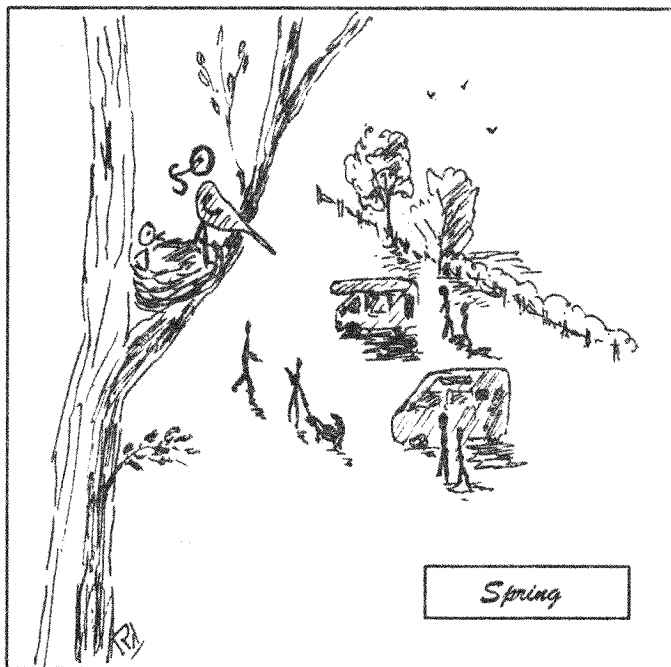




AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB

# Newsletter



No. 151

April 2001

*From the Editor*

## **Foot and Mouth**

COMPARED WITH THE ANGUISH of the farming and rural communities, not to mention the losses to those depending on tourism for their livelihood, the Club's problems resulting from Foot and Mouth Disease are small scale. Nevertheless they are serious enough. The closure of sites has meant the cancellation of rallies and a question mark hanging over others until the outbreak recedes. One result you will see from this issue's rally supplement - no rallies are being advertised this month. The position on the AGM Rally is given below and that for other rallies in April appears on page 3.

If your *ASOC Newsletter* reaches you a little later this month it's because the copy was sent to the printer late. We felt it important to let members know as soon as possible what the Committee had been able to decide about rallies, especially the AGM rally, at their meeting on 17 March. It couldn't meet at its usual venue because the Caravan Club's Moreton-in-Marsh site, like all their other sites, was closed because of FMD. Instead the meeting had to be transferred to a central London. If the Newsletter seems more disjointed than usual, I ask your understanding. These first two pages are being written on the train back to Yorkshire after the meeting and it won't be possible to do the usual 'tidying up' job before sending them off to our long-suffering printer.

When, as it must be eventually, Foot and Mouth is overcome, the many friends who provide resting-places for our rallies on their sites and farms will be in great need of all the support we can give them as they begin the long job of rebuilding their lives and communities. In the meantime we can only watch and wait patiently, making sure no careless intrusions by us and our vans are the cause of prolonging the outbreak, and perhaps writing to any we know well to express our sympathy and support.

*Ian Day*

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### **Banham AGM goes ahead**

THE AGM RALLY at Banham Zoo, Norfolk, from 20 to 22 April will go ahead as planned, the Committee decided at its meeting on 17 March. After taking advice from the Department of the Environment, Trade and

the Regions (DETR) and receiving assurances from the owners of Banham that they expected their site to be open, the Committee felt it was safe to continue.

However, when the Committee met, Foot and Mouth Disease cases were still being reported and it seemed that the outbreak might not have reached its peak. Despite the assurances, it was possible that the Banham site might become unavailable if the disease spread to Norfolk. For that reason a small sub-committee made up of Ray Whiley, the Club Chairman, Neil Rogers, Vice-Chairman and Rally co-ordinator, and Pam Davies, Club Secretary, was set up with powers to consult and take any necessary decisions if the Banham site was closed or vehicle movement restrictions were imposed.

Before setting off to the AGM rally, everyone booked into it is asked to telephone one of the numbers below to ensure that the rally is being held. The nature of the disease means that closure and restriction orders are imposed suddenly. *For that reason do not telephone until just before you are setting off.* The Banham site number should only be used in the unlikely event that you are unable to get through to Ray or Nora on either of their numbers. Recorded messages will tell you what is happening if they can't speak to you themselves.

**NUMBERS TO RING**

Ray Whiley: Home - 016 0345 2593

Mobile - 0789 985 3988

Nora Venables: Home - 019 0233 2105

Mobile - 0770 363 8109

**DO NOT SET OFF WITHOUT PHONING**

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**Other rallies in April**

**ANYONE BOOKED IN** to other rallies in April, including the follow-on rally to the AGM at Banham, should telephone the rally marshals to check the position before they set off.

It is hope that the position will improve sufficiently to allow the rally programme to be resumed in May.

