

auto~sleeper

Magazine



Eight Test Reports
25 Years of Progress
Success Story

1984/85

Quality and Comfort



The Renault Trafic might have been built with motor caravans in mind. It is ideal for town, country or motorway driving, and the sloping front not only looks extremely attractive, but reduces wind resistance, making this one of the most economical of motor caravans.

Superb design. Much thought has gone into the interior design, which is built to the highest possible standards. Only materials of the best quality are used, and the comprehensive specification leaves nothing to be desired.

Equipped for comfort. The dinette is designed for comfort and even with the table in position there is plenty of room for four people with space to spare. When not in use the table can be stored away out of sight enabling the luxury of the contoured seats to be fully enjoyed.

The well designed kitchen area includes a matching stainless steel sink and cooker with lids enabling them to be closed away out of sight when not in use, pressurised water system, Electrolux gas/electric refrigerator, electrical control panel incorporating a water level gauge, and even china for four!

At night-time the luxurious seats quickly and easily fold down to form either two single beds or a large optional double bed; sleeping accommodation for a further two is provided, making the Renault Auto-Sleeper a true 4-berth.

Full curtaining is provided and there is an abundance of storage space throughout the vehicle. Even the wardrobe is fitted with shelves down one side.

The aerodynamically designed, easy to operate, elevating roof is fully insulated and is fitted with an integral roof rack.

When on the move, comfort is provided by the two fully adjustable luxury cab seats and the rear dinette seats which can quickly be converted to form two front facing seats.

Additional touches of luxury include tinted glass in the side sliding windows, smart paint design and even concealed compartments inside the vehicle where valuables can be stored.

A joy to use. The Renault Auto-Sleeper is a delight to drive and use, a vehicle which will give lasting pleasure and which you will be pleased to own.



Everything to hand in the well designed kitchen.



The spacious dinette seats four in comfort.



Plenty of storage space in large wardrobe.



RENAULT AUTO-SLEEPER



The Hallmark of Quality

www.vwT25camper.info - a useful website for owners and enthusiasts of VW T25 / T3 / Vanagon Campervans

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Magazine

Contents

- 2 Making the right choice
- 4 Dedication to progress
- 5 A quarter of a century old
- 6 Dealer viewpoint
- 7 Behind the scenes
- Auto-Sleepers on test:**
- 8 Talbot CX1000 GTL
- 10 Volkswagen VT20
- 12 Renault RV50
- 14 Renault Hi-top
- 16 Bedford Clubman
- 20 Leisure Executive
- 22 Sherpa Leisure
- 24 The Auto-Sleeper range
- 26 Nationwide distribution
- 28 Ford RX80



Top Right: Leisure Executive-Page 20
Centre Right: Bedford Clubman- Page 16
Bottom Right: Talbot CX 1000 GTL-Page 8
Above: Volkswagen VT 20-Page 10

STOP PRESS

Record Results

Not only is the Talbot CX1000 GTL Britain's best selling High-Top Motor Caravan, but Auto-Sleepers are the largest manufacturers of Motor Caravans — For Bedford, Freight Rover (Sherpa), Renault and Talbot

Test reports compiled by **John Hunt**, editor of Motorcaravan Motorhome Monthly.

Editor: **Doug Mitchell**
Published for Auto-Sleepers Ltd by: **Motor Caravan World, Andrew House, 2a Granville Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4BN. Tel: 01-302 6150.**
Typeset and originated by Stone Industrial Publications Ltd.
Printed in England by Benham & Co and Lordswood Litho Ltd.
Auto-Sleepers Ltd reserve the right to alter, without notice, any detail of price, specification or equipment that may be quoted.



The Hallmark of Quality

Making the right choice

There are a number of ways of making sure that the motor caravan on your short list will live up to your expectations. You can talk to an existing owner. Chances are he hasn't owned the model you are interested in long enough to be able to have hard and fast views, or, you can see what the motor caravan hire firms have in their fleets.

It's generally accepted that motor caravans out on hire go through a particularly punishing time during their early years, gobbling up mileage and usage you probably won't achieve in a lifetime of motor caravanning.

The hire fleet owner is concerned with two main attributes when he buys for the fleet — reliability from the engine and electrical systems and reliability and safety from the coach builder. When we were in Surrey recently we called in to see Brian Bodie who runs one of Great Britain's most successful motor caravan hire firms, Southern Cross Campers who are based at Bagshot. Brian explained that Auto-Sleepers were now the oldest, and

most experienced manufacturer of motor caravans, both coachbuilt and van conversions. They are built to such a high standard he has no trouble hiring them and they stand up well to an average thirty weeks hiring every year, for at least three years. Should the need arise, there has never been a problem getting spare parts for Auto-Sleeper models in the fleet.

Southern Cross Campers now have a hire fleet of fifty-five vehicles. Brian Bodie admits he has no special relationship with the Auto-Sleeper company, but he did tell us that their high standard of workmanship and use of quality materials keeps his Auto-Sleepers in demand all the time, which is not a bad recommendation for you to consider.



Mr Brian Bodie, managing director of Southern Cross Campers, beside an Auto-Sleeper, the flagship of the hire fleet.



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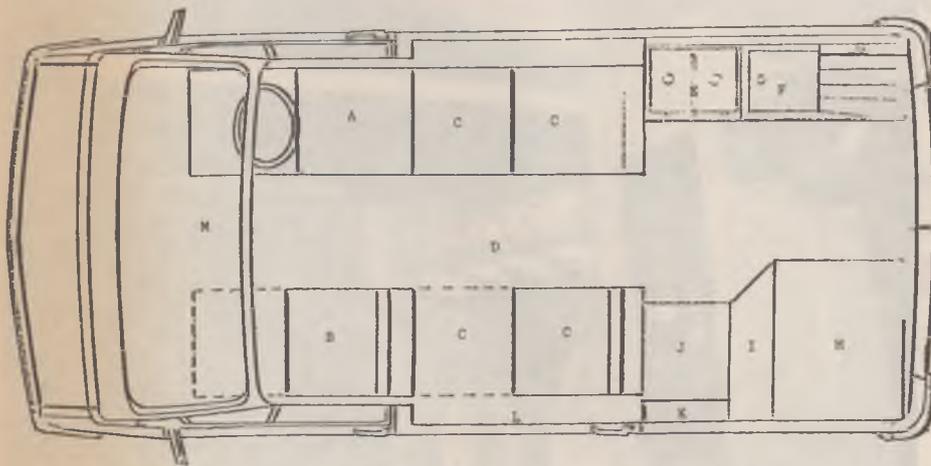


AUTO-SLEEPER DISTRIBUTORS

Auto-Sleeper Renault Trafic Hi-Top de luxe



Renault Trafic front wheel drive 1650cc with the Auto-Sleepers' purpose-made GRP high roof.



Renault RCX

4 berths

Height 8'6"

Width 6'0"

Length 14'11"

- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seat (swivel option).
- B. Swivelling fully adjustable luxury cab seat.
- C. Dinette converting to two front facing seats, alternatively A, B and C convert to two longitudinal single beds or optional double bed.
- D. Table.
- E. 2 burner/grill cooker (drawer and cupboard below).
- F. Sink with cupboard below.
- G. China cupboard.
- H. Shower compartment.
- I. Wardrobe with cupboard below.
- J. Refrigerator with cupboard below.
- K. Cocktail cabinet.
- L. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.
- M. Cut away cab with pull out double bed.

Compact, fully equipped small motorhome

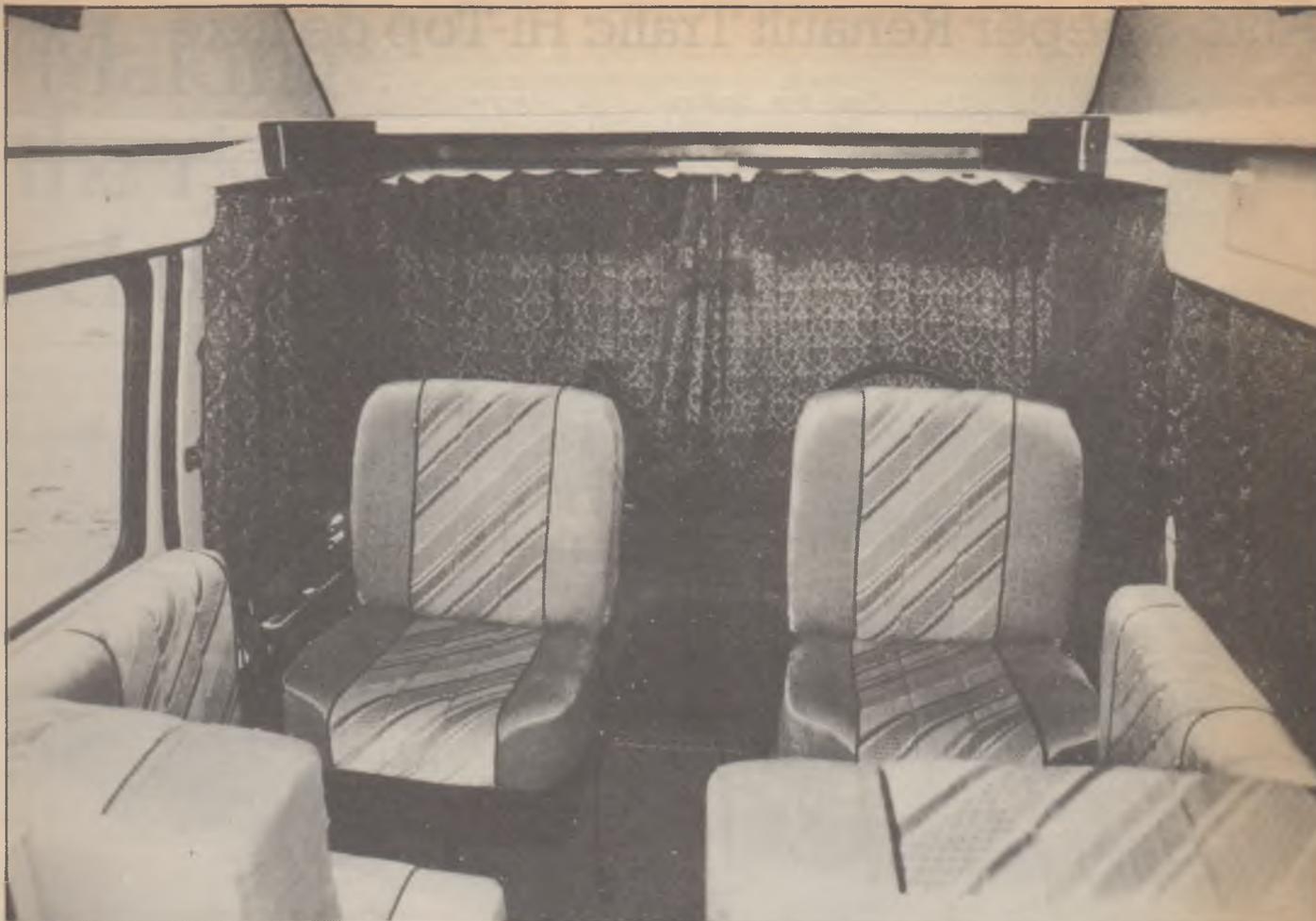
My own definition of a "complete motorcaravan" is one in which a couple or family could live for a day or two without putting a foot outside. Auto-Sleepers' new Hi-Top Trafic de luxe fills the specification and, in addition, must be the smallest one on the British market to do so.

