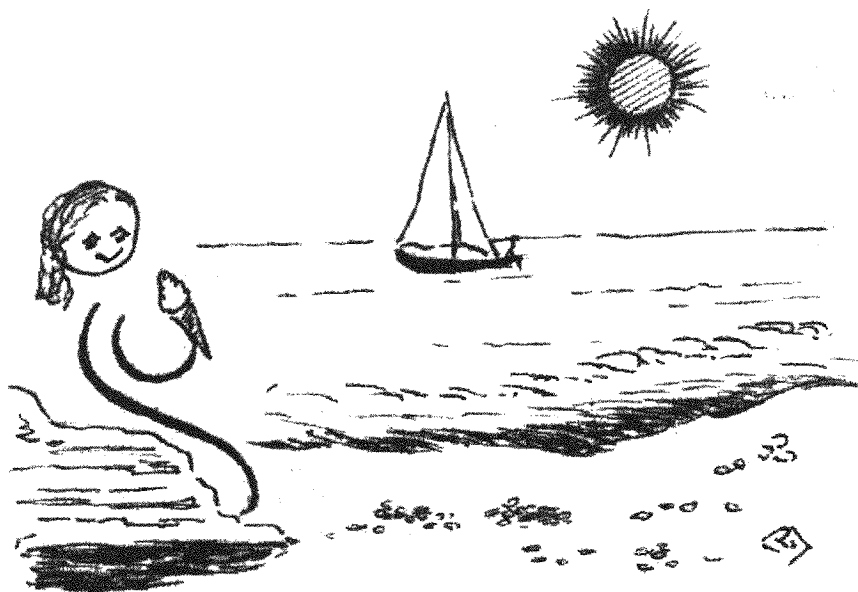


# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER 122  
NOVEMBER 1998**

Hello.

A couple of items included this month have been 'on the spike' for a short time. This is either because they arrived too late for inclusion earlier or because I had run out of space in the then current issue. Sorry about that. There are some months when I feel that the items which YOU have sent me could easily fill around 30 - 40 pages! At other times I begin to wonder whether I shall have enough to fill 10 pages. But YOU, my dear writers, always have turned up trumps so far - so please keep up the good work.

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## Items - Various

### 1: Whistling in the Dark

I was interested in reading about *Brian Ramsden's* problem on his Talisman. I wonder if the cause is the same as the Whoopee Cushion noise that I get on my Symphony. My noise is caused by gusty head winds, usually off to one side, and the noise is generated through the vent system to the two front fascia vents by the side windows or the side window demisting vents. Depending on the angle of the wind one or other of them make this noise. An easy check is to put your hand over the vent! As it only occurs occasionally I put up with it as a cure is not obvious. Bad design problem really!

### 2: Homologation

I thought the article by *Joyce and Michael Thomas* was very spot on, until they mentioned the problem with their Executive and want to modify it. Isn't it annoying that it is not to the owners satisfaction when it came off the production line? I suspect that you have the additional rubber springs fitted so that it can't sag at the back if you overload it! There are three courses of action here. One is to check how you load your vehicle using a public weighbridge (front and rear axle loads). Two is to remove the extra rubber springs, if fitted, and replace with conventional bump stops. Again a redistribution of load may be required. If you really feel strongly about it you can get the rear leaf spring reset by a spring repairer/manufacturer. They can alter the set of the spring to enable the chassis to be lower and can also alter its strength e.g. uprate it or otherwise. I suspect that this is what you infer regarding

single or double springs. I hope the intention was not to remove one of the existing springs as this must surely leave a weaker spring and whilst dropping the back of the vehicle it will also reduce its weight carrying capacity. The usual trick of fitting Air springs is to unshackle the second spring, I believe, but this allows adjustment to ride height and stiffness as the air spring is inflated. The cheap option is to re-engineer the springs but this depends on the expertise of the spring manufacturer. The article by *Maurice Wright* says it all if you refer to his bullet point No 3.

### **3: Tiggers**

I was very impressed with the stall that Tiggers had at the C&C rally. It has come a long way since I last saw *Maurice Payne* at the Shoreham rally clutching his folder of scraps and articles. It would be nice to see some regular articles from Tiggers as we are not mind readers and I don't think that all 3000 members ringing *Maurice* would be the solution. Brief notes on mods and news-worthy items need not take up too much space. I don't think that "The Editor" should do this as I'm sure *Harry* has enough work in getting the "BACKBONE" of the Newsletter itself sorted.