## Chairman's Chat



### How many's a quorum?

LAST YEAR, the Annual General Meeting of one of the two largest caravanning clubs was attended by 172 members - just under 0.06 per cent of the total membership. If the same percentage of ASOC members attended our AGM, there would be just two people in the room.

I wonder who they would be?

At present our Constitution requires a quorum (the minimum number present) of 120 members - approximately 4 per cent. With the ever-increasing cost of petrol and diesel, and of room hire (one venue which was considered would have charged some £7,000, an extra £60 for each motorhome at the rally) your Committee feels that this is too high, and will recommend to the AGM that the quorum be reduced to 40.

This does not mean that fewer members will make decisions for the Club, since there will be no attempt to limit the number who can attend. However, this reduction, together with a procedure for overcoming problems if even this lower quorum is not achieved, will ensure that the Club can continue.

Remember, at present the only meeting which could proceed with fewer than 120 members present would be one to wind up the Club.

Please think carefully about this and the other recommended amendments to the Constitution and use your vote at the AGM to decide the future. For any amendment to be carried, a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting is required.

*Ray Whiley*

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## Peugeot investigate Contrans

THIS ITEM OF INTERNAL INFORMATION between Derek Booker, Customer Support Manager of Peugeot and Charles Trevelyan of Auto-Sleepers has been passed to us for publication:

'A small but significant number of Auto-Sleeper owners have reported the deterioration or failure of Continental Contrans 195/70 tyres fitted to

Peugeot Boxer-based vehicles. Peugeot has looked into the matter and has established that the affected tyres seen so far were fitted as original equipment on vehicles typically of 1996 or 1997 registration.

'The deterioration has taken the form of cracking between the tread and the side wall, often on the inner part of the tyre (*i.e.* only visible from beneath the vehicle). In cases of complete failure, the tread has detached from the carcass.

'The matter is under investigation by both Continental Tyre Group Ltd and Peugeot Motor Co. PLC, the latter having presented details to its parent company in France following its attention being brought to the issue by Auto-Sleepers Ltd.'

*This confirmation that Peugeot are taking the tyre problem seriously will be welcomed by members. We know our President is actively pursuing the failures members have notified, and we have passed to him copies of all correspondence we have received on the subject - Ed.*

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### ***From the Factory***

## **Keeping it clean**

ALL VEHICLES SHOULD BE WASHED at regular intervals using a recognised cleaner like Autosmart Duet Car Wash and Shampoo. Dilute the fluid with up to 50 parts of water in a bucket and wash as with a normal shampoo. It is best to use a sponge and start at the bottom. Afterwards rinse with clean cold water, using a low pressure hose, then dry with a chamois. If a pressure hose is used, damage can be done to the graphics and tapes should the water be too hot or the nozzle of the pressure gun too close to the bodywork. Be aware that if the wrong detergent is used in a pressure washer, damage can be caused to tapes, graphics and even plastics in such things as bumpers and ABS panels.

For paintwork base vehicles: In addition to washing, the paintwork should be treated occasionally with a good quality wax body polish. There are many kinds on the market, but one that removes light traffic film and oxidation is the better option because some polishes just remove the surface dirt from the paintwork, give very little protection against the elements and the paintwork will start to fade. Better quality polish cuts into the paintwork to give a protective surface and helps stop

the elements fading the paintwork. Make sure any chips are touched in immediately as rust spots will appear very quickly if they aren't treated.

For minor scuffs on the paintwork surface polishing doesn't remove can be lightly flattened with a 200 grit paper, with water, followed with a fine cutting compound like 3M Fast Cut Compound Perfect IT. Buffing with a soft cloth and an application of wax polish will bring back the gloss and protect the paintwork.

Glassfibre bodywork's fading or discolouration of the gel coat is a natural ageing process caused by ultraviolet light. To restore bodywork to its original colour and lustre, use a mild abrasive to remove a thin layer of discoloured surface. Since discolouration develops gradually, doing this shouldn't be necessary more than once every three years. Frequent use of abrasive materials can reduce the thickness of the gel coat to a potentially harmful extent. Depending on the severity of the problem use either Farecla Caravan Pride Cleaner or, in extreme cases, Farecla Caravan Pride Rubbing Compound.

Scratches can be removed from both gel coat and painted surfaces. The method depends on the depth of the scratch, as care has to be taken to avoid penetrating the paint or gel coat. Very fine hairline scratches can be removed by rubbing across the line of the scratch with rubbing compound. Slightly deeper scratches should be lightly wet sanded first, using very fine (1200 grit or finer) abrasive paper, after which rubbing compound will remove the flattening marks created by the abrasive paper. For deeper gouge-type scratches where the paint or gel coat has been penetrated, you should first seek the advice of your supplying Auto- Sleeper dealer, or, alternatively, give us a call.

After a short time plastic bumpers, ABS panels and door mirrors can start to look stained due to dirt getting into the grain. A product easy to find and use is Back to Black. Don't be alarmed by the name - it won't turn your grey bumpers black, but restore them to their original look. Wash the plastics to remove dirt and let them to dry thoroughly before you apply Back to Black, available from Halfords and other retail outlets.