Most manufacturers have chosen the long wheelbase Trafic for their up-market motorcaravans. Auto-Sleepers have concentrated on the shorter version and have produced a motorhome no longer than many estate cars — as pleasant to drive and as easy to park.

Yet, thanks to careful design, it is not cramped inside. Both front seats may be turned to face the rear (driver's swivel is optional) so that the whole interior length of the vehicle can be used. There is, therefore, a comfortable seating area for four (or more if the settees are brought into use) at the front, with its own side access doorway and full standing height over the entire length.

There are beds for four people, as in the other Renault conversion from Auto-Sleepers. A wide double at the front above window level folds right out of the way when not in use (or may be partly extended to provide extra luggage space). Below are the two single beds or king-sized double common to nearly all Auto-Sleeper models.

Whether beds are in use or not, the



With upper double bed in stowed position, there is full-height access to all seats.

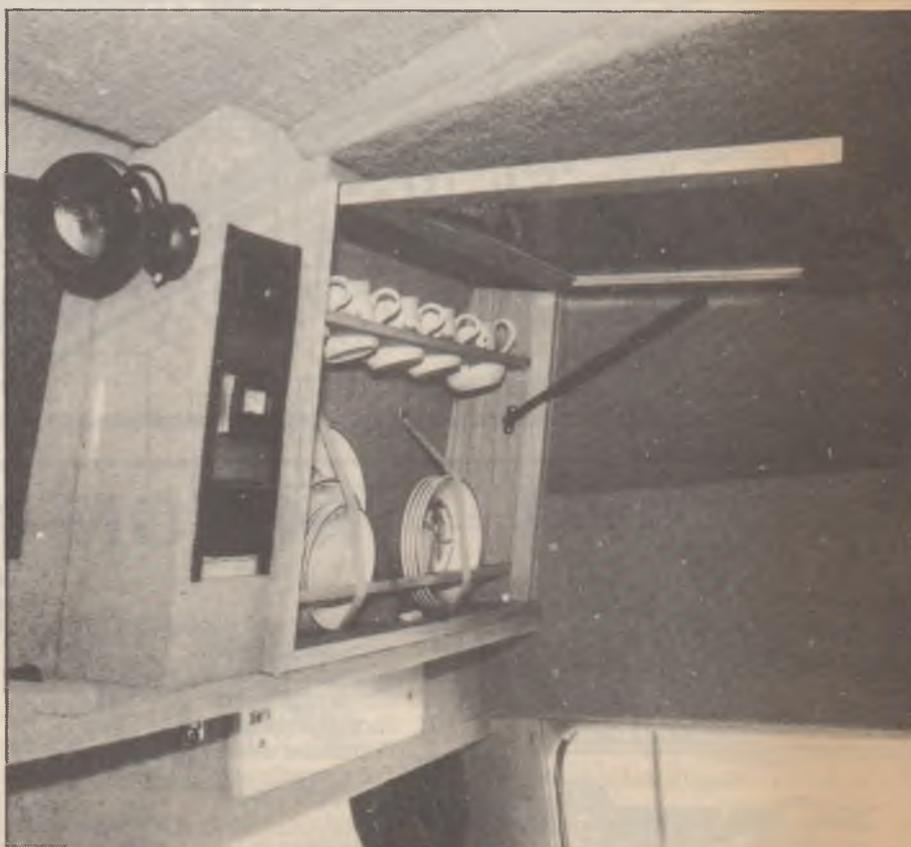
kitchen, wardrobe and toilet compartment at the rear remain accessible — and that must have demanded very careful planning on so small a vehicle. Nothing seems to have been lost in this fully equipped version of the standard Trafic Hi-Top but a lot has been gained without undue loss of floor space.

The kitchen, with spacious cupboards below and crockery storage above, is at the rear offside. Opposite are refrigerator (at a convenient height for reaching the contents), wardrobe (with clothes presented side-on for easy selection), cocktail cabinet and — the pièce de résistance — the toilet compartment.

When the door is opened, it looks small — perhaps only just big enough to serve its purpose — but the cunning feature is its double-fold door which opens across and shuts off the rear quarter of the caravan. As this compartment takes in the kitchen sink, there is a spacious toilet/shower room with hot and cold water available from the constant-flow heater, cunningly recessed into a niche in the wall. There is ample space in which to take a shower, towel-off and dress, whilst the occupants of the remainder of the caravan can come and go as they please through the side entrance door.

With its lively, five-gear motoring, comfortable seats and full specification, here indeed is a motorhome that may be used as car or caravan throughout the year — and a heater is available for winter use.

We have known for years that Auto-Sleepers' policy is one of constant, steady improvement. One thoughtful touch we spotted in this latest model was the shaping of base boards to facilitate the fitting of restraint belts to the rear, forward-facing seats.



Crockery for four is securely located above kitchen. Electrics control panel contains fuses, switches and water gauge.

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Auto-Sleepers Success

Dedication to progress

It all began in a small way a quarter of a century ago, yet, in spite of various setbacks imposed by thoughtless Chancellors of the Exchequer, the Auto-Sleeper story catalogues steady progress, expansion and success.

Several manufacturers of motor caravans have suffered traumatic changes of identity; many have submerged without trace. During successive national crises, Auto-Sleepers have, without a break, gone on producing better and better motor caravans and selling them to a public which appreciates quality at a realistic price.

There are exports to Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan and Africa. Three gold medals have been awarded by IBCAM (the motor industry's coachwork competition). Experienced judges voted an Auto-Sleeper 'Motor Caravan of the Year' three times running — a unique accolade. Two models are listed in the official Freight Rover range — another unique achievement. The firm's Managing Director has been elected by the other manufacturers to represent the industry on the prestigious Council of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

How have Auto-Sleepers achieved such outstanding success? As editor of a magazine about motor caravans, I can testify to one essential ingredient in the recipe: immediate attention to all enquiries and prompt action over any problems experienced by owners. (I have never known a serious complaint). The file of letters from satisfied customers grows month by month. After-sales service is second to none.

All Auto-Sleepers' conversions are approved by the manufacturers of the base vehicles. Bought-in components and materials are rigorously tested. If superior versions later become available, they are substituted but, again, only after thorough appraisal.

The firm's personnel are to be seen at all national and most regional and local exhibitions, talking to customers, seeking their opinions, which are fed back to management, along with comment from dealers, at regular weekly conferences. (I have been gratified to see at least one of my suggestions adopted, after suitable modification. They DO listen!)

Quality control is rigorous, every vehicle being checked before leaving the factory. Particular attention is paid to the safety aspect. The gas system is tested for leaks and all vehicles with mains electric hook-up have earth-leakage trips, providing potentially life-saving protection to occupants. Anchorage for rear restraint belts and child safety seats can be provided during manufacture.

Many of the firm's personnel and all of the principals use motor caravans regularly. Several have their own.

Evaluation of existing models is continuous. New ideas are constantly being developed but not all reach production stage. They are thoroughly examined and, if they fail to come up to the exacting standards demanded by Auto-Sleepers, are rejected.

"We never rest on our laurels," Managing Director, Anthony Trevelyan told me. "We strive continually to improve a product which most owners consider is already the best. We intend to keep it that way."

by John Hunt, Editor
Motorcaravan Motorhome Monthly



Auto-Sleepers have the chassis manufacturers' full approval for all the vehicles they build.

Personal Export

If you are working abroad, or plan to do so in the near future, it may interest you to know that all models produced by Auto-Sleepers may be purchased through the official Personal Export Scheme.

This means you can buy the model of your choice, arrange to have it shipped abroad to your home overseas and not be liable for UK taxes.

Almost all distributors of Auto-Sleepers are registered to handle Personal Export Sales and the one nearest to you will be able to give you precise information. In addition to our distributors most of the chassis manufacturers also operate their own personal export sales scheme. The full list of official distributors is on page 28, or you can contact any of the following:

VAG (UK) Limited,
Personal Export Centre, 95 Baker Street,
London W1M 1FB. Tel: 01-486 8411.

Vauxhall Motors Limited,
Luton, Bedfordshire. Tel: 0582 426196

Ford PIE Limited,
8 Balderton Street, London, W1Y 2BN. Tel:
01-493 4070.

Freight Rover Limited,
Personal Export, Common Lane Plant,
Washwood Heath, Birmingham, B8 24P.
Tel: 021-328 1777.

Renault (UK) Limited,
Personal Export, Western Avenue,
London, W3 ORZ. Tel: 01-992 3481.

Talbot Motor Company Limited,
Devonshire House, Piccadilly, London
W1. Tel: 01-499 7236 or 5533.

If you are a member of HM forces overseas you would qualify under the scheme. Please contact your nearest Auto-Sleeper distributor or Natocars, Wylds Estate, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, Somerset. Tel: 0278 55555.

Auto-Sleepers Success

Quarter of a century old

The birth of Auto-Sleepers came from a belief that motor caravans were the leisure vehicles for the future. And so it was that in 1959 an Austin-Morris J2 was converted and taken for a four week holiday in the south of France. The conversion proved to the family that this was a way of life — a view now shared by many! It was only a year later that the Company was formed and started manufacturing motor caravans in earnest.

Now, 25 years on, Auto-Sleepers are still located in Willersey though in a new and much larger factory. The range of models now being produced has increased to ten and the order book is extremely strong from both home and abroad.

The world of motor caravanning is very different from the days of the early 1960s when gas lamps were often fitted and fluorescent lights weren't even offered as an optional extra!

After more family holidays and a lot of customer research a restyled version of J2 was launched to be followed closely by a Commer in 1962.

The Commer proved a great success and, in fact, was the only vehicle used by Auto-Sleepers until 1970 when it was joined by the Bedford. By this time the



Company had been approved by both Chrysler and Vauxhall as an authorised converter. Four years later, official recognition was extended to include the Leyland Sherpa.

Auto-Sleepers' conversion of the Ford in 1975 opened up a number of opportunities and by late 1977 the Company had entered into agreements for the sale of its vehicles in Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

Up to this time the Company had concentrated on van conversions but in 1977 they broadened their range with their first coachbuilt motor caravan, the CB22. This was based on the Bedford and from the moment it was displayed on their stand at the Earls Court Show it became an instant success.

With an eye on the export market a high-roof version of the American Chevrolet was brought out and although it was planned only to export this vehicle, it was exhibited at Earls Court in 1978 to test customer reaction. Although left-hand drive with power steering and automatic transmission, a few were sold in England and paved the way for the introduction of the Volkswagen LT in 1979, a vehicle which proved to be extremely popular and won many export orders and awards for the Company.

At the 1980 Earls Court Show Auto-Sleepers caused a stir by not only introducing a new conversion of the VW Transporter but also dropping the CB22 in favour of the now well-known SV100. This vehicle is unique in that it has a monocoque glass fibre body shell of aerodynamic design styled by William Towns of Aston Martin Lagonda fame. As regular readers of MCW will know from our report, it is a very pleasant vehicle to drive.



Fish-eye view from Auto-Sleeper's factory, showing vans converted and awaiting conversion.

