



AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB

Newsletter



*We wish
all our Readers
a very
Happy New Year*



No. 160

January 2002

Committee recommends Club becomes a Company

AT ITS MEETING in November, after a full discussion of the legal advice it had been given in September and other aspects of the matter, the Committee decided unanimously to propose to the next AGM that the Club becomes a Company Limited by Guarantee. To give members more information and help them consider some of the pros and cons, a set of frequently asked questions has been prepared.

From the Secretary

Nominations and resolutions

ONCE MORE IT IS TIME to be thinking about new Committee members and resolutions to be put to the AGM. Some existing members of the Committee will complete their term of office and will be standing for re-election, while others won't. It is always good to have new blood and new ideas. If you, or someone you know, have expertise you think might be useful to the Club, why not have a word with Ray Whiley or me? Remember, you must first have the person's permission and the nomination needs a proposer and seconder. Nominations must reach me at 4 Southbrook Road, Havant, Hants PO9 1RN no later than 20 March.

If you wish to submit a resolution to the AGM, please send it to me by 20 March. Your Committee works hard to do its best for you all, but if there is something you think might be changed, the AGM is the place to try to do it. Support your Club at the AGM, have a great weekend and at the same time make a contribution towards the running of the Club at the AGM and Open Forum by saying what *you* want.

Pam Davies

From the Editor

A brief note

CAN I DRAW your attention to the notice following this editorial? It is necessary for me to take a brief break from the editorial chair, and the Committee has agreed that I should do so. The February issue will

be in the capable hands of Ray Whiley. I am grateful to the Committee and to Ray for making the break possible. Please make his job easier by sending everything to him as early as you can.

Ian Day

Contributions for February issue

THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF ASOC Newsletter WILL BE EDITED BY RAY WHILEY AND ALL ITEMS FOR INCLUSION AND ALL ADVERTISEMENTS SHOULD BE SENT TO HIM AT 21 ELLCAR RISE, EATON, NORWICH, NORFOLK, NR4 6HR, TO REACH HIM NO LATER THAN 10 JANUARY 2002. IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR ITEMS SENT TO IAN DAY TO BE INCLUDED IN THAT ISSUE, BUT THEY SHOULD APPEAR IN MARCH.

Chairman's Chat



A Happy New Year to you all

ONE OF MY MANY BOOKS that I always enjoy looking through is called 'Birmingham in the Fifties'. It contains a collection of photographs of that city, the earliest of which was taken over fifty years ago.

On page 26 is one of a large crowd gathered in front of Birmingham Town Hall, in Victoria Square, on 28 February 1952. Somewhere in that crowd is a young student who had walked the short distance from the University buildings in Edmund Street to witness a unique occasion: the proclamation of Queen Elizabeth II.

I have often tried to find the back of my own head in that photograph - so far without success. However, other pages from 1952 bring back memories: trams; Rudolph Schwartz conducting the CBSO; and information on where to get your new ration book.

On page 25 is an advertisement for Continental Holidays. Two weeks by coach visiting Belgium, Germany, Austria (staying there one week), Switzerland and Paris (two nights) cost £42. Each traveller was allowed to take £10 spending money - for the fortnight! How times have changed. Even in the twelve years or so since our Club was founded,

much has changed. We often hear that we live in a litigious society, where people readily sue for damages. It is for this reason that, after very careful consideration following legal advice, your Committee decided on 24 November to recommend at this year's AGM that the Club should become a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital.

The reasons behind this recommendation have already been put to you in the Newsletter. Of the very few members - less than a dozen - who have commented, only one, a former Company Secretary, has put forward strong arguments against the proposal. Those arguments, together with the Committee's views, will be published again before you make up your minds at the AGM, for - as with any amendments to the Constitution, it is for the members to make the final decision, and a majority of two-thirds of those members present and voting will be required for the change in status to proceed.