If you have problems finding products, look in Yellow Pages under Motor Factors. They have counter service and supply body shops with paints, polishes and anything to do with car body supplies.

**Brian Yeates, Paintshop Manager**

*Thanks, Brian, for clearing the haze from the subject - Ed.*

## ***From the President***

### **Birmingham success**

WE HAD A REALLY EXCELLENT show at the NEC Boat and Caravan Show, exceeding even our own targets that we had felt were somewhat optimistic. This year we had gone to great lengths to enhance the appearance of our stand, which certainly looked more modern and welcoming. For the first time we had enquiry desks for ASOC and for Auto-Sleeper Insurance - Shield Direct. There were fifteen vehicles on the stand and the display image was further enhanced by Peugeot cycles and motor scooters.

The Owners' Club presence was much appreciated by members of our staff and visitors. When I was there it was pleasing to see how involved the Club representatives were, particularly in helping answer customers' queries. A heartfelt thanks to all those who volunteered for an arduous task.

We launched our new Palermo at the show. It was extremely well received, with the fixed rear bed having great appeal. We also featured the Symbol fitted with a Spinflo Caprice 2020 four-burner hob, grill and oven in place of the original Integ grill, and that, too, met with wide approval. The latest Auto-Sleeper Clothing Collection was also on display and met with much interest.

It was, as always, heartening to meet so many Club members on the Stand. You are always more than welcome, if not only for just a cup of coffee.

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### **Oops!**

THERE WAS AN ERROR for which I believe we were responsible in the March issue of *ASOC Newsletter*. We had transposed certain of the figures in the table on page 6. The corrected table is printed on page 8. Our thanks and congratulations to the many members who contacted the Editor pointing out the error - it is very encouraging to know how many of you had taken this most important subject to heart and read it in such detail.

<b>Propane</b>	<b>Calorific Value</b>	<b>Butane</b>
2500btu	(how much umph per cubic foot)	3200btu
37mbars	<b>Working Pressure</b>	28mbars
-42°C	<b>Boiling Point</b>	0°C
10ff <sup>3</sup>	<b>Offtake</b>	5ff <sup>3</sup>
	(how much gas per hr from a 4.5 or 3.9kg cylinder)	

Do keep the correspondence flowing. If there are any other specific subjects you would like to see dealt with in *ASOC Newsletter*, we will be pleased to try to supply articles similar to Alan Curry's on gas and this month's by Brian Yeates on caring for bodywork

**Charles Trevelyan**

*'How do (or don't) you ... ?' is always a good question. Here's your chance to ask it and have it answered by the experts - Ed.*

### **Notes and Queries**

#### **High-top space-stretchers**

MY DAYTIME JOB involves ensuring there are sufficient baked beans (amongst other things) on the shelves of our shops to 'satisfy customer demand' which means making the best use of the cubic shelf space available. This science or black art, depending on which side of the checkout you are, comes in handy when seeking out all the nooks and crannies in a high-top for storage. Where do you put the water kit, mains leads and levelling blocks, particularly in our 'T' reg. Harmony? I sympathise with D. Cadman [Feb.] as we, too, had considered buying a free-standing awning - but where would we store it when not in use?

My wife often catches me staring wistfully around the van eyeing up 'spacial opportunities', but I'm loath to start cutting, drilling or generally hacking the interior about as this would do nothing for the resale. However, I have put a galley rail around the outer edge of the top of the wardrobe and, as TV is barred in our van, this has become 'the library'. The nearside rear seat locker now has a false floor with tools underneath and one of those small suitcases on wheels above that now slides in and out with the greatest of ease.

For some time I've had my eye on the narrow space between the near-

rear door and the wooden panel at the back of the shower compartment, believing that one of those hanging suit covers would hold some changes of clothing. However, I see that in one of the monthly motor-caravan magazines a reader has recently submitted an idea that involves cutting a hole in the rearmost wooden panel at the back of the washroom, which has behind it a relatively large area that would store all the bits and pieces. I'm not brave enough to follow suit but would be happy to buy such a panel from Auto-Sleepers, pre-cut and nicely finished, leaving the uncut original to be put back in place for resale. In a small high-top this would surely be 'optimum cubic utilisation', as we say in the trade.

I hope this gets a response from Auto-Sleepers.

**Terry Hammond**

*Some people, like Terry, clearly sit and think, while others of us just sit. He'll get some of us thinking now. A copy of his letter has gone to Auto-Sleepers who are looking at the technical aspects and will reply, although I suspect they would want to see a substantial demand before putting ready-machined substitute panels on the market - Ed.*

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### **Clubman condensation worry**

JIM CONNACHAN [March issue] expresses concern about condensation in his Clubman. For a short time we fitted a West of England cloth type material in the Luton roof of certain Clubmans, believing it would give a cosy and homely feel to the area. However the cloth headlining did not act as a thermal barrier to heat and condensation. On very cold wintry days, moist warm air came into contact with the inner face's insulation of the Luton roof, resulting in condensation which sometimes marked the headlining. We changed without delay to a leathercloth headlining that acts as a very effective thermal barrier and prevents condensation forming. Concurrently we also fitted a mushroom roof vent in the forward part of the Luton which allows the area over the leathercloth and inner face to breathe, further reducing the chance of condensation forming.