### **And finally 4: The C & C Rally**

What a wonderful experience! It was nice to meet up with some old acquaintances and to meet some new ones. The organisation of the event must be mind boggling and obviously the support of the Company vital for this to be such a super rally. The entertainment was excellent. And it was interesting to look around the new products. I particularly liked the layout of the Ravenna, shame about the dark blue interior but at least you could open the toilet door without trampling on the cook! When A-S produce a version with a low profile front, outer underbody storage space, change the internal colour and offer uprating to the 350 chassis, I'll be in the queue to buy. But why is it 2 inches shorter than the others? Would it not be cheaper to make them all on the same body panels? The Company shop was also interesting as there was an opportunity to purchase replacement parts and kits for modifying worktops etc. as well as a bargain corner although nothing there for the Symphony this year. Maybe the Factory could do an article on what is available, my dealer never told me about this! It was a great

weekend despite the poor weather.

*David Mayne*

We shall have to ask the factory whether they might be able to give some idea of what special items will be available for the next Club & Company Rally. Unless they only find what they have available at the last moment when Phil Bennett starts loading the stuff!

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## Rambling Recipes

This has now gone into the fourth edition! The latest is an improved version with a Frontispiece which can be adjusted to suit your requirements. The version I have seen said "This copy was specially printed for ..... with best wishes for the festive season. from....." The sentiment can be modified for any other special occasion, e.g. a wedding, a birthday, a retirement or whatever. *Nial Reynolds* our member who is the chef, author, publisher, printer and putter-togetherer of the book makes no extra charge for this additional service; the price remains at £6.50 inclusive of postage and packing. The covers of the book are now laminated plastic which improves the appearance and increases durability. Orders, which will normally be sent within a couple of days unless things are very busy, should be sent to *Dr. Nial Reynolds, 49 Arden Way, Market Harborough, LE16 7DB*. This would make a very good gift for any of your friends who already have (nearly) everything!

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## **PEUGEOT BOXER - BATTERY LEADS**

Owners of vans based on the Peugeot Boxer will know that their vehicles used to have a problem of rain water running into the battery. Our Executive (diesel) was bought new in March 1997 and fitted with a battery cover about four months later. It is now 18 months old and on two occasions this summer the electrical supply from the battery has failed suddenly and completely. The failure was temporary. Power would resume and the engine restart after a few minutes rest. Our local garage discovered that one of the main leads from the battery was corroded. Most probably the result of acid spilling over on to it before the cover was fitted. I am told that

this is an unusual fault but owners whose base vehicle did not benefit from any modification for this problem during the Peugeot production process may wish to check that their battery leads are in a healthy condition.

*Janet Sutterby*

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## Boxer Battery Cover - the Saga continues

Since September 1995 my dealers have fitted my Executive with a gearbox rain protector, new battery and a rain gutter drain. The latter failed to cure the water on battery problem. After perusing the information in MMM, copy supplied to the dealer, I got them to fit a battery cover. They promptly imposed a charge of £9.83 for the cover plus over £30.00 to fit it! A minor explosion at the reception desk resulted in the waiving of the fitting charge but insistence on payment for the cover. It took from 7th July to 3rd September to obtain a refund of this sum. Moral - carefully cull relevant information from MMM and elsewhere and be d\*\*\*\*\*d persistent!

*Sean Hollands*

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## Synthetic Oils

I was interested in *Bill Forester's* note in August regarding these oils in diesel engines. I have no experience of diesels but the same problem came up with our petrol engine Symphony when it had a service at the official Plymouth Peugeot agents. The cost of synthetic oil was outrageous when compared with normal oil at the servicing garage I have used for around 35 years.

I was then interested to see the comparison of oils in New York taxis as shown in "Consumer Reports" - the equivalent of "Which?" magazine. You could not get harder wear on a vehicle engine than in a New York taxi. They tested 20 oils each in three New York taxis. All 60 cabs had identical rebuilt engines put in before the tests started. The oil was changed every 6,000 miles and after 60,000 miles the engines were taken apart and checked for wear and harmful deposits. No brand was found to perform better than the others. There was as much difference between the engines as between the oils. The wear on the camshaft, valve lifters and bearings was less than the thickness of a magazine page.

The Plymouth Consumer Group, for which I am Information Officer and Editor, wrote to Castrol asking what advantages were claimed for the expensive oil - £4.86 per litre against £2.00 per litre. Neither reply nor advertising literature was received.

My own garage saw no advantage in using such oil in a motor caravan which has much less use than either a New York taxi or even a normal delivery van.

*Stuart Coverley*

It goes to show that you have to "shop around" a bit and ask questions before swallowing stories - such as "if it costs more it must be better!"

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## France & Northern Spain

I am anxious to correspond with any member who has taken a winter or spring holiday in Northern Spain and has motored through France from Calais rather than take the Portsmouth to Santander Ferry. Having suffered severe sea sickness on a recent crossing from Plymouth to Roscoff I have no desire to be inflicted once again. Our intention is to motor along the northern coastline of Spain and then down the west coast, both of which I believe are very attractive. We have never visited Spain before. Perhaps members could phone me on 0120 445 1927 or write to 1 Higher Ridings, Bromley Cross, Bolton, BL7 9HP with information. Many thanks

*Barry Newth*

I'm sure that many people have done all of these things, including the sea sickness, and will be pleased to help.