In the meantime, Brian Smith is preparing a list of questions which members might like to have answered. The questions and answers will be included with the Newsletter as soon as possible. If you have any further queries, please send them to me at 21 Elcar Rise, Norwich NR4 6HR, or by e-mail: rewhiley@waitrose.com (No questions by telephone, please - some research may be necessary). You will receive either a personal reply or, if your question seems to be one in which others would be interested, I will prepare another question and answer sheet for distribution with the Newsletter.

This will be the most important decision the Club has made since it was founded. Please take a full share in making it.

Ray Whiley

From the Membership Secretary

A reminder if you haven't renewed

THANK YOU to everyone who has renewed their membership. By 30 November, half of the total membership had returned their forms - some even from those escaping the British winter in sunnier places.

If you have not yet renewed, this will be the last Newsletter you will

receive. Perhaps you have mislaid the form? If so, please send your name, address, membership number and vehicle details, together with a cheque for £15 made payable to 'Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club', to me at 17 Rydal Avenue, Freckleton, Preston PR4 1DJ.

Norma Caley

From the Regalia Officer

New items for the 'complete' member

WE NOW HAVE two new items of regalia for you to choose from.

The first is a badge similar to the windscreen badge, but this one has the adhesive on its back to enable it to be used on mugs, name signs, etc. It costs 60p.

The second is a new printed 3 inch (75mm) circular Club emblem suitable to sew on to body warmers, hats, etc. This costs £1.25.

Committee members have been supplied with a small number of each to show to members at rallies.

If you would like either of them, please send your order, together with a cheque made out to 'Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club' (in full, please, or the bank won't accept it) to me at 8 The Dell, Mytholm, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6DP.

The supply of teas towels has now sold out and there are no plans to replace it.

Andrew Entwistle

Throbbing Trident taps

HAVING MET SEVERAL Trident owners at the Malvern Show, one fault seemed to be common. When the sink tap is turned on the water seems to pulsate - water, then air.

Have any other members experienced this? How can it be rectified?

Iain King

Access to Boxer batteries

SINCE THE ITEM on access to the leisure battery on Boxer Auto-Sleepers, it has become apparent that some vehicles are being produced by Peugeot with ball-bearing seat runners rather than the original standard slides [See items in the November and December issues - Ed.]. We have therefore informed our dealers and pass the information on to Club members through *ASOC Newsletter*, that the following should be done. The procedure covers all types of seat runners, both those with and without ball-bearings.

MODIFICATION TO FRONT SEAT RUNNERS ON PEUGEOT BOXER-BASED MOTORHOMES TO IMPROVE LEISURE BATTERY ACCESS

1. Release 4 x 6mm allen bolts that secure the offside seat to the seat box.
2. Release 4 x 6 mm allen bolts from seat runners and remove runners from seats.
3. Whilst holding the seat runners securely in a vice, grind or file off the two pressed indents on the front end of each seat runner lower sections **and remove 8 ball bearings and the 4 plastic runner inserts**. Repaint repaired areas with satin black paint.
4. Remove the two screws at the front end of the seat base and insert the metal runners (part no. IF0252 x 2), refit screws through the metal runner. Re-assemble the seat and refit to the seat base.
5. Ensure that the seat slides freely before fully tightening the securing bolts.

I hope this is clear and do, of course, apologise to any owner who might have had problems previously.

Charles Trevelyan

Thanks for the clarification, Charles. It just shows how hard it can be to keep up with changes - especially if the base vehicle makers don't tell. Anyone who kept the item published in October might like to put a firm black line through their copy to avoid confusion later - Ed.

'Tiggers Talk'

Modifications safety plan

CAN I CLARIFY how modifications will now be dealt with? The procedure the Committee has agreed to adopt after consulting Auto-Sleepers is that *all* modifications will first be passed to Denzil Brunning at the factory so that when they are made available to members you will be able to be content that they do not infringe any of the various regulations that apply, nor endanger yourselves or your vehicles.

This is absolutely important because some of the modifications we see are illegal or dangerous. One example was a coachbuilt van with a big box fitted to the rear, to which was added a cycle carrier holding four bikes and a huge top box. The van's rear end was almost on the floor, while the front wheels were just about in contact with the road. When the family left, the van was literally weaving around, such was the lack of control due to imbalance. I hasten to add that it was not an Auto-Sleeper.