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### **Flood disaster mark two**

KINGSLEY SQUIRE [also March issue] made mention of problems we

had sealing the infil door panel to the door frame of the Thetford external storage access door - an option on our sandwich construction models. Our initial problems with that sealing allowed water to enter the vehicles' interiors. Since changing the manufacturing method from hand to machine-routing we have had no further problems.

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### **Side storage for Talisman**

DENIS AND WENDY CLARKE [March] asked whether a side storage locker was available - I imagine on the lines of that fitted to the Gatcombe. This has been passed to Stephen Small, our Design Manager, and he is currently investigating the possibility of such a locker being made avail- able for the Talisman and the Executive. Apart from Beeny Boxes mentioned below, I cannot offer a ready solution.

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### **Beeny Boxes answer**

BEENY BITZ ceased trading about two years ago and handed over the concession for their exterior underfloor locker doors to Coachcraft and Leisure - Managing Director, Paul Stimpson. Since taking the concession over, they have carried out a number of first class conversions in fitting these underfloor lockers and I would recommend them most strongly. They are also a very competent motorhome repair centre, so any Club member in the Truro area with problems will find them helpful. Their phone number is: 0120 9822 177.

**Charles Trevelyan**

*Our thanks to the very many members who took the trouble to phone, write or e-mail Caravan and Leisure's details to me. Their address is: Unit 1, Radnor Industrial Park, Scorrier, Redruth, TR16 5EQ. Unfortunately there isn't room to list all those who got in touch, but differing opinions about the boxes' usefulness came from John Eaton, Keith and Lorraine Isles, and Sean Hollands. John says, 'From the photos, it seemed to me that for that sort of money you weren't getting a lot of storage space.' On the other hand, Keith and Lorraine say, 'They made a great job of fitting sliding drawers either side', and Sean speaks highly of those in his van, although rainwater occasionally gets into the off-side one on the move and when parked. - Ed.*

## **APRIL 2001** **Rally Supplement**

Due to the outbreak of "Foot & Mouth" it has been decided by your Committee that rallies will not be advertised until the situation affecting caravanning/motorcaravanning is clarified by the DETR.

As you may be aware the major club sites have been closed until further notice.

If the situation improves then the June rallies will be advertised in the May Newsletter. This will give members at least one month to apply for these rallies.

Those who hope to attend rallies in April including the A.G.M. will be informed if these have to be cancelled.

Members have approached me about the possibility of an article explaining the situation with V.A.T.

### **The "Ogre" of V.A.T.**

The Club had no choice when it came to registering for V.A.T. Advice and guidance was taken at the highest level and the decision was not taken lightly. Failure to register would have caused many more problems than it has created.

I am well aware that the very name V.A.T. brings to mind all sorts of bad experiences, usually heard of in anecdotal form from friends. However from the point of view of running rallies there is very little change from what has been good practice in the Club since rallies first began.

When running a rally receipts are required by the Treasurer for purchases involved in the rally whether these are coffee, tea & biscuits, raffle prizes or any other items. Receipts are required for items under £100 total with the shop name, date & V.A.T. number printed on them. This is usually no problem in most supermarkets if you ask at the till before the receipt is printed. If there is a problem then a visit to the customer "Help" desk will usually solve it. To assist the Treasurer put the rally purchases through the checkout first and obtain a separate receipt. This rids the Treasurer of the task of identifying rally purchases among your weekly shopping.

The only way in which V.A.T. will affect the planning of rallies is in connection with site and rally fees.

**Site Fees.** The marshals will need to check whether the site, commercial or Green Field rally field, is V.A.T. registered. If it is then the site fees should include V.A.T. This should be shown in the rally information in the Newsletter. The site will give you a *proper* V.A.T. receipt for the site fee paid, if you request one. The site is bound by law to provide a proper V.A.T. receipt if requested.

If the site, commercial or Green Field, is *not* registered with V.A.T. then the marshal must add 17.5% to the quoted site fee. The site fee + V.A.T. is the site fee to be advertised in the Newsletter. The V.A.T. added must be returned to the Club Treasurer with the other monies and *not given to the site owner.*

**Rally Fees.** V.A.T. must be added to the rally fees before they are advertised in the Rally Supplement of the Newsletter.

This V.A.T. must then be returned to the Club Treasurer.

If you would like to run a rally but you are apprehensive about V.A.T. then ask either the Rally Co-ordinator or the Treasurer for advice.