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## From the Factory

*Tony Johnson*, our Sales Manager, retired from A-S on the 8th September after many fruitful years with the company. He was a familiar face at motor-caravan shows and our Dealerships around the country, together with the Club & Company Rally. A competing motor caravan manufacturer recently said to me that *Tony's* show stands were always the first to be finished, and the best presented, at every exhibition A-S attended. *Tony* must also take the credit for much of our sales network as it stands today. We all wish him a long

and happy retirement. As I write he is touring France in his brand new Symphony, which he bought after parting with his Talbot Talisman. Of course, the *Johnson* Symphony was bound to be a distinctive vehicle, specially fitted with a Heki 2 roof light and green trim from our Styrofoam coachbuilt range. It is also finished in light green, with colour coded bumpers, door mirrors, awning and roof. In my three years here I think every other Symphony has been white! There are several other small modifications drawn from a lifetime motor caravanning and from studying many, many vans.

Interestingly *Tony* chose a special order Petrol 320M base van, which gives a huge 720kg payload. He says that the R15C tyres fitted to the 320M reduce roll and improve general handling compared to the lighter capacity versions - however I know that some people prefer the slightly softer ride of the 270M.

Turning to other matters, we are all working hard on the build up to the Earls Court Caravan show. This year we have the additional complication of the new CEN Habitation code EN1646-1, which replaces the SMMT/NCC Code of Practice 201. These are the new European voluntary rules which cover minimum payloads, safety ventilation, warning labels, fire protection and so on. Happily, because of the work of Steve Riley, *Anthony Trevelyan* and numerous others, we have found the new rules relatively straight forward to implement. In fact I think that the UK motor-caravan industry will be the first in Europe to have a "compliant" fleet of vehicles to sell. A very creditable performance. The vast majority of our vehicles have already been inspected by the National Caravan Council, and by the time you read this, they all will have been. This work comes under the "Homologation" title, so I have been working on it for months. Overall the project has been a team effort involving everyone from purchasing, design and quality through production to sales. A-S have the first "EN" certificates in this country, so I would guess we have the first certificates in Europe. We think that the changes we make will have a minimal effect on our customers' motor-caravans. We have made more than 300 modifications. One example is that the water label by the water filler has changed to blue! Multiply that by twenty odd vans and you soon end up with 300 changes all in the name of European harmonisation.

Happy Motor Caravanning!

Denzil Brunning  
Homologation Engineer, Auto-Sleepers Ltd.

## Tigger News

Members! Please do **NOT** phone *Stuart Lamb*!! This is contrary to what I said in the last Newsletter but *Stuart* has just informed me that he has taken over as Quality Manager at work and does not at the present have any time to devote to ASOC/TIG. He will, however, continue to be a member of TIG.

Members have reported problems relating to both the Boxer and the T4. For the former they relate to cab seat belts which *Brian Smith* is investigating. The latter vehicle's problems are to do with the clutch slave cylinder which I am investigating. Full details in a future issue.

We have received the A-S Newsletter for September in which there are items relating to Hekii roof blinds, Ford 2.5 TDI Automatics, Batteries, Seitz blinds, windows, towing, wheel trims, tyre pressures, rear steps and Carver spares. Also included was an example of the Quality Control Report which is normally completed by the dealer. Should any member like to complete one then I can provide copies. They can be sent either to me or to A-S. The TIG test report on the Ravenna is now available to members who may compare it with the press report in MMM October 1998. For copies of any TIG documents please contact me on 0131 336 3385. If I do not answer right away it is probably because I'm out enjoying myself! Please leave a message or write to me at 3 Clermiston Road North, Edinburgh, EH4 7BL.

*Maurice Payne*

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## Easewell Farm, Mortehoe, Rally Report

30 members joined us for this rally and despite the inhospitable weather over the weekend we hope that they all enjoyed themselves.

The site management kindly allowed us to use the clubhouse for coffee on the Friday evening. This was then followed by a Skittles night with *Terry Holtom* showing the rest of us how it should be done, his opening statement was "Watch me and then do what I do" and promptly scored a maximum 9 with his first ball.

Quite a few took advantage of the local bus service to visit the exotic resorts of Woolacombe, Ilfracombe, Braunton and

Barnstaple on the Saturday. Returning to the site in the evening for a bar meal in the clubhouse, some lingered on over liquid refreshments late into the night catching up with old and meeting new friends.

Sunday dawned with an early downpour, coffee was once again taken in the clubhouse where the raffle was drawn and thanks must be given to those members who kindly donated prizes.