Please keep sending your suggestions or useful tips to me at the address in 'From the Regalia Officer'.



Peugeot Boxer recall

IT HAS BEEN brought to my notice that Peugeot have announced a recall on some Boxer vans but that to find out whether yours is one of them it is necessary to contact your Peugeot Boxer dealership with your VIN number and Chassis number.

Some members may already have been notified via the DVLA at Swansea.

The recall concerns the fuel tank, which may be insecure.

Andrew Entwistle

New Year: All the pleasure of making resolutions we won't keep - GB.

From the Press Officer

'Classic' publicity

ALTHOUGH it may seem a long time ago now, at July's Club and Company rally a number of members, particularly owners of 'Classic' vans were interviewed and photographed by Chris Burlace of *Practical Motorhome*.

As a result a two-page spread was published in their Winter edition, featuring the following members and their vans: Sid and Hazel Blea, Duncan and Jean Ellis, Jim Botterill and Louise Story, Ray and Marion Tullett, David and Mylie Bunyan, and Malcom and Pam Fox. Also pictured were No. 1 - John and Barbara Cox, Ben and Evelyn Mansfield, Jan and Vic Hicklin, and Irene Boydell. Unfortunately the caption to the photo of the latter five got a bit mixed up, with the result that Ben is now married to Irene, and Jan is now tied up with Vic Harding!

Practical Motorhome is a new magazine published quarterly at £3.95. Its nearly 200 pages, clear text and superb artwork is good value and a good read.

Brian Smith

Meeting up in Portugal

I AM GOING to Portugal on 2 January for three months and will be wandering around in the Algarve, stopping on campsites and camping in various locations.

If there are any other members who will be somewhere in that region during the same period and would like to meet up out there for a chat or information exchange, I'd be pleased if they would ring me on 0121 3505050 to fix a time and place, etc. Should anyone else see me in Portugal during my travels, we could meet. I will be in my Talisman R 862 PRA.

Ken Harris

Unfortunately Ken's e-mail reached us too late for the December issue, but most readers will receive this issue early enough for them to phone him before he goes - Ed.

From the Factory

Motorhome Service Centre - Willersey

IT HAS RECENTLY become apparent that quite a number of our customers, particularly Club members, are not aware of our existence, and I felt it would be appropriate to outline the rôle and aspirations of the Motorhome Service Centre with our aims for the future.

The Willersey Motorhome Service Centre is the first of a series of seven we will shortly be setting up throughout the UK. The aim is to offer what is known as a 'one stop shop' facility and we have achieved this here at Willersey after a considerable amount of work, particularly in planning for future growth.

We aim to offer a full repair, rebuild, renovation and refurbishment service on any model of motorhome, as well as a full automotive service and back-up through our own technical support. In conjunction with the main factory, we can carry out re-spray work and also, in conjunction with a fully-approved ISO 9002 bodyshop, any coachwork repairs that are necessary. It is interesting to note that much of our work to date has been insurance repair and refurbishment. We expect that as we become a known force in the motorhome industry the amount of automotive servicing will increase as well.

Our team consists of me and Adrian Stanford, ably assisted by Tracey Irving who gives us full clerical support as our Service Receptionist. Adrian's rôle, in addition to helping build up our current premises and introducing the very necessary computerised support for all aspects of our operation, is by using this pilot venture to establish the country-wide network of similar centres.

At our first Open Weekend we showed with, I believe, a justifiable degree of pride, the facilities we can offer. Since then we have extended into the retro-fitting of reversing aids and alarms and, in conjunction with Coachcraft and Leisure, the fitting of Beeny boxes as well. We also fit electrically-retractable side steps to the Symphony, Symbol and Harmony. We also work closely with those who wish their Auto-Sleeper to be adapted for use by the disabled - as you will read in our latest Company Magazine. In effect, we will carry out any work that is required by a customer such as extra work surfaces, Blizzard air conditioning and

(where appropriate) back boxes, provided that the work conforms to current Health and Safety legislation.