It was the advent of the Renault Trafic which turned Auto-Sleepers' thoughts to a different approach to van conversions and one which has been extremely successful. This was followed in 1982 by the introduction of the Sherpa Leisure, and thereafter the Talbot Express which, as the CX1000 GTL, quickly became Britain's best selling high top motor caravan.

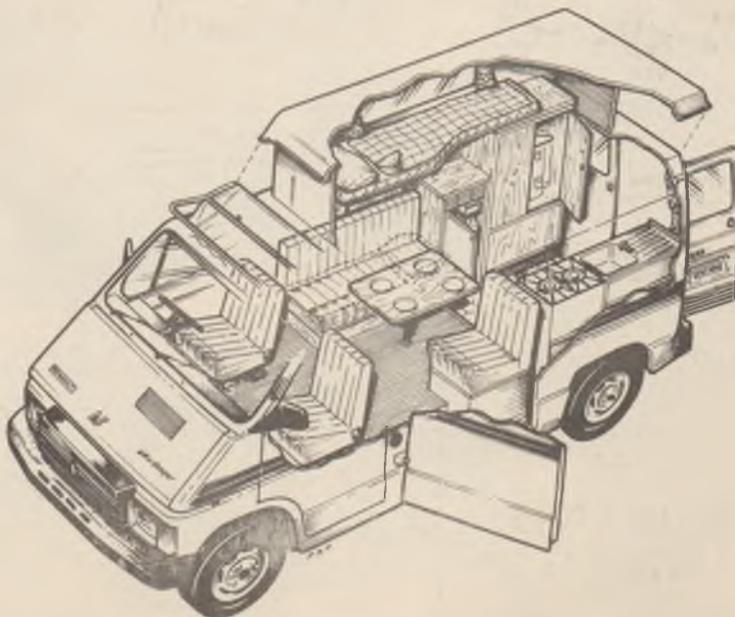
1983 saw the introduction of the luxuriously equipped Leisure Executive — a totally new concept in motor caravan design — and the attractively styled Coachbuilt Bedford Clubman.

The Company takes considerable pride in the vehicles they produce and their success is confirmed by the numerous awards they have won which include 3 Gold Medals in the Motor Show Coachwork Competition and the unrivalled achievement of having won the Motor Caravan of the Year Award on

three separate occasions. However, the desire for perfection continues and no one working at Auto-Sleepers is satisfied by anything less than the best. The search for new materials, ideas and original design goes on. The Company has its own bodyshop, cabinet makers, engineers and specialists fitting electrical, gas and plumbing systems.

The marketing of vehicles manufactured by Auto-Sleepers is through a network of approved dealers who are able to offer full PDI (Pre-delivery Inspection) and after-sales service in workshops of their own.

Auto-Sleepers see the future as extremely encouraging and the air of enthusiasm you can sense at their factory leads one to believe that they will never fail to have a continuing demand for their vehicles.



Auto-Sleepers Success

The Dealer's Viewpoint

Before discussing the dealer's viewpoint on the Motor Caravan Industry just a few words about The Master Dealers Association. This has now been formed for nearly 3 years and is going from strength to strength with at the present time 19 Motor Caravan Specialist Dealer Members spread right across the UK. It is, of course, by no means a "closed shop" but is open to any other Specialist Dealer who meets the exacting requirements in terms of stocking levels, workshop facilities, reputation and service. As a matter of interest since the association was formed only 3 letters of complaint have been received — not a bad record when you consider the thousands of motor caravans that have already been sold by members of the association.

The Dealer's Viewpoint — well, yes of course we are in the business to make a reasonable profit! However, in such a specialist industry as ours professionalism has become much more important than ever before. It's all very well to go along to "Joe Bloggs" with only a few poorly presented and heavily discounted vans in

stock, knock him down in price to rock bottom, and drive away with your new purchase feeling very proud of yourself! However, if you just stop and think for a minute, what's going to happen after you've taken delivery of your gleaming new purchase? With no profit margin to work on, your dealer is certainly not going to be interested in warranty and after-sales care, and suddenly your rock-bottom deal doesn't look so good.

As we move on in time motorcaravans are becoming much more sophisticated in terms of specification — a few years ago for example it was practically impossible to find a van with a shower as standard equipment — now they nearly all have them. Although there is nothing wrong with the concept of fully equipped vans it does require considerable expertise to maintain and service water heaters, central heating systems, etc. Going back to our "Joe Bloggs" example, again with no reasonable profit retention then, of course, he can't maintain full workshop facilities, let alone a parts department back-up again, your rock-bottom deal doesn't look so good!

One of the major aims of this association is to maintain and where possible improve the standard of service given to you, both in terms of sales advice and after-sales care — we all know that the engine, etc,

has to be serviced regularly or else eventually it lets you down. But how many of you have your caravan equipment serviced regularly — again, we're back to "Joe Bloggs" and his lack of service facilities.

Finally, QUALITY! No, not just the quality of the dealer and the fact that to be a member of the association he must have a good reputation! But quality in terms of the product that we are endeavouring to sell. Yes, all the usual ingredients such as a full range of elevating roof, high-top and coachbuilt models, attractive, up to the minute equipment, alternative layouts, etc, etc, apply. But quality also means a manufacturer who is totally committed to his dealer network and his buying public, builds his vans to a consistently high standard of workmanship and provides a first-class parts back-up service to his dealer network for both current and discontinued models. Although it is by no means a condition of membership that a Master Dealer has to sell Auto-Sleepers, you will find by looking through the advertisements elsewhere in this magazine that nearly every member does in fact do so — surely a recommendation in itself!

If you are considering either changing your present van or purchasing a motor caravan for the first time then you could do a lot worse than go along to your local Master Dealers Association Member now.

For further details of the Association and a list of the member Companies, please write to the Master Dealers Association Ltd, 44-45 Devizes Road, Swindon, Wilts.

by David Saunders,
Chairman: Master Dealer Association

The SMMT and the Trade

The SMMT, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, is the official representative for the motor trade in Britain with about 1500 members among whom, of course, are motor caravan manufacturers and converters. Until recently, the motor caravan section included light commercial trailers but now the two sections have been separated and Anthony Trevelyan, Managing Director of Auto-Sleepers is the Deputy Chairman of the motor caravan section.

As well as acting as the industry's liaison with the Government and other public authorities, the SMMT provides specialist services to its members and regularly publishes statistics for the motor trade; gives legal, economic and technical advice.

The Motor Caravan Section within the SMMT comprises the major British manufacturers and converters of which Auto-Sleepers is one, as well as some importers and concessionaires. The Section does a great deal of work in the field of technical standards and represents the manufacturers at the European Caravan Federation, reviewing proposed European legislation and international standards in relation to their applicability to UK conditions. It is also represented at the British Standards Institution where standards for heating, ventilating and LPG (butane and propane) appliances are given numbered standards to which equipment must be made to be awarded the "Kite" mark of approval.

These are just a few of the activities in which the SMMT is involved and in which the Motor Caravan Section takes part on behalf of their members.

The secret of our success

During the quarter of a century Auto-Sleepers have been producing motor caravans, we have often been asked to explain the reason for our success.

This is simply that we have always concentrated on giving the customer the best possible value for money and to producing vehicles to the highest standards of workmanship and design.

Whilst in itself this is a daunting task, we also have to ensure that every vehicle we build meets with the chassis manufacturers' and importers' high standards of engineering.

Our Company is dedicated to safety, and the vehicles we produce meet with all known standards; including many that have not yet been written!

Whilst all of this is extremely reassuring to the prospective buyer, our existing owners are not forgotten and we believe that the after-sales service we provide is second-to-none.

Our range of vehicles include those with elevating roofs, high tops and, of course, the Coachbuilt Clubman the body shell of which was styled by William Towns of Aston Martin/Lagonda fame.

Before buying or hiring a motor caravan, I hope that you will spare the time to look at an Auto-Sleeper in order to see the way they are built, the materials used and the standards to which we work.

On behalf of myself and all the staff at Auto-Sleepers, I wish you many years of happy motor caravanning.

A.L.C. Trevelyan,
Managing Director.



Behind the scenes



Auto-Sleepers 1984/85

Auto-Sleepers on test

Talbot CX1000 GTL

Britain's best selling high top motor caravan.

The GTL is Auto-Sleepers' top-of-the-range Talbot van conversion and the sample I tried had one or two welcome optional extras, among them the 2 litre petrol engine with five speed gearbox and a shower with hot and cold water.

I found the petrol engine to be one of the liveliest among the 2 litre vans. It is extremely flexible and the fact that it is coupled to a five speed box does not mean that the driver must always be in exactly the right ratio. For normal pottering around town, the fifth gear can be forgotten. It comes into its own on the open road, allowing relaxed, economical cruising at 60 to 65 mph coupled with the ability to accelerate to well over Britain's legal limit of 70 mph. Suspension was fairly firm, providing exceptional road-holding and lack of sway on corners. Indeed, this front

wheel drive seems to straighten out bends and roundabouts, although we have found that the Talbot provides its best ride when fully laden for a holiday.

It is among the larger of the vans commonly used for motorcaravan conversion, yet handles like a car, with light controls and steering. I encountered no difficulty in selecting the gear I wanted in the five speed box and the light steering made parking in a tight spot a piece of cake.

The CX 1000 GTL, like all Auto-Sleepers' conversions, provides comfortable, face-forward seating for four, with a good all-round view. There are plenty of ventilation options via the grilles in the fascia, wind-down cab windows, sliding caravan windows and hinged roof vents which may safely be opened a little way during travel. Entry to rear seats is simplified by the wide sliding door at the side.

The Talbot is a sensible van for conversion to a motorcaravan, for all mechanical components are located at the front. The fuel tank filler is forward of the left-hand cab door and even the spare wheel is stored cleanly and accessibly beneath the bonnet. With front wheel drive, there is no prop shaft nor space-consuming

differential housing between the rear wheels, so the floor can be made conveniently low, making the caravan easy to step into and keeping overall height down whilst providing full standing height throughout.

The Caravan

There have been several improvements since Auto-Sleepers first introduced the CX 1000. The floor is now level throughout. The crockery cupboard has been redesigned and relocated more conveniently at high level, behind a glass-fronted door. The toilet compartment at the rear may be extended across the full width of the vehicle, taking in the conveniently placed sink, which also does duty as a washbasin.

The CX 1000 GTL can now, therefore, be classed a compact motorhome, providing as it does everything a family of four would need in their mobile home-from-home.

In detail

Most noticeable improvement is in the extension of the toilet room door. For quick, on-the-road stops, there is room inside to use the chemical closet. Simply open the door and step in. But on site the door is opened across the gangway through 90



Talbot CX 1000 GTL. Distinctive banding at waist and roof level.

Auto-Sleepers on test

degrees, when another door is hinged out from it which, with a small flap, completely closes off the rear of the vehicle. Pull the curtains across the rear doors, open the sink cover — and there is a sizeable shower/dressing room with hot and cold water at the telephone shower head and stainless steel sink. Water is drawn by an electric pump from a large underfloor tank with exterior filler. A water gauge gives a read-out of contents.