*We depend on volunteers within the Club to act as rally marshals. If you know of a suitable site why not think about running a rally. It is not difficult and help is available.*

*It is important that all potential rally dates and venues are checked with me first as, unless they are approved by the Club, no rally can be held.*

*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 at least 3 months before the actual rally.*

*Neil C. Rogers,  
3 Appleby Close,  
Aldbrough St. John,  
Richmond,  
North Yorks,  
DL11 7TT.  
Tel./Fax. No. 01325 374 540  
E-Mail. ncr@nasuwt.net*

Local assistant: Jerry Haxton (01483 223 476) Woking, Surrey.

E & O. E.

Rally : ..... Date: .....

Your name and address(Please PRINT) .....

..... Post code: .....

Phone No.: ..... Van Reg: .....

Membership No. .... Day/Time of arrival .....

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

Name ..... Phone No. ....

**Please complete both sides of the form!**

Rally : ..... Date: .....

Your name and address(Please PRINT) .....

..... Post code: .....

Phone No.: ..... Van Reg: .....

Membership No. .... Day/Time of arrival .....

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Your name and address(Please PRINT) .....

..... Post code: .....

Phone No.: ..... Van Reg: .....

Membership No. .... Day/Time of arrival .....

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

Name ..... Phone No. ....

**Please complete both sides of the form!**

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box Yes  No   
Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Names of Adults.....

Names of Children (including ages).....

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:-

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

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box Yes  No   
Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Names of Adults.....

Names of Children (including ages).....

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, if available:  
Electricity: Yes  No  Saturday night meal if any: Yes  No   
Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If Yes please specify:-

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Electricity: Yes  No  Saturday night meal if any: Yes  No   
Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If Yes please specify:-

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

## **Move to the right**

### **An exclusive report for ASOC Newsletter**

HAVING SUFFERED metres, litres and kilos which few of us over 40 understand, not to mention all the other irritations like straight bananas and round strawberries, we are now in receipt of the latest edict from Brussels:

'EU 24567/97 UK/Rep.Ire. W.e.f 1.4.2010 - All vehicles will be required to drive on the right-hand side of roads in the EU.'

Actually that's just the gist of it - the original document runs to thirty pages.

The Prime Minister, making the announcement in the House, welcomed the requirement, saying, 'This will definitely bring us closer to Europe.' (It is difficult to see just how it *will* bring us closer, except for example when driving from Dover to Brighton when one might perhaps be 20-30 feet nearer.)

William Hague, for the Conservatives, asked if the reason for the change was the fact that several Labour MPs had recently purchased left-hand drive vehicles at half the price right-hand drives were selling for in his constituency.

Several members of 'Old Labour' complained that the requirement would take the Party still further to the right, but Tony Benn said the move would make things easier for foreign truckers and we could do away with all the 'Drive to the left' signs at the dock exits and at Carter Bar on the English/Scottish border.

Tony Blair said he expected our motor industry - supposing we still had one - to build left-hand drive cars only, from 2007. The planning for the changeover would be in the hands of his deputy, John Prescott. (Our source at Westminster tells us a left-hand drive Jaguar is already on order.)

Mr Prescott told the House no-one should be worried about any inconvenience. He had taken steps to ensure a smooth transition. After consulting our friends in Ireland it had been decided that buses, lorries,

lorries, motorhomes and cars towing caravans would start driving on the right on 21 March 2010, while other cars, tractors, vans, motorcycles and invalid carriages would begin on 28 March 2010.

To avoid confusion, the railways would also change over with the 'up' line becoming the 'down' line and *vice versa*. To enable signalling work to be completed, the entire network would close down from Monday to Thursday for the whole of 2009, unless rebuilding the West Coast Main Line was behind schedule, in which case the programme would be delayed. However, a restricted service would operate from Friday to Sunday each week to allow MPs to visit their constituencies.

The Father of the House, Ted Heath said, 'This is not my idea of a united Europe. As I said to my good friend, Margaret Thatcher, "They must do it *our way*".'

For the CBI, Mr Del Trotter, millionaire Chairman of Trotter's Independent Traders (New York, Paris and Peckham) said 'Lovely Jubbly - Fabrique Belgique!'

**Brian Smith**

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## Upgrade and tyre bands

*MMM MAGAZINE* will sooner or later publish the story of the conversion of my 1988 Legend into a 120 mph (actually governed to 87 mph) 'TDi eater' after fitting a V6 engine conversion and more robust axles, brakes and suspension, not to mention other mods. including an extra fibreglass locker built to match the original A-S lockers.

I have located sources for original specification wall carpet: brown for the bed boxes, wheat for the Luton walls, charcoal for the outside lockers. I have also found rear door hinges and rocker lights with brown surround as fitted in the roof of the cocktail cabinet, at the side of the sink drainer in the old Legend, and on the fridge wall near the step in GL models.