Our team of three motorhome technicians, Paul, Darren and Tim, are most experienced, with a cumulative 45 years' service with our company behind them. They have been carefully selected and have a broad knowledge of panel van, bonded construction and monocoque lines. They always seem more than happy to undertake any operation - the more challenging, the broader the smile. On the engines side, Terry Hemming has recently joined us from the local Peugeot dealer in Evesham and thus has the benefit of being fully conversant with the Boxer range, amongst other models. His past experience, apart from Peugeot, includes a very sound working knowledge of Ford, Volkswagen and (interestingly) Renault. Full mechanical servicing is his speciality.

We offer three levels of automotive servicing - Silver, Gold and Platinum. Put simply it means that the higher the mileage, the greater the depth of servicing we recommend. And, of course, we already carry out quite an amount of SMMT/NCC habitation checks as well. Of interest too, and possibly unexpectedly, is that we can carry out a full winterisation check if asked.

Many people visiting us seem not to know of the range of our facilities and have said that had they done so, they would have arrived prepared with more time available for retro-fit or accessory work to be done.

This New Year we are launching a realistic discount on work carried out on Club members' vehicles. In January and February Club members will receive a 15 per cent discount from the cost of any work we do. All we will require is your membership number. Please telephone to make an appointment (our number is 01386 853511), but I must add that we are already well booked in January.

The Motorhome Service Centre has a first class waiting room with TV, coffee, tea, daily newspapers and current magazines. Do drop in - even if no work is required - we are always happy to meet you and to show you around our workshop which we think will impress you.

Happy New Year, and we look forward to hearing from you, but *please* try to spread your calls out, or I may dread returning after the holiday!

Charles Trevelyan



January 2002



Rally Supplement

If you are planning to run a rally in 2002 then please contact me as soon as possible.

*****HELP REQUIRED. Marshals are required to run the following rallies in 2002;

1.Motorcaravan Jamboree, the Kent County Showground, Detling. 17th. - 19th.May .

2.Warners' Midsummer Event, Lincoln Racecourse 19th.- 21st.July

3.The Shepton Mallet Show,12th.-15th.September .

I will need to know who is willing to marshal at these rallies by the end of January 2002. *No marshals - No rallies!*

May I please remind you that, unless otherwise stated in the Rally Supplement, all rallies are to be applied for by posting a rally slip, with a cheque for the appropriate amount, to the rally marshal.

Unless otherwise stated ALL rallies start at 12 noon.Please do not arrive early.

If you are unable to attend a rally inform the marshal as they may be able to allow another member to take your place.

3rd.June - 16th. June 2002.The Black Forest & Bavaria.A two Centre German Rally at Kirchzarten & Oberammergau.

THIS RALLY IS NOW FULLY BOOKED.

***Members attending this rally are reminded that they must arrange their own ferry bookings and any insurance that is required.

14th - 17th (3 nights).February 2002."Valentines Rally" Grouse & Claret, Rowsley, Nr. Matlock, Derbyshire.

Site Tel.No. 01629 733 233 (Emergencies only, landlord).

Rally Marshals: Jan & Vic Hicklin & Evelyn & Ben Mansfield.

Booking slips to: Mrs.J.Hicklin ,381 Manor Road, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.S43 1PP. Tel.No. 01246 236 157

Directions: On A6 between Matlock & Bakewell.

THIS RALLY IS NOW FULLY BOOKED

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, there will be no Public Liability Insurance and 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:

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:

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 Evening meal: 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 14 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 Evening meal : Yes No
Have you any special needs? Yes No If Yes please specify:-

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

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, if available
Electricity: Yes No Evening meal if arranged: 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 14 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE!