A small roof ventilator in the shower room and a larger one in the centre of the corridor ensure as much flow of air as is needed. It is an altogether sensible arrangement which allows the caravan to have a spacious interior yet provides full toilet facilities within the confines of a fairly compact vehicle, not too large to use as a day-to-day car.

The rest of the kitchen contains more working surface and storage facilities than

are usually found in a van conversion — and at a convenient working height. The two-burner hob plus grill may, if desired, be supplemented by an oven. There is a large refrigerator at eye level (such as is usually only found in coachbuilt motorcaravans) which has three-way operation from (a) the 12 volt battery when motoring, (b) bottled gas when stationary or (c) mains electricity when available. In accordance with Auto-Sleepers' policy of building in as many safety features as possible, use of mains electricity automatically brings into operation an earth leakage trip. Even on damp grass, in pouring rain or in the unlikely event of a faulty appliance, caravanners can be sure that electricity will be cut off the moment a fault develops — and before any injury to humans occurs.

Other safety features include a bank of gas cocks for isolating appliances separately, accessibly placed just inside a kitchen cupboard. The water heater and blown air space heater are properly vented to the exterior.

Opposite the kitchen unit is a wardrobe of reasonable width and depth. Unusual in a van conversion is the positioning of the rail so that, when the door is opened, clothes can be seen hanging sideways on. Each and every garment is visible and the one required may be removed on its clothes hanger without disturbing the remainder.

The versatile seating, which follows the proven Auto-Sleepers' pattern, provides several options. If four people are travelling, all may face forwards on individual seats with raked backrests (cab backrests are adjustable to any angle). For dining, one or both rear seats may be quickly converted to settees that face inwards to the centrally mounted table, which is stored when not required behind one of the settee backrests which, again, are raked for comfort. Up to eight people can be accommodated by sliding forward the cab seats, reclining their backrests fully to mate with the settees.

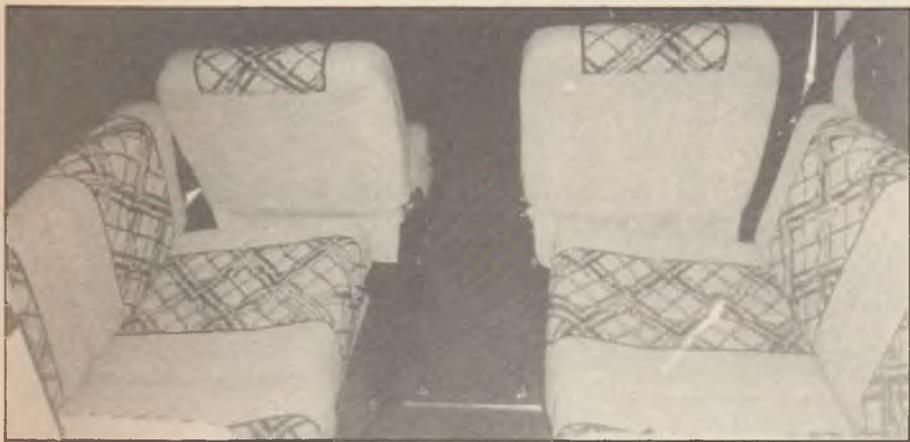
In this position, the cushions have formed two comfortable single beds, with a gangway between. For supreme luxury, a really large double bed can be formed by bridging the gangway with optional-extra cushions.

Above the seats/beds is a large hinged flap, which normally travels folded up, out of the way, to allow unobstructed walk-in access to the front seats. When hinged downwards and extended, there is another double bed in the roof area.

Bedding, in the form of sleeping bags or duvets, is stored in the lockers which form the bases of the rear seats. If additional blankets are required, say, for winter camping, they may safely be carried on the lowered upper bed platform. There is still ample headroom for occupants of the seats below.

With its warm, carpet-like inner lining and fully insulated GRP roof, the CX 1000 GTL makes a sensible vehicle for year-round camping, (when, naturally, the optional heater should be specified). There is a warm, quality carpet in the seating area and the option of a removable carpet to cover the vinyl floor in the kitchen is available.

That's just one of Auto-Sleepers' thoughtful touches. There are many more such as slim-line fluorescent lamps for illumination wherever required, splash guards around the hob, a drop-down door to the grill, which provides further working surface, four-place crockery set in rattle-free racks (no plastic cups for Auto-Sleeper users), fly-screened roof vent above the upper bed Auto-Sleeper owners will find many more.



Twin-settee configuration in Talbot. Table stands on one leg in centre.



Double doors across gangway provide a large toilet room (viewed from rear).

Auto-Sleepers on test

Volkswagen Transporter VT20

Superb motoring from a famous marque

There are no two ways about it, the new breed of water-cooled 1.9 VWs are my favourite for motoring enjoyment. One glides along over rough roads, when shocks are not fed to driver or passengers. On smooth roads, the ride is akin to flying or, rather, gliding, for little noise reaches the interior from wind, tyres or the engine, tucked away out of sound and sight at the rear.

It is no longer necessary to open cab windows to remain cool in summer, for the VW's heater/ventilation system provides a cool, face-level breeze when moving. In traffic snarl-ups, the three speed fan can be used for the same effect. In winter, output from the heater radiator (sited up front, plumbed from the rear) will keep the cab comfortably warm — and there's sufficient warmth to comfort rear passengers, too. (Gone are the days when VW owners shivered because warmth from the old air-cooled engine hardly reached the cab).

The powerful 78 bhp engine on the demonstration vehicle provided sparkling acceleration through the gears from rest. In a VW, there's no difficulty in keeping up with cars. On the contrary, the driver who wants to do so will often leave most of them behind.

For gentler motoring and better fuel economy, a cheaper 60 bhp version of the same 1.9 litre engine is available. I have never tried one but owners have told me that it compares in performance with the old, air-cooled 2 litre. So it is no sluggard. A 1.6 litre diesel engine is available. Whilst lacking the sparkle of the petrol motor, it provides satisfactory performance with the ability to cruise at 60 mph or so all day — and outstanding fuel economy. Automatic transmission may be ordered with the 78 bhp petrol version.

My wife enjoys riding in the back of the VW as much as the front. In fact, we both love it, are always delighted when offered a sample for road test purposes.

The Caravan

"With those peacocks of praise, why don't you own one?" we're often asked. The simple answer is that it is a couple of inches too high to fit into my garage. The rear engine layout imposes certain interior layout difficulties upon converters. Most have settled for a double bed over the

engine and a furniture unit along the offside. Auto-Sleepers' approach is a little different, as might be expected from this old-established firm not afraid to innovate.

The downstairs double bed is still at the back. In place of the usual transverse settee towards the rear, there is a U-shaped couch, spanning the whole width of the VW, capable of accommodating four at the table, which is mounted on a single leg. Kitchen sink, cooker, refrigerator and cupboards are fairly well forwards, behind the driver's seat. Backing the cab passenger's seat is a storage cupboard, one shelf of which contained, on the test vehicle, Auto-Sleepers' usual crockery set. An externally-flued heater may be fitted here or, alternatively, a thermostatically controlled blown-air heater is available. There is a wardrobe at the rear, by the head of the bed, which we found would take four or five jacket-length garments on hangers.

The nearside wing of the U-shaped couch is based on a folding box, may be folded away to give more face-forward leg room when travelling or for load carrying. As a seat, there is storage space beneath. Its opposite number, on the offside, houses a chemical closet which is fitted as standard. The roof rack would carry the tent or annexe to use it in.

The downstairs bed is quickly made ready by removing the cushions from these two side seats, pulling the bench forward and thereby flattening its backrest, which mates with the big cushion above the engine to form a large, comfortable double.

The upper double bed is equally simple to make. Its ready-upholstered base panels are just slid into position. 1985 Auto-Sleeper VWs have a modified rising roof, still in the familiar and proven pattern, which gives an extra four inches of headroom above the bed.

The beds do not interfere in any way with the cab seats, leaving them free as dumping places — or ready for a quick getaway should occasion demand.

We found the kitchen, backed by a fly-screened, louvred window, a convenient place to work, well clear of the seating/dining area, where others may come and go at will through the wide side door. The sink cover is hinged on a sliding rail which allows it to be pulled forward a little, swung through 180 degrees to rest horizontally above the cab seat, making a useful working surface. The two-burner hob, with grill beneath, has flame guards on three sides, ensuring that no splashes reach the upholstery and that curtains are well protected from gas flames and steam from pans.

The upholstery of 1985 models is new: fawn with attractive brown and white diagonal insets and brown piping. The brown carpet with flecks of white was not easily marked and extended into the cab. Curtains were of toning brown. The exterior was white with wide brown striping carrying the 'Auto-Sleepers' motif.

Another unusual aspect of Auto-Sleeper VW is that it may be regarded as a spacious estate car. A large shelf is provided at the rear, just below window level. When the tailgate is opened, a commodious luggage locker is revealed where a load of shopping may be completely hidden from prying eyes. The shelf is removable and can be left at home if all you are carrying are blankets and sleeping bags.

With the shelf removed, along with some cushions, and the settee backrest folded, the VW becomes a small removal van, capable of taking, through side or rear doors, sizeable items of furniture. More than one owner has discovered that 'VW' signifies 'versatile wagon'.



High-lift roof on Transporter gives extra four inches.



Front end of VW seen from side door.



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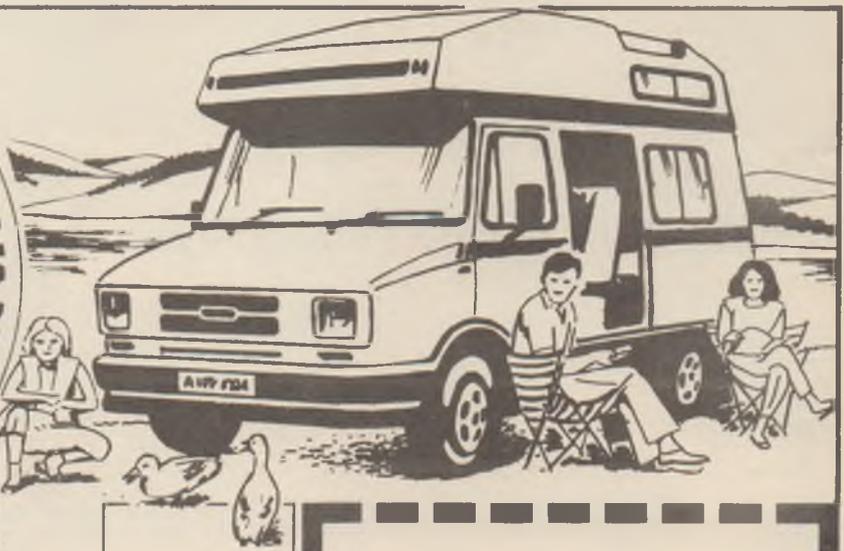
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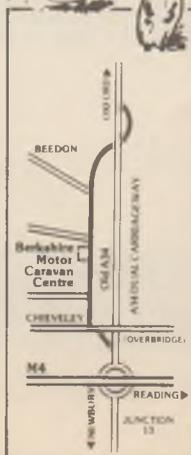


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Auto-Sleepers on test

Renault Traffic RV50

French flair allied to traditional English craftsmanship

When the Renault Traffic (spelt the French way) was first introduced, one wondered if the steeply sloping front would appeal to British motorcaravan converters. Would the comparatively small cab roof impose restrictions on layout? Was the 1400cc engine big enough?