*Sandra and Bernie Wisely*

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I know you must have letters on a regular basis from first time ralliers, but I still wanted to let other members know just how much *Kim and I* enjoyed our first rally at Easewell Farm. We are still getting to grips with modern motor caravan life after two years of having our Symphony. But we certainly learned a lot from everyone and will be off to our local supplier for skid mats, ramps and other useful things to stop us from sinking in the mud. I still get nervous of waterlogged green field sites. It takes me back to the late seventies when we first flirted with motor caravanning. We had a Commer Overlander, which I am sure nobody has ever heard of. We were regularly towed from National Trust car parks and camp sites during a particularly wet summer! So starting rallying with ASOC with a hard standing pitch was great.

The weekend was full of "firsts" for us. *Kim* managed to win at skittles - neither of us having played for getting on 20 years - and I picked up a snooker cue for the first time ever and had a game of pool - much to the entertainment and amusement of everyone near us. So thanks to everyone for making us welcome and, of course, to *Sandra and Bernie* for the organisation. It was a great weekend.

*Wendy Hayden*

That is just what this Club is all about - good friends even if you are only meeting them for the very first time. Don't forget that a stranger is only a friend you haven't yet met!

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## **Clubman**

1. My Clubman dates from February, 1994. To protect the carpet in the cab, I fitted rubber mats. Even while running in, road performance seemed inadequate compared with a previous 2.5 diesel Peugeot. Looking down at the accelerator I

noticed that the rubber mat was restricting pedal movement. Moral of story - use only the genuine VW mat or similar which is cut away under the pedal. However the problem did not end there. Having assumed all was well, I now found that the A/S carpet (foam backed) was also fouling the pedal. Needless to say I no longer feel the engine needs a turbo charger. So be warned - on any T4 based model.

2. Another 'glitch' - the front drawer of the nearside locker developed a habit of sliding open while on the move. I found that while the rear drawer lock was fitted with a striking plate, the front one was not. Similarly the two offside drop flaps have no plates, merely locking against the carpet lining and doing it no favours. Fortunately it was a simple matter to make and fit striking plates on the frames.

3. The wash basin in the toilet compartment - mine is the model which requires the whole unit to be removed from the wall to thoroughly clean the plastic waste funnel and grille. I found no mastic had been used and the rubber washer was only a loose fit. A light smear of Seelastik and a tighter screw has effected a cure - and it is still removable.

*Gordon Finlayson*

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## **MAINS ELECTRICITY**

*Bernard Spurgin* need not doubt the 'German adaptor' system of reversing polarity on mains hook-up lines. I have used it in France over many years. The 'adaptor' is actually a two-piece in-line outdoor connector which incorporates twin spring metal earthing contacts on both sides of each component, so that earthing is provided whichever way round the connection is made. Further, the 'plug' half of the connector will also accept the single earth pin of the 'two pin' socket hook up point sometimes met with, via a metal link between the earthing socket and the earthing contact strips already provided.

I have made up two short leads incorporating this type of connector to link up correctly with either end of my hook-up line fitted with the standard 'blue' male connectors. In this way I can connect with any standard 'blue' hook-up point or to any of the 'two-pin' type hook-up points with either type of earthing provision.

# **November 1998**

## **Rally Supplement**

**N.B. Ralliers please note that rallies start & finish at 12 noon, unless otherwise stated. Early arrivals and late leavers can invalidate our Exemption Certificate.**

**When sending a rally slip to a rally marshal please remember to include both site fees and rally fee, unless otherwise stated.**

**\*\*\*\* Advance Notice. 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>. January 1999 White Water C.C. Site, Stockton-on-Tees, Co. Durham. Marshals Pauline & Neil Rogers. Full details next month**

**\*\*\*\* Advance notice. 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>. February. Grouse & Claret, Rowsley, Nr. Matlock, Derbyshire. Full details next month.**

**6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>. November (2 nights). Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent.**

**Emergency Tele. No. on site marshal's mobile. 0467 398 393.**

**Rally Marshals: Dorothy & Baz Wellard.**

**Site Fee: £5 for two nights. Toilets: Yes. Electricity NO. (except for wheelchair charging). Rally Fee: £1.50.**

**Concession rate into exhibition for both Sat. & Sun. £6.30 per adult. (children £5.50).**

**Booking slip to: Dorothy & Baz Wellard, 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants. PO16 7UF.**

**Home Tel. No. 0129 231 259. Cheques payable to: Mrs. D.A. Wellard.**

**Attractions. Be an honorary Man, or Maid of Kent for the weekend! Rally on hardstanding giving access to the Historic Dockyard exhibition covering 8 major attractions over 80 acres. Also in the locality is Britain's premier Napoleonic Fortress - Fort Amherst and also the award winning museum of the Royal Engineers. Shopping in Chatham in 1 mile.**