Notchy clutch, barriers, rear viewing

I HAVE a 1999 'T' registered Boxer 1.9TD-based Harmony which has just come back from its 15,000 mile 'intermediate visit', as it's referred to in the handbook. I was surprised to learn that the clutch will need replacing shortly as the gear change between first and reverse has become 'notchy'. Would that be from shunting in and out of car park spaces and pitches, I wonder? It's my only vehicle and gets used for the daily eight mile run to work, the weekly shopping trip and as the family taxi service. While I understand that clutch wear will vary according to use, I'd like to know if there's some kind of average mileage for a clutch change on similar vehicles before committing myself to the £500-plus garage bill. Have other members had the same experience? In accordance with Murphy's law, the extended warranty ran out earlier this year.

On a separate subject, Jane Griffiths, MP for Reading East, assures me that the last remaining surface car park in Reading, which is alongside the cattle market, will remain unrestricted in height. Visitors to the new Oracle shopping centre shouldn't be tempted to use the Loddon Bridge Park 'n Ride if it's raining. The River Loddon is quick to burst its banks and owners may come back to find their vehicles up to the hub caps in water. There is another park at Green Park at the back of the football stadium, just off M4 on A33. Many of the edge of town superstores are now clamping vehicles - except the one opposite the prison, so far.

For rearward vision when parking in tight spots, I've recently fixed a Volvo truck cab nearside blind-spot mirror, which cost £23 including VAT, over the Harmony's back door and can now get within a gnat's whisker of the vehicle or obstruction behind. I'm hoping that *MMM* will publish pictures and details in their next issue.

Terry Hammond

More storage - at a price

WE BOUGHT THE CLUBMAN in 2000 from Brownhills. I found it much better than my first vehicle, but as time went by, realised extra storage space for all those little things collected on our travels would be an advantage.

I had noticed other vehicles with boxes fitted under the side sills, but found out that the Clubman had no space for one. However, while I was at Blackmore C.C. site in July, I met an ASOC member with a Gatcombe who invited me to look at its water tank. Because the Gatcombe was built on the T4 chassis, that gave me an idea which I checked out with the engineers at the Club and Company rally. They told me what I had in mind was possible. After I returned home I phoned Auto-Sleepers and Charles Trevelyan later gave me a price and I travelled to Willersey to have a new water tank fitted.

In the meantime I'd seen the item from Andrew Entwistle ['More storage drawers'] in July's *ASOC Newsletter*. This was ideal because the firm he mentioned were in Leeds, not too far from my home. When I contacted J.H. Caravans, they said they would be at the York Show where I could see their product. The box was exactly what I had in mind and I arranged to take the van to them early in November, after I'd re-directed the water feed pipe from the new tank to make sure it would not interfere with the storage locker. The firm sent me directions to their premises and we arrived a few minutes late to be greeted and guided in. While they were doing the job my wife and I spent the day in Dewsbury, to return at four o'clock to find it done. We were very pleased with the workmanship and the fact that the locker can be removed easily for cleaning or painting. We recommend it to members who may be interested and can be phoned on 0161 430 6126 for further information.

The total cost of the conversion was £578.25 made up of £216 for the new water tank, fitted; £380 for the 750 mm, 45 Kg locker, and £2.25 for a new water pipe and two jubilee clips.

Wilf Johnson

Waste water disposal

WITH REGARD TO Derek and May Armitage's question and Tom Caxton's answer in the November and December issues, it seems they have not come across *Guide Official Des Etapes Touristique Camping Cars* which, with its accompanying map, covers 4,500 Aires de Service throughout France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland.

We have visited many of these aires throughout France, where grey

water can be disposed of, chemical toilets emptied and fresh water tanks filled. They are to be found in towns, cities, on autoroutes and in villages throughout France. Many have parking places where one can stay overnight, very often without charge.

Many of the aires are in really beautiful spots - riverbanks, lakesides, parks - or near village sports stadiums. It is not unusual to have a supply of free electricity as well. Obviously one has to be sensible and choose where to stay carefully. If another van is there already, then stay. It can be a very pleasant and low cost way of touring the 'real' France.