We were not left in doubt for long, for the design team at Auto-Sleepers soon realised the possibilities offered by the spacious body with floor made acceptably low by front wheel drive layout. Far from being restricted by that sloping front, they have managed to install a roof rack ahead of the rising roof.

The first Renault Traffic I drove had the 1400cc engine, which is still available, it was entirely capable of propelling the

vehicle in a forward direction at a sensible speed, at the same time returning fuel consumption figures previously achieved only by midget motorcaravans. Certainly, one changed gear a little earlier on hills but this was no toy, even when fully laden for a caravanning holiday.

It was, however, a pleasure to be offered the 1650cc model for the present evaluation. It gobbled up the miles and I really enjoyed the driving. That sloping front end carves its way through the air. It must reduce drag and improve fuel consumption figures — and there was very little wind noise.

I like sitting in the Renault cab — and so does my wife. The bottom of the windscreen is a long way away, with a deep fascia top. It inspires a feeling of security, having all that metal in front. Although it feels solid, the Renault is in fact a light vehicle, hence the favourable mpg figures claimed by many owners.

It is a very comfortable cab in which to sit for many hours of motoring and controls are light, demanding little effort. Consequently, the driver does not tire quickly. Suspension, in French tradition, is superb, kind to occupants over the worst of

England's 'B' roads. Directional stability does not suffer in spite of the very light steering and bends can be taken with verve — probably attributable to the front wheel drive and low centre of gravity made possible by the low floor level.

The Caravan

In using their traditional layout, evolved on Bedfords, Commers and Fords over the years, Auto-Sleepers have not failed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this new breed from the Continent. The nearside settee backrest has been modified to make it removable, so allowing full use of the side door. This is an asset when using the vehicle as a four-seater car with face-forward seating. The rear doors can then be ignored until a bulky load, such as sheets of plywood or, perhaps, a wardrobe, has to be carried. The big rear doors, openable from inside or outside, can be hinged right back out of the way. Their large windows are an aid to rear vision, supplementing the adequate and easily adjusted door mirrors.

The low floor is a short step up from the ground, has allowed Auto-Sleepers to design kitchen furniture that is high enough



Renault Traffic. Protruding front grille denotes larger engine.

Auto-Sleepers on test



Seating in Traffic, with left-hand seat in face-forward position.



There is a great deal of storage space in Traffic's kitchen.



Wardrobe and storage shelves in Traffic.

to work at in comfort. And, because the kitchen units are taller than on some other vans, there is the bonus of more storage space. Seat base lockers are deeper, too, and accommodate more clothes or bedding, although the floor here is raised so that passengers' feet are not left dangling, whether they sit facing forwards for travelling or sideways on settees for dining.

My wife, sitting in the rear, was completely happy when travelling. When we stopped, front seats were pushed forward and their backrests reclined to make leg rests. We relaxed in style and comfort. Lower beds were easily made up by changing the face-forward rear seats to settees and matching up to the front seats.

This obstructed the side door, of course, but we could still leave and enter by the wide rear doors. A conversion is available which makes the whole of the front area into an enormous double bed. We could feel no uncomfortable ridges where the cushions of the various seats joined to make the beds. The two upper beds are stretchers, rolled up and concealed neatly behind wooden panels when not needed. They supported my 13 stones without protest and felt surprisingly comfortable.

We found ventilation, whether moving or stationary, met all our requirements, for there were, in addition to the cab windows, three tinted glass sliding windows in the caravan. In addition, as on all Auto-Sleepers' rising roof models, side panels of the roof may be opened fractionally to provide through ventilation — or one panel may be lowered completely. In really scorching weather, that's better than having no roof at all, for occupants get the benefit of the shade. It's a dodge used at sporting events, allowing those inside a grandstand view, yet with the comforts of home immediately to hand.

Furniture was, of course, immaculately finished, as we have come to expect from Auto-Sleepers' Cotswold craftsmen. On one side was the sizeable wardrobe, with three useful shelves alongside which would take folded shirts and other garments that must not be creased. Alongside is the gas/12 volt refrigerator, set at a convenient height above a locker with fall-front door — a sensible place to store shoes or tins of food. The refrigerator is topped by a wide shelf above which is the control panel with water level gauge and a 12 volt socket — a place where some owners I know put the television set. The wardrobe itself has a flat top with a lip around, where shallow items can be safely stored when travelling.

Opposite wardrobe and refrigerator are the stainless steel sink and matching hob and grill with flame guards. There is a useful recess beneath the sink which will take shallow items. A drawer is supplied and there are plenty of cupboards for storing pots, pans, food or even wine bottles. Lids to cooker and sink are split, so that either one or the other may be 'up', the other 'down' to provide a flat working surface. The fall-front below the sink also makes extra dumping space.

Interior lighting is generous, with three fluorescent and two courtesy lamps. The exterior is white or beige, with Auto-Sleepers' bold brown striping. The flecked carpet at the front is complemented by toning vinyl floor covering in the kitchen area.

Among the optional extras is a rear annexe tent and an externally flued heater mounted on the panel below the wardrobe.

With that and the insulated roof, plus the warm, carpet-type lining to lower walls, the Renault Traffic by Auto-Sleepers will prove a car-like home on wheels suitable for year-round use.

Auto-Sleepers on test

Renault Traffic Hi-Top

New — and a potential winner!

It is so new that we had to wait for the very first model to come off the production line. The fact that it was well nigh perfect says a lot about the painstaking research and development work which Auto-Sleepers carry out BEFORE they launch a new model.

This report should be read in conjunction with my foregoing assessment of the rising-roof Auto-Sleeper Traffic, for the base vehicle and "ground floor" treatment are identical. I'll concentrate here on the differences made possible by the fitting of a permanent high roof.

Before doing so, however, a remark in passing. I drove the high top (and my wife rode in the back) to assess the difference

the extra height made on the road. There was none for the Auto-Sleepers' roof made no difference to straight-line stability, cornering or cruising speed. Again, it was an altogether delightful vehicle to travel in, front or rear.

The high top, of GRP and fully insulated, takes over above window level. The front follows the slope of the windscreen and appears to add no drag whatsoever. There are windows in each side which provide a commanding viewpoint for anyone standing inside.

The extra wall space above the kitchen has been used to accommodate a glass-fronted cupboard fitted with the Auto-Sleeper four-piece crockery set of large plates, small plates, soup or cereal bowls, cups, saucers and a milk jug. There is a similar cupboard opposite, with a fret for glasses and bottles. This and the crockery cupboard make yet more space available for general storage in cupboards beneath the sink and cooker. Over the rear doors is a deeply-lined shallow shelf — ideal for maps or books.

A wide shelf runs along each side, useful as a dumping space when stationary,

although its purpose is to support the upper double bed, which may be pulled out, in ready-upholstered sections, from above the cab.

The cab roof has been cut away (with Renault approval, of course). When not in use, the bed is hinged up out of the way, thus allowing full height walk-through from the rear of the caravan right to the front seats.

The model we sampled had some optional extras in the form of a Zig control panel, second battery with condition indicator, mains electric input, 13 amp mains socket and earth leakage trip switch for safety when using the mains.

Although the Auto-Sleepers' rising roof is little trouble to put up and provides good insulation, we preferred the high top and would advise those with no garaging problems (or no garage anyway) to consider it. It must be more comfortable in winter, provides extra storage facility, upper beds which even fidgety children could not roll out of and the ability to walk tall always.

Because the Traffic's floor is low, the high top is not all that high.



New Renault Traffic high top has steeply sloping front.



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Auto-Sleepers on test

Bedford Clubman

Britain's most elegant motorhome.

"If it looks right, it IS right —" an old adage which emphasises the success of one of Britain's most sought-after motorcaravans.

Designer William Towns and Auto-Sleepers created a sensation when the GRP-bodied, monocoque construction, Bedford SV100 was unveiled to admiring crowds at the 1980 Caravan Show. The Clubman was a natural development in 1983, using the same chassis and body. It proved instantly successful and has ever since been in constant demand by connoisseurs who must have the best. When my own ship comes home

Motoring

The Bedford CF, always a likeable vehicle, has been gradually improved over the years until now, in CF2 form, it is a rival to anything that the Continentals or Orientals can produce. There have been no headline-seeking changes, merely steady and slow improvement — a bit here, a touch there. Bedfords have stuck to the proven formula of front engine, rear wheel drive and entirely conventional mechanical layout. The biggest complaint of owners of earlier models, engine accessibility, has been simply overcome by making the whole of the front grille removable in a few minutes.

The new Opel 2 litre petrol engine is a worthy replacement for the former Vauxhall 2.3 version, now finally discarded after many years of reliable service. Bench test figures reveal a slight reduction in



Forward end of Clubman, showing one seat in face-forward position.

torque but in practice I could detect no loss of performance whatsoever. I found the new engine quiet and flexible at all speeds, extremely tolerant of driver errors. It was possible to travel at 20 mph or less in fourth gear, then increase speed with no vibration or protest.

Suspension was more tolerant of indifferent road surfaces, providing a smooth ride at all times. Yet cornering ability has not suffered from the apparently softer suspension. The flowing shape of the monocoque body contributes to the low level of wind noise and owners have reported an improvement in fuel consumption figures. Automatic transmission is available as an option. The

Bedford scores over some continental rivals in this respect.

The Caravan

As Auto-Sleepers' top-of-the-range model, the Clubman has got to be good. It is. As the name implies, it must appeal to the serious caravanner who uses his vehicle to the full and often wants to entertain neighbours to a drink or a meal at club gatherings. With fully reclining front seats and comfortable settees, ten can be accommodated with comparative ease. Standard level of equipment is such that virtually no options are listed, nor are they necessary. When you buy a Clubman, you receive a complete motorhome. Yet all this



Clubman on new CF2 Bedford. Distinctive styling to GRP monocoque body.

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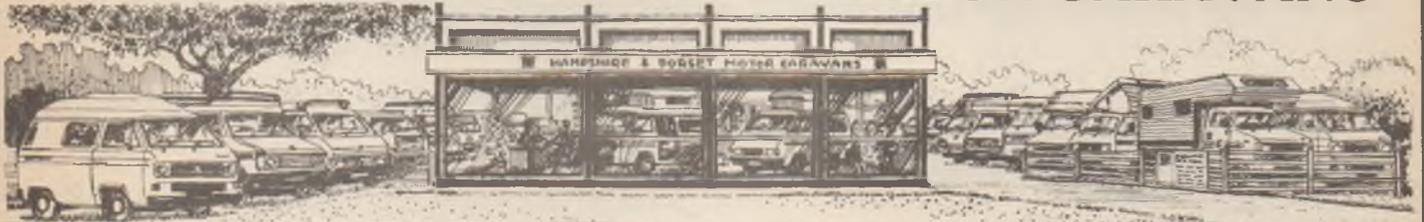
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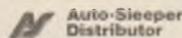
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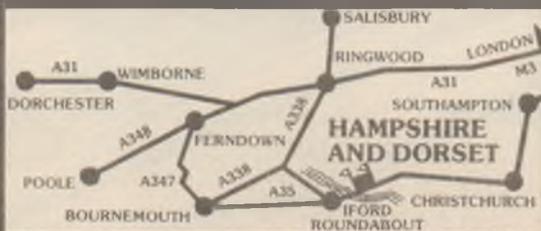
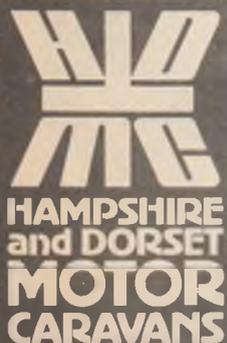


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Auto-Sleepers on test

is accomplished within compact overall dimensions, enabling the vehicle to be used as a car for daily routine.

