joe Jacobs on 0190 237 3975 or write to 17 Cotswold Drive, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, WV7 3DQ



#####

Ford Duetto, 1996, 'N' Reg. 2.4 diesel, P.A.S. Full service record. 15,000 miles. Immobiliser and towbar fitted. Awning, automatic reverse polarity checker. One owner, non smoker with no pets. Excellent condition, genuine reason for sale. £22,000.00. Telephone Mary Palmer on 0175 770 5969 or write to 6 Moss Green Lane, Brayton, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 9EN.

#####

Ford Duetto 2.5 turbo diesel with automatic transmission. Mileage under 4000 miles and in absolutely immaculate condition. All the usual extras on this classic Auto-Sleeper including Fiamma awning, Status aerial etc. This van has also been fitted with wheelchair clamps having only been used to transport an invalid lady on days out in the country. A special folding wheelchair and telescopic ramps are also available at a sensible price. Non smokers, no pets. This is a vehicle that's a pleasure to drive at a very competitive price of £25,750.00 ono. Telephone Max Sayles on 0124 656 6866 or write to 76 Yew Tree Drive, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 3NB.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Renault Rapport (2+2 berth), 1989, 'G' reg. 43,000 miles. Usual A-S fittings, h&c water, Propex blown warm air heating, double bed conversion, 3 way fridge. Fitted with 5 Michelin XC4S tyres and new battery. A treasured vehicle. Alarmed. No pets, non-smokers. £9,000.00. Tel: Ann & Riky Smith on 0168 456 8207 or write to 25 Wilton Road, barnards Green, Malvern, Worcs., WR14 3RG.

Thanks for the donation.

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Contents

Peugeot Boxer - RECALL.....	2	1988 and all that!.....	11
From the Factory.....	2	Symphony 270M/320M.....	13
Warmth!.....	3	Losing a Friend - Part II.....	13
Electricity Usage.....	4	Reversing Aids.....	15
How much do you weigh?.....	5	Rallies.....	15
Boxer Battery problems.....	8	Security.....	16
Chairman's Chat.....	8	Thanks.....	16
Vehicle Designs.....	10	Obituary.....	17
		Wanted.....	17
		For Sale.....	18

The **TENTH** of the month is the last day for items to reach
Your Editor

Harry Henthorne
144 Devonshire Hill Lane
London, N17 7NH
Tel: 0181 808 9112

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All reasonable care has been taken to ensure accuracy but none of the
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them out.

Committee Members:

Andrew Entwistle	Chairman; Joint Chairman - AGM Sub-Cttee	0142 284 3057
Sheila Henthorne	Secretary & Membership Secretary	0181 808 9112
Harry Henthorne	Newsletter Editor	0181 808 9112
Brian Hooton	Chairman C & C Sub-Cttee	0123 576 4782
Arthur Irving	Vice-Chairman: Joint Chairman AGM Sub-Cttee	0114 236 5698
Ben Mansfield	Chief Rally Marshal	0172 336 9769
Neil Rogers	Rally Co-Ordinator	0132 537 4540
Ian Ross	Regalia Officer	0170 822 8075
Geoff Scholey	Press Officer	0175 675 2303
Janet Sutterby	Minutes Secretary	0150 746 2449
John Tidbury	Treasurer	0123 552 5730
Ray Young	Vice-Chairman	0150 752 3467
Charles Trevelyan	President	0138 685 3338