Audrey Goldsmith

Thanks for the information, Audrey. Other members do use the aires and swear by them. Anyone know of similar in Spain or Portugal? - Ed.

Pescara puzzle

WE BOUGHT OUR 'V' Reg. Pescara from Brownhills in August. Sporadically we hear a sound suggesting electrical arcing coming from the left area of the dashboard. It only lasts about five seconds and, thankfully, is not accompanied by smoke or a smell, but it is of great concern. Nor does it seem to co-incident with any driving function.

It has been checked out by Brownhills and also by a local auto-electrician, both of whom feel certain it is not electrical arcing. Although this eases our concerns, we are still worried by it and would like to find out what it is and stop it happening.

Has any member any suggestion as to the cause, or the remedy? My e-mail address is: mike.hall@messages.co.uk

Mike Hall

Noises like that are always a problem and often take a lot of sorting. Although an electrical cause seems to have been ruled out, we've sent the e-mail on to Auto-Sleepers to see if they can shed any light - Ed.

'Saving is a very fine thing - especially when your parents have done it for you.' - Winston Churchill.

Gunged-up waste taps

THERE ARE TWO possible reasons for the gunged-up waste tap problem mentioned by Brian Green (December issue).

The first is that the drain tap outlet is about ½ inch in diameter, yet it is fitted to a wastepipe about one inch in diameter. The second is that the up/down 'plunger' in the tap travels only halfway up when the knob is rotated to its maximum. If the tap outlet is removed and looked into while the knob is rotated, you'll see what I mean. These factors go a long way to causing the problem.

The obvious solution would appear to be for Auto-Sleepers to fit more efficient taps or outlets, but in lighter vein, perhaps Brian should consider using disposable plates, crockery and cutlery, or (better still) eating and drinking in someone else's van.

Could I wish all my fellow members a Happy and Healthy New Year? May it be free from all such malaises as pulley squeal, waste tank odours, gunged-up taps, grumbles about this and that, and all the other things sent so unsuccessfully to try our patience.

Norman Rendle

A sentiment with which we all agree, Norman. - Ed.



Put a cork in it!

NOT LONG AFTER BUYING our 'L' registered Trophy, we noticed a somewhat nasty smell coming up through the plug holes in the sink. It was obviously coming from the waste tank so the first thought was to clean it out.

How to do this? The outlet pipe was about an inch from the bottom of the tank, which meant that there is always an inch of waste water in it. However, not far from where we live there is a short but very steep hill on a quiet road. I managed to park on the steepest bit and ran the nearside wheels of the van up on to the pavement. That tipped the tank up both forwards and sideways. When the tap was opened the tank

emptied to a much greater extent.

Pouring some clean water down the sink until it ran clean did the trick and, with a little disinfectant down the pipe afterwards, the smell was gone. Now we empty the last dregs out of the tank this way after each holiday.

The bore of the tap is so small that the waste water drains out very slowly and, as a result, can easily become blocked. After dismantling the tap and cleaning it out several times, I gave up and discarded it. In place I use a wine bottle cork which does the job just as well and is easily replaced with a new one as necessary. The tank drains in less than half the time and the pipe never gets blocked.

Cedric Cawthorne

An ingenious solution, but what happens if the cork comes out in transit? Discharging grey water on to the highway isn't popular - Ed.

Put a new tap on it!

THE DAY WE COLLECTED our Topaz from Berkshire Motor Homes, the office had a request from a customer. He wanted to take his van in because the waste water outlet was blocked. They advised him to use a short length of flexible net curtain wire and insert it into the outlet.

Some time later we had waste water backing up into the shower tray - the Gunged-Up Tap Syndrome had arrived. I put up with it for two years and never knew whether or not there was any waste water in the tank. While I was looking around the new vans at the Club and Company rally at Malvern, I noticed that they'd all been fitted with another waste tap which had a white polythene body and a red lever and barrel assembly. I bought one from the factory shop on the site.