Seats and beds

Four face-forward seats are available for travelling when, despite the fact that this is a coachbuilt motorcaravan, occupants of the rear seats have a good view forwards and a panoramic one through the big side windows, which are of tinted glass and slide to open. On site the large dinette seats — which have raked back rests — provide more than enough room and are extremely comfortable.

The dining table, stored behind one of the backrests, is placed on its island leg between the settees at meal times.

For sleeping, there are two single beds which are made up from the settees and fully-reclined cab seats — or a transverse double of generous width. We found both to be comfortable, with no nasty ridges where the cushions join. Above the cab is another double bed which, during daytime, may be pushed away forwards to provide walk-in access to the front seats.

Nobody is going to be cold at night in the Clubman, for there is full insulation throughout, including a double-skinned floor. In really cold weather the gas heater, flued to the exterior, may safely be left running all night, with the thermostat set to the desired level to maintain an even temperature. In warmer conditions, airflow may be maintained by opening the two fly-screened roof vents.

Furniture and equipment

First thing noticed by most people who enter the Clubman is the light and spacious feeling of the interior, so tastefully finished with the dark brown carpet facings to seat lockers, repeated beneath the upper cupboards which run along each side above the big windows. The ribbed, old-gold upholstery is complemented by the gold brocade curtains on a light fawn background. The woodwork is in Auto-Sleepers' traditional light oak veneer and, knowing this manufacturer, it is almost superfluous to proclaim that the finish is immaculate, both inside and outside cupboards and lockers. Yet, Auto-Sleepers' motorcaravans will take the knocks and scuffs of everyday living, as is proved by their popularity with hire fleets.

Behind the right hand seats is a generous wardrobe with full hanging height. Set into its base is the flued space heater, with vent pipe keeping the contents of the wardrobe aired. Beyond the wardrobe is the toilet/shower room, with appropriate blue and white décor. The interior is unobstructed by a wheel arch and there is plenty of standing space between the chemical closet and fixed washbasin. Above it is a large mirror, beneath, a wide shelf with drop-down door for toilet articles. The shower head is on a hose, controlled by separate hot and cold taps. The water heater is partly recessed into the wall of the toilet room and, because of its situation, there are no long pipe runs to washbasin or sink. Consequently, little hot water is wasted by being left in the pipes.

The kitchen is across the back, beneath the opening rear window which may be screened by curtains or a roller blind. The two-burner hob and grill has highly polished splashback and side guards and, like the stainless steel sink and drainer alongside, is at a convenient working height.

Beneath the cooker is an oven with drop-down door and beneath that a cupboard, again with drop-down door. The sink has a wide compartment below it, suitable for cutlery trays, bread board and the like.



At the rear of the Clubman, showing toilet room door open and adjacent kitchen.

The large cupboard which forms the base of the sink unit has twin, hinged doors. Storage space in the kitchen unit is uncluttered by obstructions such as wheel arches. There is a useful shelf, with deep lip, above the sink and oven. Three isolating cocks for gas systems are accessibly positioned in a cupboard. The gas itself is carried in a ventilated compartment, with lockable door, on the outside of the vehicle.

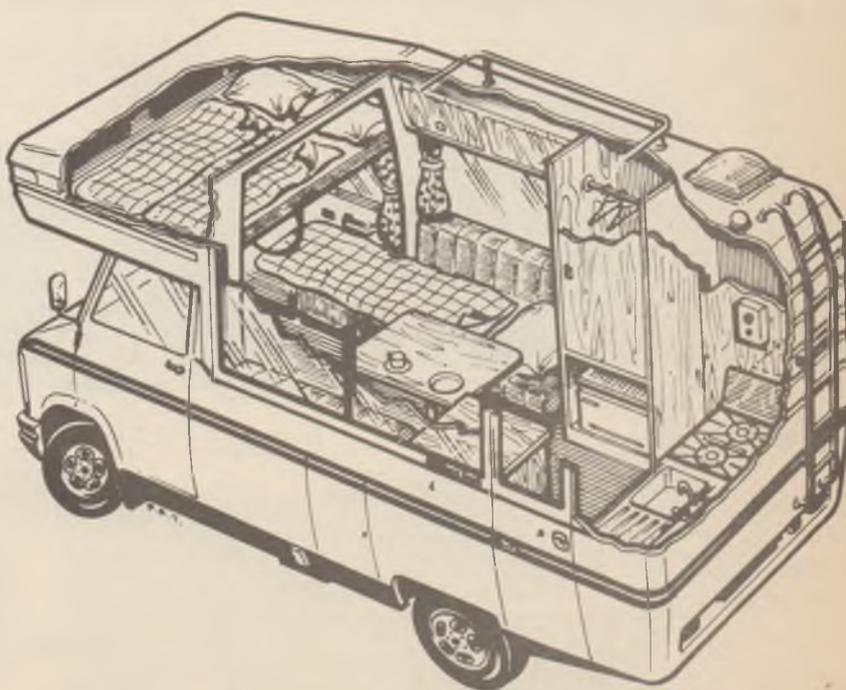
Storage in the Clubman is generous and a family of two-plus-two should have no difficulty in finding space for all their requirements. Underseat lockers are big and, if yet more space is needed, capacity can be doubled by converting one or both forward-facing seats into the settee configuration. If yet more room is required, bedding may be carried above the cab.

The wall lockers above the seats along each side are a special feature. Some are

for general storage of smaller items and have a shelf. One has a fiddle rail, is tall enough for bottles. Another is fitted with Auto-Sleepers' distinctive crockery set for four.

The refrigerator is opposite the kitchen, just inside the side door. It is enclosed in a properly vented cabinet of its own, with a flat top which extends the working space for the cook and is the ideal position for a television set. The refrigerator has a two star freezer compartment, operates on 12 volts (when travelling) gas or mains electricity. For complete safety when using the latter, a circuit breaker is incorporated.

Motorcaravanners who are in the market for the best must place the Clubman high on their list of priorities. For a couple, with or without children, there's little to beat it — at any price.

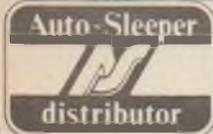


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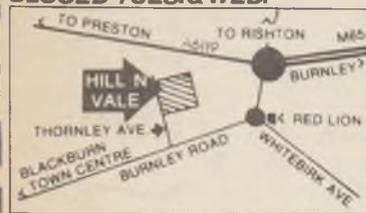
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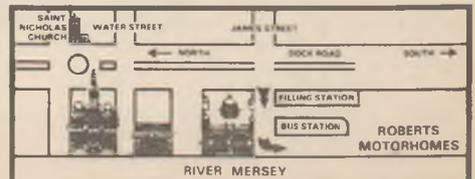
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HOW TO FIND US



Auto-Sleepers on test

Leisure Executive

A new concept in motor caravan design.

For long an admirer of the all-British Sherpa from the Freight Rover branch of British Leyland, I was personally keen to drive the new, bigger, "jumbo" version of an old favourite and felt immediately at home in the cab; it was just a bit wider, with more elbow room, but the layout was the same, with the new Sherpa's generous provision for stowage of maps, books and assorted clobber.

I drove two versions: the 2 litre petrol and 2.4 litre diesel. It was the diesel engine that provided the revelation. When first starting up, the old diesel clunk was audible but by no means obtrusive. As speed was increased, the motor became progressively quieter until, at 60 mph, it was barely heard. There was merely a soothing hum of motion — and virtually no wind noise from the carefully shaped GRP high top — styled by William Towns, who was also responsible for the SV 100 and Clubman.

The extra weight of the diesel engine (the same as that used on the Land Rover) over the front wheels apparently improved directional stability on straight roads. Yet I discerned no increased stiffness of the steering when parking. The wider track of this bigger Sherpa seemed also to improve ride quality, which was not as hard as on the smaller version.

With five speed gearbox, 60-70 mph was a relaxed cruising gait which could be held all day. Not basically a lover of diesels, I am having to modify my opinions in the light of recent experience of this and other marques. The best — among which must be numbered the new Sherpas — are quiet and almost responsive as petrol engines, with the bonus of economy and low levels of air pollution. People who travel extensively abroad, where diesel is generally much cheaper than petrol, might think seriously about making the change. The higher initial first cost would soon be recovered.

The big Sherpa was pleasant to drive and my wife, doing her spell on one of the rear seats, commented on the smooth ride and good all-round vision. She was really comfortable on the shaped seat with adjustable backrest and headrest.

The Caravan

"Unusual" is the word. At first glance, the Executive appears to have no beds, just four separate contoured seats standing on plinths, all with headrests. The seats are on swivel bases, may be turned through any angle — to face the centre, for instance, giving an attractive and intimate club lounge effect, with plenty of legroom for the four occupants. The square table can be mounted on its single leg centrally for dining, or offset to one side for greater freedom of movement when, for instance, drinks are served.

At night, headrests are removed, front seats are pushed forward and their backs reclined to the horizontal. Rear seats are reversed, with their backs reclined to mate with front seats, thus providing two single beds with a gangway between. The contoured edges of the seat cushions help to make a bed which it is difficult to roll out of. Although each bed is made up from four separate cushions, we found that they matched perfectly, presenting no uncomfortable ridges at the joints between the cushions.



Leisure Executive. Stylish high top has integral roof rack towards rear.



Cocktail cabinet in Executive takes four bottles and four tumblers.



Executive's club lounge area.

One of the few features of this Auto-Sleeper which is common to other high tops from the factory is the overcab bed. It may be hinged upwards out of the way, to allow walk-tall access to the front seats. When lowered and extended rearwards, there's a big double bed ready for use.

Unusual rear end

Unconventional though the front of the Executive may be, it is the rear end that departs radically from standard Auto-Sleeper practice, for the kitchen, shower room and storage facilities occupy the whole of the back, providing an area bounded on three sides by furniture and fittings, on the fourth by the forward lounge. The kitchen sink is placed across the back doors and there is no exit that way. Instead, opening a rear door gives convenient access to the large gas bottle compartment.

The L-shaped kitchen has a vitreous enamelled hob with plate warmer on top and grill beneath. The separate oven, with drop-down door, nestles in a recess below. The sink and drainage basin are also vitreous enamelled, matching the hob. A venetian blind covers the rear window above the sink and there is an eye-level, opening window to ventilate the kitchen. There is no doubt that placing kitchen units across the rear of the vehicle provides a significant increase in working and storage area — and gives the cook the opportunity to concentrate on the job in hand, undisturbed by the comings and goings of the rest of the family, who must use the side door which, incidentally, is one of the easiest to operate.