**An evening meal has been arranged provided we have a minimum of 30.**

**Fresh fish cooked in Kent Ale batter with chipped potatoes followed by tea or coffee**

**@£5.00 per person. Alternatively a meat dish or vegetarian can be arranged.**

**Please indicate which you prefer on the rally slip.**

**Directions: From Junct. 3 of the M2 or Junct. 6 of the M20 take A229: A230 & A231 following the brown tourist (anchor) signs through Chatham to the site.**

**At site pass the coach park and turn left into the main arena.**

***Many thanks to Gill Hopkins & Margo & Colin Lumb for taking on the Hollies rally.***

**10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>. December (3 nights). The Hollies, Little Budworth, Nr. Chester.**

**Site Tel. No. 01829 760 414 (Emergencies only).**

**Rally Marshals: Gill Hopkins & Margo & Colin Lumb.**

**Site Fee: £3.00 per night. Electricity: £2.00 per night. (20 available, possibly more**

**but book early!). Rally Fee: £2.50. (We have to pay for heating the room this year!).**

**Booking slips to: Mrs. Gill Hopkins, 46 Elizabeth Crescent, Queens Park, Chester. CH4 7AZ.**

**Tel. No. 01244 675 180. Cheques payable to M.G. Hopkins.**

**N.B. There are limited toilet & shower facilities at this site**

**Attractions.** We have the use of a heated clubroom, well stocked farm shop with specialities, vegetables, fruit, provisions & garden centre. Christmas trees for sale! Herb garden/pub 600yds, other pubs within 2 miles. Chester 12 miles, Tarporley 4 miles, Little Budworth 2 ½ miles.

**COACH TRIP TO CHESTER** Saturday £3.00 per person (If sufficient people interested). Please send money with booking slip.

Also possible Ramble and /or Birdwatch Friday -please indicate on slip if interested in either.

**Directions:** On A49, site on left 1 ¼ mile South of A456 and ½ mile before A54. Site at rear of Hollies Garden Centre. (GR 117/583679).

31<sup>st</sup> December-2<sup>nd</sup> January Hidden Valley, Devon. Fully booked.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND RALLY APPLICATIONS TO MARSHALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT. DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE A SAE IF YOU REQUIRE CONFIRMATION OF YOUR ACCEPTANCE.**

\*\*\*\*\*Before booking rallies on rally fields attached to caravan sites please contact me for some important information about such sites.

Rallies for next year, 1999, are now being planned we have 26 already pencilled in. If you are interested in running a rally then please think ahead as I will be preparing a provisional rally list for inclusion in the January 1999 Newsletter and information will be required by the end of November for inclusion in this list. As usual rallies can still be arranged after this date but they will not feature in the list. Good advance publicity is essential for a successful rally. Please remember to check the availability of dates with me BEFORE booking with a site.

New or possible rally marshals should contact me, or the area assistants, for further information or advice on running rallies. It can be fun and a very fulfilling experience.

Bookings are now being made for the year 2000. If you wish to run a rally on a specific date please think about booking early.

Please note that ALL information concerning rallies, dates, booking of sites 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.  
Bob Brindle ( 01 777 711 588 ) Retford, Notts.

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: .....

***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!**

Needless to say, this device can **only** enable you to reverse polarity and will not deal with the problems of either earth fault or neutral fault which I have often found in France. The only cure is to try other hook-up points until you find one which is OK (they can usually be found).

I have also made a third short lead with the 'socket' half of a German connector and a standard British 13 amp 3-pin plug so that I can plug into my hook-up line from the mains at home. I have marked the inside faces of the German connector components with white paint spots so that I can connect correctly with the pins of the 13 amp plug.

*Ron Lear*

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## MAINS ELECTRICITY (AGAIN)

I was interested to read this article in Newsletter 119 as I was employed as a field engineer in electricity supply for over 38 years. Provided the van is correctly wired and occasionally tested and the site supply conforms to European standards, the weak link in the chain of camper electrics is the lead and plugs. As stated by *Albert Brown*, a neon tester is not reliable used in a van as it **cannot** confirm continuity. If a low wattage filament lamp is used instead of a 'neon', it will cause both the van and site RCD's to trip out!

I overcame this problem by checking both the lead and the polarity (when felt necessary) before plugging in the van, by using an adapter consisting of a 'blue' EEC plug and a 13 amp socket connected by a short piece of 2.5 mm flex. Plug a 'three neon tester plug' into the socket and plug the adapter into the 'van end' of the cable. Connecting the site supply should then give a reliable indication:- (Live to neutral 'on' ---- live to earth 'on' ---- neutral to earth 'off' and all is well).