To install it, I drove the van on to two wooden blocks on the offside to give good ground clearance, then marked the restraining straps and the tank to ease reassembly. The tank was supported with a jack. (There is a plywood support under the tank on older models but on newer ones that has been discontinued.) The jack was packed to prevent it damaging the tank. Then I loosened one of the water inlet hoses and slipped it off - the ideal one is that nearest the tap.

Four nuts held the tank restraining straps, and they were unscrewed using an extension to a socket wrench. By lowering the jack, the tank was allowed to assume an angle of about 45°.

In the top of the tank I found a hole large enough to put a hand inside which enabled me to hold the tap's plastic lock nut inside and unscrew the tap with the other hand. Then I fitted the new tap using a suitable mastic on the collar of the flange holding the plastic nut inside the tank, after which the components were refitted in reverse order and the studs greased once the nuts were secure.

On examining the tap I'd taken out, it was evident that it was not suitable. With a clearance between the barrel and body in the open position of no more than 2 mm, even the smallest waste matter would soon block it. The tap seemed similar to the type used on the plastic barrels of beer-making kits. The advantage of the new tap is that it has a straight-through hole of about 14 mm. It's comforting to know that we're not transporting seven gallons of waste water on our travels.

Gordon King

This does seem to be an area where the technology is developing only slowly. I must say I've found a bit of bell wire, or even a leaf stalk, works wonders. - Ed.

Shoreham success

THE SHOREHAM RALLY held over the Shoreham Air Show weekend raised £860 toward the Show's total contribution of £105,000 for the Royal Air Force Association's funds which was an all time record. The money raised by our rally was itself a record, despite having a lower attendance than usual. A Sterling effort.

Chris and Shirley Sturgeon, Dave and Theresa Smith, Tony and Lynn Fowler were the rally marshals.

For those interested in the history of the site of the rally, flying began at Shoreham when a flying club was founded in 1911. The ground was privately owned but became the Brighton, Hove and Worthing Municipal Airport in 1936. The same year an RAF Volunteer Reserve training centre was established and during World War II the airfield became an

RAF establishment providing a base for fighters. As part of its defences it was equipped with pipe mines which were designed to blow up runways in the event of invasion. They were apparently forgotten about, but came to light long after the war when the runways were being redeveloped - complete with explosives!

The Shoreham Aircraft Preservation Society is very active and has a small museum in the town.

Duetto d-i-y

WE UPGRADED from a Rambler to a Duetto about four years ago, mainly because we wanted power steering, an automatic gear box and a diesel engine.

The Duetto has proved to be just the vehicle for us - large enough to live in and small enough to drive with ease and get to those places that other vans can't. However we found that it had a lot less places to store the essential odds and ends, as well as having one or two little things that could be improved. Here is how I went about solving problems and getting more into our 'pint pot'.

For water filling hoses I have made up two from the flat hose now available. Both the seven foot length with a tap and adapter, and the 14 foot length with a Hoselock coupler, go into the Duetto gas bottle locker on either side of the bottles without interfering with ventilation. A long hose on a reel is stored below the clothes tray under the passenger seat, together with a folded warning triangle and piece of teak to go under the jack (if it is ever needed).

When filling up, the washing-up sponge is very useful for wedging the filling hose in the filler hole and saving having to hold that in place.

Ten feet of black (fishpond) hose serves for emptying the waste water tank and can be stored behind the door to the cassette toilet, together with a plastic bottle of toilet fluid (the sort that has a built-in measure and siphon). This bottle can be refilled if the siphon can be got out. I threaded a strong, thin, steel wire through the holes in the tube top and levered it out with a large screwdriver. Narrow nose pliers now get it out for refilling.

The 'brewers tap' originally fitted to the short hose from the waste tank was a pain until one day I didn't secure it properly in its clip. I replaced the remains with an old Hoselock female from a defunct sprinkler, secured it with a worm drive clip and added a piece of elastic shock cord so that the next time it was not in its clip it stayed off the road. This has a 'bung' made by blocking the hole in a male and female coupling which, together with a male Hoselock fitting on the end of the black hose makes emptying much easier.