The kitchen is on the right. On the left side of the vehicle are toilet/shower room at the rear. Forward of that is a wardrobe of sensible size, with the thermostatically

controlled heater in its base panel. Between wardrobe and sitting area is the 2 cu ft refrigerator/freezer, raised slightly off the floor for easier access, and topped by a cocktail cabinet which takes four bottles and four tumblers. Tumblers are supplied, bottles are not. The customary Auto-Sleepers' crockery set for four is securely located in a cupboard above the kitchen.

The instant water heater is placed near to shower and sink, so avoiding long pipe runs and waste of hot water. Water is drawn from the large underfloor tank and a waste tank is also, of course, provided. The Executive is equipped with mains electricity input, safeguarded by an earth leakage trip device.

As on other Auto-Sleepers, there were thoughtful touches, among them being the mirror and towel ring for the toilet room, accessible fuse box, mains and 12 volt sockets, water level gauge, integral roof rack and ladder, shut-off cocks for all gas appliances, chopping-board sink cover.

The exterior of this luxury motorcaravan is finished in white, with brown skirts and bold brown side stripes. Inside, woodwork is traditional Auto-Sleepers' light oak, topped by brown laminate working areas. Upholstery is fawn with matching inserts. The brown velvet Regency striped curtains are generously cut and have fasteners to keep them in place when drawn, matching ties to hold them back. The brown sculptured carpet in the forward area is complemented by toning vinyl at the rear. The toilet room is finished in blue and white, with a white shower curtain. A light fawn carpet-type material and wide dark blue trim lines the roof and sides. It all adds up to a most attractive vehicle which is sure to evoke the admiration of all who see it.

LEISURE EXECUTIVE



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Experience the Leisure Executive's extra dimension of luxury for yourself. See it at your local dealer, or write to us for more details.



SHERPA

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Tyburn Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 8HJ

Auto-Sleepers on test

Sherpa Leisure

A compact model which will fit into many garages.

This is the easy one for me, for it's the one I own! It became necessary to find a motorcaravan which would fit into a small garage, with no chance of widening the entrance or raising the roof (of the garage). We searched the buyers' guides for something a couple of inches under 7ft in height. There were a few midgets but we wanted a proper motorcaravan with an engine that would gobble up the miles on long business runs. (On holiday, we don't hurry).

We counted ourselves lucky, indeed, that there was one Auto-Sleeper which came within our measurements. The fact that it was based on the new generation of Freight Rover Sherpas was the icing on the cake. We had owned a Sherpa before, had come to like it for its easily-serviced engine and reliability.

The Leisure vehicle used by Auto-Sleepers has a sliding side door, so easy to get into and one of the quietest closers on the market. Motoring was always good in Sherpas; it is even better with the Leyland 'O' series 2 litre engine which has the reputation for better fuel consumption than some of its rivals. And it's fast. Steering is light enough when motoring. Some samples can be a bit heavy when parking, though much lighter than earlier versions. The Sherpa is a willing workhorse that becomes a racehorse when the driver so wishes. The version supplied to Auto-Sleepers has a comprehensive "hush pack" with lots of lining on the panels beneath the bonnet, and tinted glass sliding windows. The cab fascia has been redesigned to accept a quantity of books, maps and clobber. During a recent 3-week holiday, it swallowed our site guides, tapes and paper-back library.

Mine is an automatic, which takes the strain out of driving in heavy traffic. The sample I drove at Auto-Sleepers was manual four speed and I realised again that auto transmission does carry a few performance penalties if left in 'D'. In other words, it still pays to use the gears, though shifting them is merely a matter of flicking a lever.

With its host of mechanical options (there's overdrive, diesel engine, four wheel drive or limited slip differential) this compact little vehicle will appeal to many. The conventional, accessible front engine and rear transmission will be understood by mechanics everywhere and there are more service and parts centres in the UK than for any other make, for engine and transmission are common to cars in the Leyland group.

The Caravan

It is narrow — that was one of the reasons for our buying the vehicle — but the side door adds a new dimension to caravan living, leaving the cook in undisturbed isolation at the rear, where sink and cooker have been raised above window sill height to make them easier to work at. The long work top is hinged along its length. When raised, one part drops behind the other, leaving ventilation available through the sliding window which backs it. There is a shallow compartment beneath the sink where we store glasses and a plastic cutlery tray, keeping the drawer for kitchen cutlery and oddments. The drop-down flat increases working space, as does the one in front of the grill. Beneath there



Sherpa Leisure and Sales Manager, Tony Johnson.

Auto-Sleepers on test



Sherpa's kitchen. Long box above window hides stretcher bunk.



Sherpa's wardrobe and shelf unit. Lower panel will house a heater.



Single bed in Sherpa. Dropping settee backrest into recess increases width.

are more cupboards with hinged doors, one of which carries the crockery set securely in a fret. The cupboard beneath the cooker is tall enough to take wine bottles and the spare gas container. The gas bottle in use is housed in a ventilated compartment beneath the floor, next to the spare wheel, accessible in its hinged cradle on the offside. The big water tank is also slung below, feeds the sink via an electric pump.

Opposite the kitchen is the wardrobe, with twin doors which conceal the hanging rail and a nest of three shelves. We allow ourselves one shelf each, reserving the third for first aid and medicines, which are therefore instantly available. Alongside, is the gas/12 volt refrigerator with another cupboard below, there is a wide flat shelf above the refrigerator and above that are fuse box, water level gauge, 12 volt socket and isolating switches for refrigerator and water pump. (With the latter "on", water comes as soon as the tap at the sink is turned). The panel at the bottom of the wardrobe will take a flued heater.

Seats and beds

For travelling, there are the usual four forward-facing individual seats. One or both of the rear seats can quickly be converted to inward-facing settees. With front seats pushed forward and reclined, two long single beds are quickly formed. The gap between the beds may be filled with optional cushions to provide a king-sized double.

Stretcher bunk housings run along each side of the vehicle above window level, extending to the rear. The rolled bunks are hidden behind a long, hinged panel until required. They take my weight without protest.

The parallelogram rising roof has two double-glazed windows in its solid sides at a convenient viewing height when standing. Ventilation may be increased on one or both sides by opening the panels fractionally. As on other Auto-Sleepers, one side panel may be dropped completely without danger of the roof collapsing.

Appearance

From being an ugly duckling, the Sherpa has grown into an attractive cygnet, with looks enhanced by Freight Rover's two-tone paintwork in brown and white. Inside, the only change for 1985 is a new, smoother upholstery in oatmeal tweed which resists marks. The familiar light oak furniture framed in rammin remains. All doors have recessed catches. The flecked, two-tones of-brown carpet is extremely hard wearing and does not show footprints. One of the colours is picked up by the vinyl floor at the rear. Roof ends and walls (where visible) are lined with beige carpet-type material. The brown curtains run easily on their tracks and ample width is supplied. Cupboards are backed by washable, plastic-faced panelling and all wheel arches are covered.

Livability

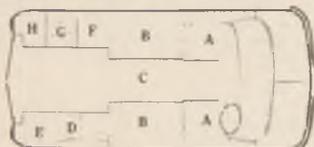
The easy-slide side door makes all the difference to this compact package. Each of the three sliding windows may be opened at front or rear to give ventilation where it is needed. Storage capacity is much better than you'd expect in such a compact vehicle. We managed, with careful packing and judicious use of cardboard boxes, to take enough reserve food and drinks for three weeks (as it happened we bought little except fruit and bread and lived on our stocks) and clothes for hot and cold weather with nothing without a "home", so proving that Auto-Sleepers' Sherpa is a practical little package.

The Auto-Sleeper Range

Bedford SB45



4 berths
Height 6'11½" Width 6'4"
Length 14'5½"

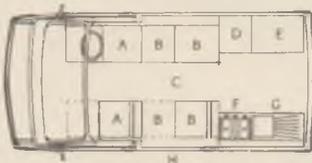


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds, or B and C convert to a transverse double bed.
- C. Table.
- D. Sink.
- E. Wardrobe.
- F. Locker.
- G. 2 burner grill/cooker.
- H. Refrigerator (optional).

Ford Auto-Sleeper RX80



4 berths
Height 6'8½" Width 6'5"
Length 15'2"

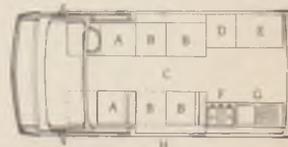


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively converting into 2 single beds or with B and C transverse double bed.
- C. Table.
- D. Refrigerator (cupboard below)
- E. Large wardrobe.
- F. 2 burner/grill cooker (cupboard below).
- G. Sink (cupboard and china below).
- H. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.

Renault Auto-Sleeper RV80



4 berths
Height 7'0" Width 6'9½"
Length 14'7"

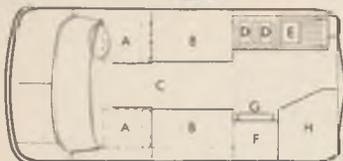


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds.
- C. Table.
- D. Refrigerator (cupboard below).
- E. Large wardrobe.
- F. 2 burner/grill cooker (cupboard below).
- G. Sink (cupboard and china below).
- H. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.

Bedford CX200



4 berths
Height 8'5"
Width 6'4"
Length 14'5"

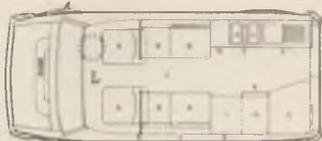


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. 'dinette' converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds, or B and C convert to a transverse double bed.
- D. 2 burner/grill cooker with oven below.
- E. Sink with refrigerator below.
- F. Large wardrobe (cupboard with china above).
- G. Optional heater.
- H. Toilet compartment.

Talbot CX1000 GTL



4 berths
Height 8'7" Width 7'0"
Length 15'6"

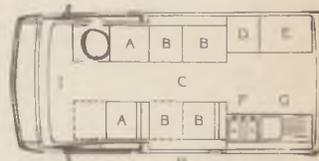


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds.
- C. Table.
- D. Cupboard.
- E. 2 burner grill/cooker (cupboard and drawer below — crockery cupboard above).
- F. Sink (cupboard below — cocktail cabinet above).
- G. Toilet compartment with optional shower.
- H. Wardrobe (optional eye-level oven fitted above).
- I. Refrigerator/freezer (cupboard below).
- J. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.
- K. Optional heater.
- L. Drop down over cab bed.

Renault Hi-Top



4 berths
Height Width 6'0"
Length 14'11"

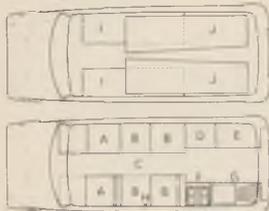


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or optional double bed.
- C. Table.
- D. Refrigerator (cupboard below).
- E. Large wardrobe with crockery and cocktail cabinet above.
- F. 2 burner/grill cooker (cupboard below).
- G. Sink (cupboard below).
- H. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.
- I. Cut-away over cab bed.

Sherpa Leisure



4 berths
Height 6'8"
Width 6'8"
Length 15.9"

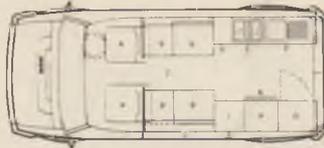


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds.
- C. Table.
- D. Refrigerator (cupboard below).
- E. Large wardrobe.
- F. 2 burner/grill/cooker (cupboard below).
- G. Sink (cupboard and china below).
- H. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.
- I. Two longitudinal single beds.
- J. Two bunk beds.