I am appalled at the incidents of rear tyre blow-outs resulting in vans on their sides or having spun around on motorways. The root of this problem seems to be with a particular make of tyre, but nevertheless such incidents are to be avoided at all costs. I am proceeding to fit Tyron

safety bands on at least the rear wheels of my van. These ensure that if a blow-out occurs, even at maximum speed, whether going in a straight line or around a bend, the vehicle remains completely controllable.

**Mark Hart**

*A good deal of thought and work has gone into this upgrade and refurbishment. We look forward to seeing the report when it's published - Ed.*

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### **Pirelli strip-tease**

WE OWN an 'R' registered Executive, bought new and have had a spot of bother with tyres, but not Continentals. Ours are Pirelli L6 195/70 R15s. The saga started when we took our wagon for its 40,000 mile service to Birtwistle's of Northwich, Cheshire, who do an excellent job. When we went back for the vehicle we were told that strands of wire had been noticed coming through the tread of the off-side rear tyre and should be seen to urgently.

As we had already scheduled our time very tightly for the rest of that day and the three or four days following and we also have a car and wouldn't need to use the van, we decided to leave the matter until the MoT was due a week or so later when we would have more time.

However, a couple of days later and at very short notice, we were asked to help out by moving a few bulky items a short distance in the van. We did and on returning home reversed the vehicle on to the drive as usual.

The next morning, the van was seen to be sitting at a 'fun' angle and, yes, the off-side rear tyre was flat - only at the bottom, of course. On taking the wheel off to put the spare on, we found that the deflated tyre had a good few strands of reinforcing wire coming out and back in again through the tread. We took it to our local ATS tyre merchant and arranged for a new one of the same make and tread pattern to be ordered and fitted, with the defective one sent to Pirelli for examination. A few weeks later Pirelli reported back and offered a 100 per cent refund, which we accepted.

Logic told us that if one tyre was defective, the other four needed to be looked at. As we had already thought of having Tyron bands fitted to all the wheels, now was clearly the time to have it done, and at the same

time have all the tyres inspected while they were being taken off and refitted. The safety bands were installed, the tyres were refitted, wheels balanced and given new valves at a cost of £188.10 plus VAT. We think that's good value for the peace of mind we now enjoy, knowing that should we have a blow-out, the van will be more likely to remain driveable and be brought to a stop in a straight line.

*Michael and Joyce Thomas*

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### **Scooter carrier**

I AM ABOUT to take delivery of a Ravenna on the new Ford chassis and am trying to locate a dealer who can supply a carrier for a motor scooter which will attach to a Hope Safe-T-Bar. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

*John Geeson*

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### **Backache in bed**

WE HAVE a 'C' registered VW Auto-Sleeper Hi-top and find that the foam cushions that make up the bed are too firm and we get backache. Has anyone else experienced this problem, and how have they solved it?

*Suzanne Botto*

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### **Knocked napper**

MY WIFE AND I enjoy our two and a half year old Executive. We like the comfort, the leak-proof surroundings and the extensive storage. But we have one gripe. The crockery stored in a high locker is a stretch for my wife to reach and I mark my bald pate on the locker door when I strap the plates in. Have any members plagued with the same problems come up with a solution like a new and better storage location for the crockery?

*Tony Hillier*

*Over to members for comment before we refer these items on to Auto-Sleepers. - Ed.*

## 2001's first rally ode

We went off to Rowsley, the Missus and me,  
The Hicklins were having a rally, you see.  
The Mansfields assisted as Deputy Sheriffs,  
All for the cost of three seven quid tariffs.  
Pieces of cake and bickies all free,  
Photo calls, quizzes and great urns of tea.  
Visits from friends who came for the day -  
Better, by far, than staying away.  
So thanks to you all for making things pleasant  
At the meet you arranged at the Grouse and the Pheasant

*Diana and Keith Rhodes*

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## Cool, clear water

*Readers will recall Michael Mawer's account of his problems when his Duetto pump stopped at the York Show, printed in our November issue, and Eric Jones' comments published in February - Ed.*

I'D LIKE TO THANK Eric Jones for his kindly remarks and am sorry that he misunderstood my letter. We bought our first towing-van in 1961, when Eric would already have been capering about - long may he continue!

That Sprite consisted of the box with four beds, cooker, sink unit and a gas light - no internal electricity and no water tanks. Its endearing feature was that it cost £185, brand-new. We bought a Porta Potti with a tent for it, a waste bucket and a water-carrier.

These days I don't bother with a water filter on site, but I still have a drinking-water carrier of 10 litre capacity. I like my bananas by the pound, so ten litres is about two gallons, weighing about 20 pounds. In summer my old dog and I shift quite a lot of water.

Unfortunately, none of my prescribed medicines includes an RTL micro-chip to give a five-minute warning of impending catastrophe, the nature of which should not need explanation; suffice it to say that 'RTL' means 'Rush to the Loo'. Lack of this chip accounts for my comparatively few

forays from the van.