Because Calor bottles can't be obtained outside the UK, I carry one 10 lbs Calor and one 6 lbs Campingaz bottle in the locker, running on the 6 lbs with the 10 lbs available when looking for a replacement.

A couple of nine metres long mains leads made up of 1.5 sq. mm. core flex, fit nicely behind the bottles in the gas locker. If you aren't qualified in electrics, the plugs and sockets must be fitted by an electrician and PET tested. I rarely have to use both leads 'daisy-chained', but used with precautions they have got us out of trouble once or twice.

I've made and installed a comprehensive alarm set-up to warn me I'm driving with the fridge on gas, with the mains lead hooked-up. or using with the fridge on both gas and mains at the same time.

A 'childproof' catch fitted to the cutlery drawer stops it falling out when it isn't properly shut.

A small plastic tip-lid waste bin, secured with a piece of shock cord between existing convenient screws goes on the toilet compartment shelf and holds cleaning stuff and spare rolls. The fixings (from Halfords) are small compression lugs (blue) used for electrical connections, but with the sleeves discarded.

More shock cord on small self-adhesive plastic hooks, holds lightweight bits and pieces on the outside shelf of the bathroom cabinet.

A sleeping place for a small 2-year old grandchild was made by attaching two pieces of rope (that used for main sheets in a dinghy) to a cot base. This is placed across the front seats, the rope is tied between the front corners of the base and up to the headrests and a cot mattress completes the job. With the front curtains closed and clipped, small fingers can't get at the switches, etc.

A very cheap socket set and a screwdriver live in a box under the driver's seat with extra tools in a canvas bag.

Because the Duetto, like many vans, is rather near the weight limit, we travel with just enough water for the trip, fill the water tank on arrival and empty the waste before leaving.

John Parker

Some folk are ingenious. We print this this month as an encouragement to carry out your New Year's resolutions. Any more handy hints? Ed.

For sale



CLUBMAN GL 2.5 TDI. 'T' reg., Sept. 1999, 14,000 miles. Strike Back alarm, 2-bike rack. Excellent condition. SOG. House move forces sale: £25,000. Phone Alan Finney 01827 62315 (Staffs).*

ELECTRIC PEDAL CYCLES, BIKE CARRIER. Gents Yamaha Easy 4-speed electric pedal cycle, top of the range, incl. lights, carrier, Altura cycle bags. Only a few months old. Cost £950 as new, accept: £550 ono. Ladies Yamaha electric cycle as above. Cost £850 as new, accept: £450 ono. Two-cycle carrier from Holland, its towball, complete with lights and no plate. Very easy to use. Cost £300. accept £125 ono. Phone Harold Thomas 01782 660633. (Staffs).*

LEGEND GL 2.0 LITRE PETROL 2-BERTH. 'E' reg., 1998, 57,000 miles. MoT until December 2002, taxed to June 2002. Only 3 owners, full service history since new, rebuilt engine and complete new exhaust 2001, superb runner. 2 swivel front seats, bike rack. No smokers/pets. Excellent condition. Only changing as 2 grandchildren now need overnight accommodation and a 4-berth in required. £9,950. E-mail or phone Steve Tolson: steve@cadeas.fsnet.co.uk 01304 375517 (Kent).*

TALISMAN GL 2.5 DIESEL. 'J' reg. 1992, 40,000 miles. Airide suspension, top box, awning, Fiamma bike rack., interior screens. Taxed, tested. Excellent condition throughout; and inspection welcomed: £15,995 ovno. Phone Jeff Wood 020 8648 9857 (Surrey)

REAR BUMPER to fit Clubman GL. Original A-S stainless steel. Price new £137, will accept £50. Phone or e-mail Peter Stride 01296 622779 (Bucks), peterstride@onetel.net.uk

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

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Contributions for publication in *ASOC Newsletter* are welcomed. For the **February issue only** they need to reach **Ray Whiley, 21 Elcar Rise, Eaton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 6HR** or by e-mail to: rewhiley@waitrose.com 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.

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