Talbot Sportsman SL



4 berths
Height 7'2"
Width 7'0"
Length 15'8"

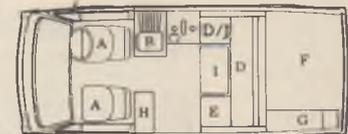


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds.
- C. Table.
- D. Cupboard.
- E. 2 burner grill/cooker (cupboard and drawer below).
- F. Sink (cupboard and china below).
- G. Toilet area.
- H. Wardrobe.
- I. Refrigerator (cupboard below).
- J. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.
- K. Optional heater.

Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper VT20



4 berths
Height 6'10 1/2"
Width 6'8"
Length 14.9"

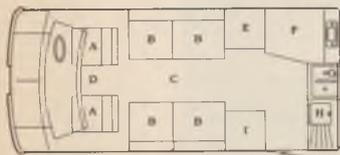


- A. Adjustable cab seats.
- B. Sink with refrigerator below.
- C. 2 burner grill/cooker with cupboard below.
- D.) Form U-shaped dinette.
- E.) Foldaway seat.
- D.) Convert to a large double bed or, E.) by removing cushion, a large load F.) carrying area.
- F. By leaving parcel shelf in position, F forms a boot.
- G. Wardrobe.
- H. Large storage locker with crockery.
- I. Removeable table.
- J. Toilet. Stowage.

Bedford Clubman



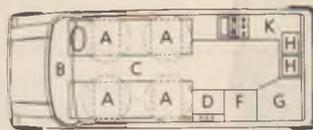
4 berths
Width 6'9"
Height 8'10 1/2"
Length 16'0"



- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats.
- C. Table.
- A. and B. convert to two longitudinal single beds or B and C convert to large double bed.
- D. Cut-away cab with pull-out bed.
- E. Wardrobe with thermostatically controlled heater below.
- F. Shower/toilet compartment.
- G. 2 burner grill/cooker with oven below.
- H. Stainless steel sink and drainer with cupboard below.
- I. Refrigerator/freezer.
- J. Gas storage with external access.

Leisure Executive

4 berths
Height 8'11"
Width 6'8"
Length 16'3"



- A. Fully adjustable swivelling luxury cab (passenger seats converting into two single beds).
- B. Pull-out over cab double bed.
- C. Table.
- D. Refrigerator/freezer.
- E. Cocktail cabinet.
- F. Wardrobe with thermostatically controlled heater below.
- G. Shower/toilet compartment.
- H. Sink with drainer.
- J. 2 burner grill/cooker with oven below.
- K. Gas storage with rear door access.

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Alan Mallett Motor Caravans
247 Lincoln Road,
North Hykeham, Lincoln.
Tel: 0522 681463/685506

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Roberts Motor Caravans,
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**Brownhills Garage (Nottm)
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Southern Cross Campers Ltd
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Allens Caravans Ltd,
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Hayes (Leisure Ltd,
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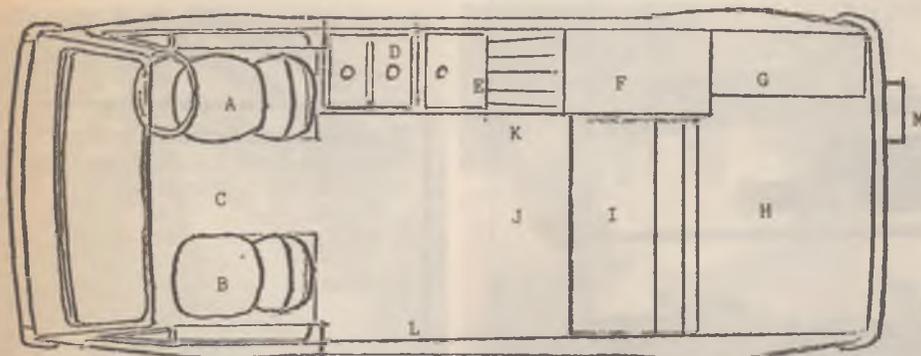
**AUTO-SLEEPER CLUBMAN
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Auto-Sleeper Volkswagen Transporter Hi-Top



Steeply sloping front roofline reduces drag yet provides over-cab covered storage.



Volkswagen Hi-Top

4 berths **Width 6' 8"**
Height 8' 3" **Length 14' 9"**

- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seat (swivel option).
- B. Swivelling fully cab seat.
- C. Optional table. Storage locker and china cupboard above cab.
- D. 2 burner/grill cooker with cupboard below.

- E. Sink with cupboards below.
- F. Large storage locker with removable trays.
- G. Wardrobe.
- H. Parcel shelf with storage below.
- I. Dinette seat.
- H. and I. Convert to large double bed
- J. Table.
- K. Chemical toilet in special cupboard Above H.I.J. double bed.
- L. Side door.
- M. Stainless-steel ladder with roof rack

An extremely stylish, yet practically designed motor caravan.

It was a logical development — none the less welcome — for Auto-Sleepers to raise the roof (and the specification) of their popular Volkswagen estate-car-caravan. They have done more than that Readers able to compare the two side by side will notice many subtle variations. The extra accommodation provided by the stylishly designed high top roof — again the work of William Towns of Aston Martin/Lagonda fame — has allowed an even more spacious layout below. The floor area is completely unobstructed from the back of the cab passenger's seat to the front of the rear transverse settee. This can indeed be a load carrier as well as a motor caravan — and there is, in addition, the estate-car type rear access load platform, with luggage or shopping hidden by a wide removable shelf.

Bed making is no chore. The rear settee which, like the cab seats, is finished in an extremely attractive new trim, is pulled forward — and the double bed is ready, its three sections matching perfectly with no uncomfortable ridges. The upstairs double

bed is even simpler, for it is always available and bed clothes may be left there. The children have only to remove the ladder and climb up. The high top roof has been designed to provide headroom where it is needed. At the rear, where the feet go, the roof line is lower to accommodate the external roof rack. Both the roof rack and ladder are finished in stainless-steel, which typifies the standards to which Auto-Sleepers work.

Dining is at separate tables: one stands on an island leg in front of the settee, a smaller table being provided by the cab passenger seat, which is turned to face it. The driver's seat can also be swivelled — an option — enabling a fourth person to be seated at the table.

The furniture work, which is to Auto-Sleepers usual immaculate standards, includes a matching stainless-steel sink and cooker, both of which can be closed away out of sight, plenty of storage space, and a large Electrolux 212 refrigerator/freezer with mains hook-up and full safety protection. Beneath the generously long work surface is to be found an enormous top-access locker, deep enough to accommodate the largest wine bottle. Two wire trays are provided so that smaller items are not lost in its cavernous depth. Beneath this locker are compartments for a Porta Potti (supplied as standard) and two 10lb gas cylinders (ventilated to the exterior as in all Auto-Sleeper models).

Storage space is a feature of the Volkswagen high top as the attractively designed roof provides yet another large compartment above the cab. Up there, and conveniently accessible, is the four-place crockery set which has for long been a feature of Auto-Sleepers.

So, the Cotswold firm have done it again with this, their very latest offering. They have a knack of getting things right first time — thanks to thorough research before production commences, plus the fact that so many of their staff are dedicated motor caravanners.

As for the Volkswagen base vehicle, it is just about the best there is for fast, comfortable, quiet motoring. Here, in truth is an estate car with very many additional features.



Comfortable rear bench seat is ideal for dining or, with table stowed, for travelling.



Easily made comfortable double bed. Second double bed is in roof space (above).



Gold Medal for Leisure Executive

At the Motor Show, the Leisure Executive was awarded a Gold Medal in the International Coachwork Competition.

This brings Auto-Sleepers total of Gold Medals won in this prestigious competition, to a record of four — an achievement unrivalled by any other manufacturer of motor caravans.

*By John Hunt,
Editor
Motorcaravan Motorhome
Monthly*

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AUTO-SLEEPER CLUBMAN

We have designed it for family travelling and living. Which is why you'll find so much innovative style, space, comfort and convenience in the Auto-Sleeper Clubman.

Handsome, aerodynamic lines benefit the handling and aid the fuel economy.

The compact bodywork, of reinforced glass fibre monocoque-type construction, is fully insulated and well proven for strength and durability. Add the Bedford chassis, backed by more than 50 years' vehicle engineering experience, and the result is a leisure vehicle with inherent refinement, reliability and economy.

Inside, there's the same thoughtful design approach, with plenty of airy spaciousness and limousine-like comfort when on the move.

In 'daytime' layout, lots of room and conveniently-sited features make it a pleasure to be 'at home'. At night, the dinette area converts to two single beds with unobstructed walk-through access or, if you prefer, the two singles are easily turned into a large, comfortable double bed.

In addition, the cut-away cab houses a pull-out double bed to form a spacious sleeping compartment – and makes the Clubman perfect for family holidays and week-ends away.

From fridge-freezer to shower unit, hot and cold water to space heater, we have included all the equipment you need for relaxed, self-contained leisure living. Check out the extensive features list to confirm the pleasure of owning the Auto-Sleeper Clubman.



THE NEW CF2 SHOWS BEDFORD MEANS BUSINESS.

Simply the Best



The combination of Auto-Sleepers, one of Europe's most established motor caravan manufacturers and the Talbot Motor Company has created the CX 1000 GTL. Britain's best selling high top motor caravan.

Built to the highest standards of workmanship and design the CX 1000 GTL is lavishly equipped and the high level of specification includes full headroom throughout, matching stainless steel sink and cooker which can be closed away out of sight, large capacity refrigerator with freezer compartment, mains hook-up with safety protection, toilet compartment and an abundance of storage space. For those demanding even more luxury a shower with hot and cold water, thermostatically controlled blown-air heating and eye-level oven/cooker are available.

The seats can be easily converted to make two extremely comfortable single beds or with additional optional cushions become a generously sized double bed. The over-cab pull-out double bed completes the accommodation of this tremendously spacious motor caravan.

Special consideration is given to insulation which even includes a double skinned roof, keeping the interior warm in winter and cool in summer and together with the quality and finish of the material used, provides instant holiday luxury throughout the year.

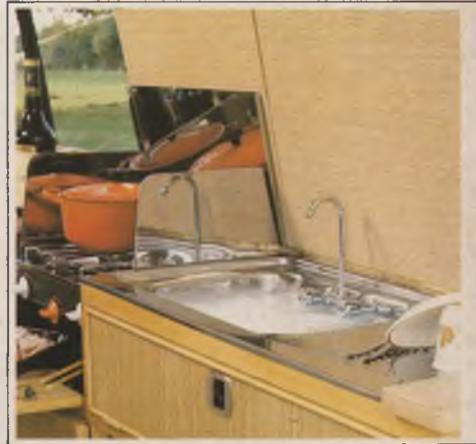
The CX 1000 GTL is a vehicle worthy of a company with over 24 years experience in the manufacture of motor caravans and who have won successive Gold Medals and Awards for superlative coach work, ingenuity of design and quality of construction.



Optional shower with hot and cold water



Well planned dinette with full headroom throughout



Luxurious kitchen with everything to hand