The cassette loo in the Duetto is flushed by an electric water pump (you shocking sybarites [Lovers of luxury - Ed]) and that's fine when it's on song, but not so hot when it isn't. At my age and state of decay, carting 20lbs of water over the long hauls encountered at York Racecourse and similar places, and then sloshing it down the loo becomes distinctly unfunny. One member has my real thanks for lugging a full container of water from a tap fully 300 yards away - metricate that distance if you must.

I think that, as a major Club, ASOC might well strongly protest to Warners about the paucity of loos and taps. After all, they need not be more than temporary for the show and other summer events, and hooking-up standpipes to underground water pipes is not expensive, while the organisers' income from site fees must be considerable.

*Michael Mawer*

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### **Staying on**

PAM HADLEY, well-known to the many members who have spoken to her, or met her at Club and Company rallies over the years, has decided not to retire from Auto-Sleepers this year and hopes to be there for a few more years yet.

She thanks members for the kindness shown to her and says she has made some good friends amongst us. She looks forward to meeting them and making others at this year's C and C rally.

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### **Dropping fifth gear**

TWO YEARS ago I was able to buy a second-hand 'L' registered Talisman GL, one of the last to be built before the new Boxers became available.

We have had excellent holidays, away-days, etc. in it. However, last year while travelling on a Swiss autobahn, it dropped out of fifth gear on a downhill slope. The approximate mileage then was 33,160. Later in the year during a long weekend in the Midlands, fifth gear

dropped out on several occasions with the mileage then about 35,000. At 35,253 the gearbox failed completely in Dunstable High Street and we had to be rescued with a very professional pickup by the RAC.

Our garage, Brian Martin of Cheshunt, who have specific experience of Peugeot light vans, said they had not seen a gearbox failure at such low mileage. Naturally, a warranty claim was not possible, so it was a matter of just gritting the teeth and paying the £1,771.20 (incl. VAT) bill for a genuine Peugeot exchange gearbox and rebuilt clutch.

The moral of the tale is to *beware* if fifth gear starts dropping out. This is the first time I've had a gearbox failure in over 500,000 miles driving.

*John Cullin*

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### **Wizard wheezes**

**Useful Thermos:** Always carry a large Thermos. I refill mine when washing up breakfast things and use it for drinks *en route* and at lunch time, for hand washing etc. and to fill the hot water bottle on cold nights.

- *Marjorie Thompson*

**Blotting up the fridge:** Line the bottom of the fridge with a paper towel - white side down. It soaks up spills and helps prevent stains.

- *Marjorie Thompson*

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### **Settling down**

WE WOULD LIKE our good friends in ASOC to know we have now sadly 'retired' from motorcaravanning, although we will continue as Club members to keep up-to-date through the Newsletter.

We have bought a static van at Tywyn, near Aberdovey, and hope to spend much of the summer there. There is a nice little caravan site, the Vaenol, adjacent, which is handy for walking to sea and shops, and there is also the lovely scenery and the Tal-Y-Llyn Railway.

We wish you all many years and miles of safe and happy travelling. If you see an old blue Sierra flashing at you, it may be us.

*Don and Beryl Walker*

## Please let us know

IN A CLUB the size of ours, news about members' deaths quite often does not reach the Committee for a considerable time afterwards. It would be appreciated if the Chairman or Secretary could be advised when it is known that a member has died.

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## Wanted

**SENSOR UNIT, CONTROL PANEL GAUGE.** Labcraft water level gauge or complete control panel for pre-1990 Legend or similar, also level sensor unit from fresh water tank of similar vehicle. Phone Mark Hart 0142 332 4565 (North Yorks.).\*

*A version of this appeared incorrectly under 'for sale' instead of 'wanted' in March's ASOC Newsletter. Apologies to Mark for the error - I do know the difference. Honest! - Ed.*

**TRIDENT/VHT (1985-1989)**, must have 2.1 injection engine. Preferably rust-free, low mileage and with full service history. But anything, anywhere considered. Cash waiting for right vehicle. Phone Chris Dumville 0168 456 9920 (Worcs.) and leave a message if necessary.\*

*Chris is looking for a vehicle with a view to joining the Club - Ed.*

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## For sale

**SYMPHONY 2-LITRE PETROL**, 'M' reg., 26,000 miles. FSH (Peugeot), Alarm/immobiliser, RDS radio with additional speakers, new Peugeot battery (Jan. 2001) and part exhaust. One owner, no smokers or pets. Vehicle won 1st prize in 1998 ASOC photo comp. (photo available) and still looks as good. Drives superbly; must be seen: **£14,950**. Phone Derek Wilson 0238 084 5040 (Hants) .\*

**DAHON FOLDING BICYCLES.** Two black Dahon folding bicycles, with carrying cases, in good condition. One with a blue bell, the other pink. **£125** each or **£200** the two. Phone, write or e-mail Peter Bishop (0120 629 8841) Old Post House, East Berg-holt, Colchester, Essex CO7 6TB pee.bee@btinternet.com