Re *Jim Sykes*' problem, without having the 'testers' concerned to hand, I can only say that all three lights 'on' indicates an open circuit in the earth connections somewhere. The resistors used in various testers can range from 500,000 ohms to 50,000 ohms; if *Jim's* was at the 'low end' and his friend's at the 'high end' (or had only two neons), and depending on the weather (wet/dry), and time of day (dark/light) and assuming loss of earth connection, this MIGHT explain the results. Using his tester on the end of the lead

without the van (with an adapter as above) should have indicated the cause more clearly.

Leads and plugs badly fitted or seriously neglected have figured in all the serious electrical accidents I have come across (only a few I am glad to say, but one is one too many). Cut off plugs where lead is worn and refit. There should be no difficulty in getting the connections right. Proper tools and neat work ease the problem, but there is no substitute for leaving the 'tops' off until you have got your partner to check your work. If in doubt get a professional to do the work. Careful inspection and regular checking (in addition to annual professional tests) should ensure you do not appear in the accident statistics.

Earth cores and connections only pass current when there is a problem, consequently poor connections due to dirt, corrosion and neglect can go unnoticed. Everything still works, even the van RCD trips properly on its test button, but **CANNOT** trip if an earth fault (on wiring, fridge, TV, battery charger etc.) develops and there is no earth path. The trip then only operates when something (or someone!) completes the path between van metalwork and the ground. If this worries you, a simple metal pin (a large metal tent peg) pushed into the soil with a wire to the chassis would serve - but this is yet another thing to remember. I got the fridge working off both mains and gas together this year - not a good idea! In consequence of which I have now made and fitted comprehensive alarm systems to warn of 'gas on and mains on', 'gas on and 12 volts on' (fridge) and 'switch-on vehicle ignition with mains lead still connected', I now think that this is going a bit too far.

#### *John Parker*

No doubt our Tiggers would like the details of *John's* alarm system for incorporation into one of their information sheets. Warnings are always a useful thing to have. But I have heard about the 'professional' electricians who have mis-wired plugs before now. It seems so simple, "Brown is hot, Blue is not, Green and Yellow earths the lot!" is a phrase I learned a long time ago.

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## Vanishing Currency

I read with interest the advice given by *Janet Sutterby* regarding the vanishing FF200.00 note, 'large and brownish', being replaced by the 'Disney' FF100.00 as valid currency. As I had saved a 200 franc note purchased at a ferry port, sans commission, last September, I thought it was redeemable. Alas, no, the 'Black Horse' would not accept it as a safe bet, saying that it was taken out of circulation in January 98. I could however (maybe) change it at a French bank on my next trip to Cherbourg (possibly) before July! On tour, I offered it back to the same Ferry Exchange in the West Country. Their refusal was compounded by Mr. Cook upstairs, in the same offices. Notwithstanding its drawn value of £20.00, more or less, I then challenged the 'Black Horse' again at a different stable. It was now redeemed politely and I gratefully accepted £20.00, less than more, with the Midas touch to support my resistance to the threat from EMU in my thoughts.

No doubt the new £2.00 coins are also a little francophile in appearance, and not dissimilar to the ECU coin. This makes one aware of the need to check tenable foreign currency for face value to avoid the 'decoupage' syndrome.

*Roger Yeatman*

I know the adage about changing horses in mid stream but changing notes at horses?

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## Towing

In last month's Newsletter I read with trepidation the worries of fitting a towbar to a Trident. Not having a care in the world, I have had a towbar fitted to my '97 version and find that it tows my twenty-five foot long by eight foot wide microlite trailer far better than the car! P Lee of Stockport fitted the bar and did not turn a hair when I asked them to fit it. They used a standard Witter bar. No doubt one day I will find that I am driving a pick up truck on arrival at the airfield leaving the local constabulary the task of deciding why anyone would want an aircraft trailer with double bed fitted!

*David Titterton*

I must confess to a smile crossing my face when I read the last couple of lines - particularly when I read *David's* surname to go with it!

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## Payloads and G.V.W.

As a Clubman owner I was rather concerned about the weight of my van after reading *Barry Loveland's* article in the July Newsletter. The two heaviest items that I carry are my wife and my bicycle and I began to wonder if I might have to choose which to leave at home on my next trip! The bicycle is lightest but unfortunately it cannot cook!! However, having now weighed my van on a weighbridge and every item that I carry, that predicament will not arise. The weighbridge weight included half a tank of fuel, one 4.5kg gas cylinder, Fiamma awning and no water. Adjusting this figure to allow for 90% fuel, two 7kg gas cylinders, no awning and adding 75kg for driver gave an unladen weight of 2410kgs which compares with the A-S figure of 2411 kgs. The weight of all items carried in the most extreme case, i.e. when we go off for several weeks, including passenger, tent, bicycle, top box, Fiamma awning, maximum clothes and food, and half a tank of water came to 396kgs which gives a gross vehicle weight of 2806kgs. The VIN plate on my Clubman gives the GVW as 2890kgs, so I have space capacity of 84kgs which now makes me feel a little happier.

When comparing my weights with *Barry's*, my Clubman is only a 2 berth so I do not have the added weight of the overhead bed, and I do not have a tow bar or swivel seat. Also *Barry* included a lot of fishing gear and clothes for children. All of these items on *Barry's* list came to 147kgs.

*John Barrett*

I know 'they' have brought out electric bicycles so perhaps the next version will be able to cook too!

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## *Chairman's Chat*

Home at last! This last week or so *Joan and Ray Young, Betty and myself* have been dashing here there and everywhere. That's how it feels to us all. We have covered just short of 700 miles

attending various meetings. Our first meeting was at Wicksteed Park in Kettering to arrange for next year's Annual Dinner, AGM and Spring Holiday Rally with a few new innovations, more of that at a later date. Next came Normanton-on-Trent for the Constitution sub-committee; as before more information later. The weather while we at Normanton was vile with lashing rain making all our usual tasks around and about the van miserable. I find it a little difficult to smile with cold water trickling through the best of waterproofs and down my back. Ugh! Why do we do these things when we can be at home in comfort? Our farthest destination and last meeting found us at Banham in Norfolk, not too far from Norwich, which pleased *Barbara and Ray Whiley* as they were close to home. We were there for ACCEO's (or to give its full title



the Association of Caravanning and Camping Exempted Organisations) AGM in which we had a great interest. If a proposal for a per capita charge was to be implemented the Club would have had to reconsider its membership of that body. We were not alone in having concerns on this issue. At the meeting we were able to put our point of view and found many friends who shared our concerns. I am pleased to say that this proposal was roundly defeated. The circumstances which led to the proposal were because of a shortage of finance! This still exists and must be addressed by all the member clubs. One of the very small clubs, a Christian fellowship group, put their beliefs into practice by making a donation to ACCEO, as their need was greater than that of the fellowship. An example to us all. The committee of ACCEO is a very dedicated group of fellow travellers who have rightly pointed out the need for member clubs to publicise the existence of the association. Also to encourage individual membership at an annual fee of £2.50 as a means of raising finance. When we have more details we will pass them on for your consideration. There are some useful discounts available e.g. van and content insurance which is reputed to be a very good deal with General Accident.

The Club already benefits from purchasing our Public Liability Insurance with ACCEO, which has saved us many hundreds of pounds each year. *Ray Young* has recently investigated the cost of this same insurance, should we require to find our own

one day, and the results are truly a revelation. Thanks *Ray* for your excellent work and to *Joan* his unpaid assistant. Now where have I heard that before?

If only a small number of the stories I here about the governments proposals for the new exemption certificate are true then we shall need all of the assistance we can get from ACCEO and its member clubs. This may well be the moment when the anti-caravan lobby may be able to achieve some of their goals at our expense. I am not being alarmist for there are some very powerful bodies pushing hard for the withdrawal of exemption certificates which permit us to use a piece of land for a rally of up to five days without the need to apply to the local council for permission. Remember, without the certificate we would only be allowed to meet on a recognised camping/caravan sites which would make us entirely dependent on site owners! I for one cherish the freedom that is possible with our certificate. We will all have to wait for the publication of the white paper and then make an informed decision on the proposals.

Change of subject. Recently one of our members who had some problems with the door on his new coachbuilt van was asked to take the vehicle to Cheltenham Laminates, the company who manufacture the fibre glass monocoque body shell for A-S. He was so impressed by the high standard of workmanship that he contacted A-S and myself to point out that we users don't give these craftsmen a second thought unless we have a problem. He is absolutely correct. We have taken the quality, design and strength of the body for granted because it is so good and gives very few problems in use. *Betty and I* have always extolled the virtues of this construction by explaining the simple fact that there are no seams to open up and cause problems with leaks, a major point when purchasing a vehicle. We are also impressed by the strength of the glass fibre. We were out one winter's afternoon with our *Talisman* when down came a very heavy and unexpected snowfall which rapidly brought all traffic to a virtual halt. To shorten the story we were hit twice by two different cars with some force on the rear nearside wheel arch and corner. When we saw the extensive damage to one of the cars we feared the worst! But on examination the damage to our *Talisman* was truly insignificant, considering the force of the impact. *Betty* really caught the attention of the Datsun

driver by impressing on him the price of a new van in that somewhat irate and forceful manner she has when upset! Later we heard the badly damaged Datsun was written off whilst the bill for our damage was less than £400.00 thanks to the makers of our van.