**CASA ROYAL CAMPER 4** lightweight free-standing awning to fit VW T4 Talent or Trident-type vehicle. Used one week only. For sale due to change to larger motorhome. **£250**. Phone Wilf Johnson 0161 430 6126 (Stockport).\*

**THETFORD PORTA POTTI 335.** Brand new, still in original wrappings. Cost £66. Sell for **£50**. Phone Kath Wakefield 0178 576 0920 (Stafford)

**TALISMAN 2.5TD INTERCOOLED (TB) 2-4 BERTH.** 'R' reg., March 1998. 20,000 miles, PAS, GT 136 alarm/immobiliser, 3 metre awning, Turbo Vent fan, 2 bike rack, TV aerial/booster. Full service records. Vgc. No smokers, pets or children. **£25,750** ono. Phone Ian Marshall 0148 782 2265 (Camsb.).\*

**TRIDENT 2.4 LITRE DIESEL 2+2 BERTH.** 'N' reg., November 1995, 40,000 miles. Fridge, heater. Taxed until August 2001, MoT until September. Non-smokers, no children or pets. As new and immaculate. RAC or AA inspection invited. **£15,995** ovno. Phone Bob Jowett 0127 478 3640 (W. Yorks.)\*

**SILVER SCREENS.** Diamond Internal Thermal Screens for VW T4: **£35**, Fiamma Sun View sunblind 2.4m: **£30**. Two Silver Screen road wheel covers 16 inch: **£10**. Phone or write John Barrett (0122 586 6846) 18 Broomground, Winsley, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts. BA15 2JT.

**TALBOT EXPRESS EXECUTIVE 2.5 DIESEL TB** Turbo intercooled. 'L' reg., Sept. 1993. 17,500 miles. PAS, Air-ride suspension, alarm/ immobiliser, blown air heating, Status tv aerial/booster, Omnistor 5000 awning, Omnibike Plus 2 bike rack. Other extras. Non-smokers. Vgc; garage serviced. **£18,000**. Phone Mike Bull 0797 497 2225 (Herefordshire)\*.

**OMNISTOR 'S' CLASS TOPBOX**, 135 x 89 x 38 cms. Fits Clubman roofrack. Cost £340. Will accept **£130** ono. Phone Doug Fulluck 0156 678 2060 (Cornwall).

**VW TRIDENT T4 2-LITRE PETROL.** 'K' reg., August 1992, 31,000 miles. Alloy wheels, Hope Safe-T-Bar, Kenwood CD system, blown-air heating, mudflaps, car bra. Comprehensive service history. Summer use only, so absolutely as new and immaculate; garaged from new. One owner, non-smoker, no pets. One of the best Tridents available at **£13,995**. Phone (evenings) or e-mail Kelvin Chambers 0172 232 7594 (Salisbury), kelvin@chambers56.freemove.co.uk.

**SYMPHONY 2.5 DIESEL.** 'M' reg., 1995. 69,000 miles. PAS. All usual A-S fittings, plus Omnistor awning, separate drive-away awning, 3-bike rack, towbar, alarm, immobiliser, radio/CD, electric front windows, windsurfer/ski racks, silver screens, swivel seats. Recently serviced, FSH. Tax and MoT to November 2001. Ready to go at **£17,950**. Phone or e-mail Joyce Abbatt 0153 563 3971 (Yorks.) or mobile 0778 593 1830, algy@aol.com

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*Note: Advertisements followed by a \* mean the advertiser has made a contribution to Club funds. To each we say, 'Thanks for the donation' - Ed.*

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## Committee Members

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Chairman	Ray Whiley	016 0345 2593
Vice Chairman & Rally Co-ordinator	Neil Rogers	013 2537 4540
Secretary	Pam Davies	023 9248 4972
Treasurer	John Tidbury	012 3553 8593
Membership Secretary & Regalia Officer	Ian Ross	017 0822 8075
Minutes Secretary	Barbara Potter	018 4427 4021
Chief Rally Marshal Chairman, AGM	Ben Mansfield	017 2336 9769
Sub-Committee	Nora Venables	019 0233 2105
Committee member	Andrew Entwistle	014 2284 3057
Chairman, Club & Company Rally Sub-Committee	Baz Wellard	013 2923 1259
Press Officer		
Newsletter Editor	Ian Day	014 2388 0233

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Contributions for publication in *ASOC Newsletter* are welcomed and need to reach the Editor: Ian J. Day, 10a Kingsley Road, Harrogate, HG1 4RB, North Yorks., or by e-mail to: [james@smooth.demon.co.uk](mailto:james@smooth.demon.co.uk) no later than the tenth of the month. Telephoned contributions cannot be received. While every effort will be made to publish acceptable material in the following issue, no guarantee can be given. Contributions or notices may be shortened or otherwise edited.

Notices of items wanted or for sale are printed free, but small donations towards Club expenses are appreciated and will be acknowledged on publication. Please make cheques payable to 'Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club' not 'ASOC'.

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