The Club members who visited the York show saw at first hand why we insist on the 20ft./6m rule. One of caravans belonging to the cleaning contractors was totally destroyed by fire. Thankfully no one was hurt and, thanks to a change of wind direction during the night, damage was restricted to a storage tent and a neighbouring caravan otherwise it would have been a very different tale.

I read the item in last month's newsletter on the Hunstanton rally and noted the remark about dogs and 'the notable member who should lead by example'. Mea Culpa! It was me, and I shan't make any excuses.

By now you have had enough of me, so I'll wish safe journeying and give us all a smile.

*Andrew Entwistle*

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### WANTED

Rac'N'Roll Motorcycle carrier, will pay cash or exchange for either 'NR' motor chalet drive away awning or Bickerton (Dahon) folding cycle with carry bag. Tel: Don Thompson on 01634 233 362 or write to Roseveare, 16 Tanglewood Close, Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 0PH.

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### FOR SALE



"Arabella" is looking for a new home! A-S Legend GL on Ford Transit base. Dec. '89 'F' reg. Excellent clean condition, 24,000 miles only from new. Two owners, non-smokers. Brand new set of tyres, new exhaust system fitted, tax & MOT. Full A-S specification, mains electric, H&C water system, gas hob/oven, shower room, cassette toilet, ducted heating etc.

Stratus TV aerial. Bargain £11,250.00. Tel: Dorothy & Simon

Ekins on 0190 476 4670 or write to 22  
Ploughmans Lane, Haxby, York, YO32  
2WR.

Thanks for the donation.

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Fiamma Top box, second size. One  
year old in good condition. £145.00 ono.  
Cost new £300.00. Also leisure battery. £25.00. Tel: Sue or  
Stuart Christie on 0167 386 2274 or write to 36 Ryland Road,  
Welton, Lincoln, LN2 3LU.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Camping Gaz cylinders. £25.00. Silver Screen for Talbot.  
£35.00. Purpose built bicycle rack, fits to rear axle of Talbot.  
£85.00. Tel: Clare Somerville on 0193 581 3310 or write to  
Tabard Cottage, South Street, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 3LX.

#####

To fit Duetto/Flair/Omega, new H/D steel wrap around,  
stepped rear bumper complete with dismountable Witter 2/3 bike  
rack and trailer towing facility. Cost £295.00. Sacrifice at  
£100.00, buyer collects. Also Transit external Silver Screens, new  
in bag. Cost £110.00, sell £50.00 ono. Duetto clutch pedal lock,  
£10.00 Tel: Dennis Peel on 0190 324 2132 or write to 15  
Parklands Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 4NG.

#####

Rambler 2.0P March 90 (G), usual options plus second  
battery, waste tank, Omnistor awning, Silver Screen. Only two  
owners from new. Non-smokers, no pets. Full service history, six  
months tax and MOT. 86,000 careful miles, therefore  
£10,000.00, no offers. Tel: Margaret or Mike Ashfield on 0186  
537 5196 or write to 20 Chorefields, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 1SX.  
Reason for sale, we've bought a Talisman.

#####



Jawa 49cc Moped. 'J' reg (Dec 91). Single speed auto gearbox. Metallic blue. New MOT. Mint condition, recorded mileage only 124! Also purpose built bike trailer, 18 months old. Lighting, spare wheel/cover, securing straps and bike cover. The lot at £595.00. Omnistor Top Box. approx 42" x 33" x 14". Gas strut assisted top. Undrilled and as new. Complete with set of securing straps. £100.00. Tel: Alan chennells on 0162 866 4132 or 0175 352 0417 or write to "Copper Beech", 9 Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 0PQ.

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Amethyst, Ford 2.5 diesel automatic, 1996, 14,000 miles, PAS, RDS radio/cassette, Thatcham alarm/immobiliser, split battery charger, wind deflectors, swivel seat, heated seats and lumbar support, overcab bed, heating with piezo ignition, cooling fan on fridge, 3.5m Fiamma awning, Silver Screens, electric step, service history. £28,500.00 ovno. Tel: Mary or Rick Lockyer on 0189 590 5600 or write to 12 Sylvana Close, Hillingdon, Middlesex. UB10 0BH.

#####

VW Trooper N reg 1996, 2 litre petrol engine, 10,100 miles, immobiliser and alarm fitted, heating system, four berth, non smokers, no pets, always garaged from new. Omnistor awning fitted. As new, must be seen. Vag service history. £18,500.00 ono. Tel: Jim Ireson on 0181 863 6743 or write to 8 Rugby Close, Harrow, Middlesex. HA1 1UB.

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Internal Silver Screen for facelift Harmony/Symphony. £35.00. External Silver Screen for VW T4 (Clubman). £50.00. Available end of October. Telephone Alan Whittaker on 0116 270 8318 or write to 9 Sickleholm Drive, Leicester, LE5 5TS.

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

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