

Secondhand Selection

Used Car Test by **PETER NOAD**

VW Auto-Sleeper Trident

Reg No:	H472 AKR
First registered:	August 1990
Recorded mileage:	46,000
Asking price:	£10,995

For sale at:

*W.H. Jervis and Sons,
VW Garage, Botteslow Street,
Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 3NE
Tel: (01782) 219966*



● With an H registration and only 46,000 miles, this desirable Auto-Sleeper must be one of the last rear-engined Transporters.

I never expected that VW Motoring's Secondhand Selection would lead me to meet up with the gentleman who can claim to have been the first to establish the Beetle as a successful rally car in England – even before Bill Bengryl! As I recorded in my book *VW Beetle in Motorsport*, Bill MacKintosh scored top placings on major national events such as the Birmingham Post Rally, the London Rally and the Morecambe Rally driving his Beetle in 1955, and came third in class on the RAC International Rally in 1956.

Bill MacKintosh and his sons Colin and Ian run the independent VW garage known as W.H. Jervis and Sons, in Stoke-on-Trent. It has been a family business on the same site since 1908, the original Mr Jervis being Bill's wife's grandfather. The business was mainly concerned with horse-drawn carriages and then commercial haulage vehicles, until 1953 when Bill started the car side and became one of the first VW dealers in England. W.H. Jervis remained a franchised

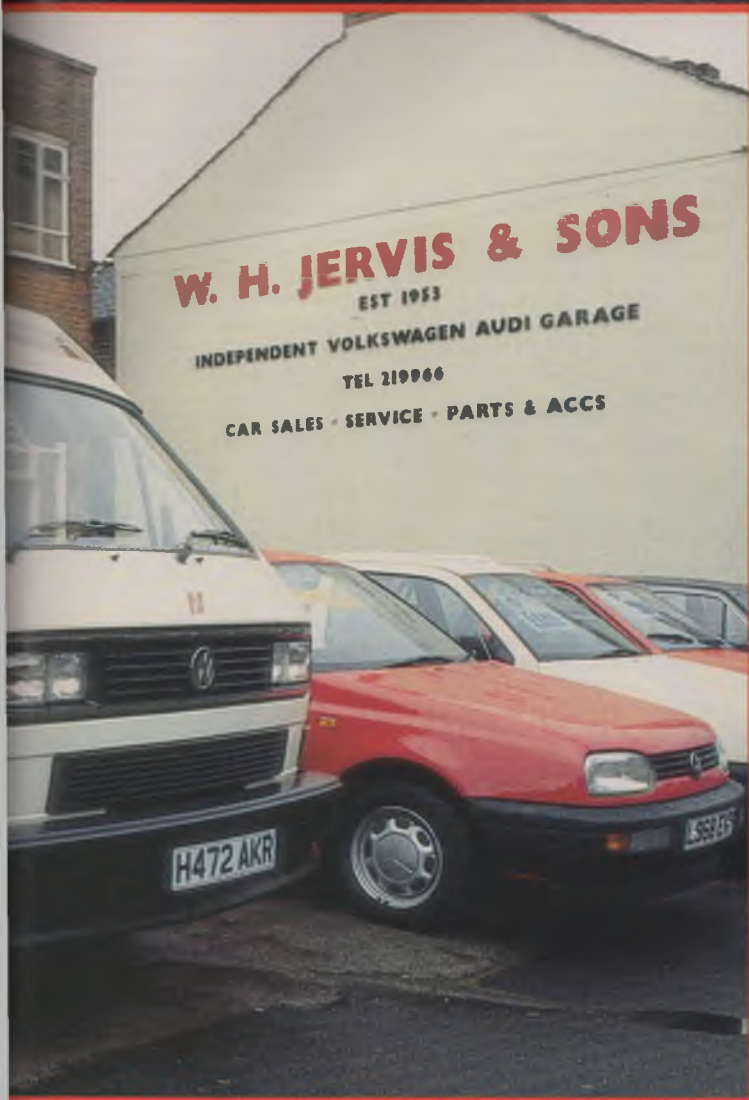
Volkswagen dealership until 1981, but then opted out to become an independent VW Audi specialist, preferring to remain as a small family business rather than expand in the way that V.A.G would have required.

They still service air-cooled VWs and Ian showed me a Beetle Cabrio and a VW-Porsche 914, which have been owned by the dealership almost from new, hidden away at the back of the showroom.

Nowadays, the stock of used cars for sale is entirely water-cooled. At the time of my visit they had a very good selection for anyone looking for a good car at less than £3,000. The B-reg Jetta GLX had quickly found a buyer at £1,495, which was not surprising as the GLX had the best specification of all Jetta and is extremely rare.

There was a choice of Polos, starting with a very tidy 90,000 mile B-reg Classic CL for only £1,295. A Passat C Estate on a C-plate with 99,000 miles was on offer at £2,295 and the same price was being asked for a Golf 1.8GL Automatic of the same age, with

Used **CAR**



74,000 miles. Later examples included an 89F Passat CL Saloon for £4,695 and a 92K Golf 3CL with 38,000 miles for £6,495.

The main focus of my attention, though, was not actually a used car, but a used motorcaravan. W.H. Jervis specialises in Campers and you will nearly always find one or two for sale at Botteslow Road. As the holiday season approaches they try to offer a choice of four or five. In mid-January I found three: an '85 Leisuredrive with 1.9 petrol engine priced at £7,995, a lhd '84 Westfalia diesel which would be offered at £5,995, and the vehicle you see in these pages, an Auto-Sleeper Trident which must be one of the last rear-engined Transporters, first registered with an H-plate in August 1990.

This Auto-Sleeper is powered by the 1.9 litre water-cooled flat-four, with five-speed gearbox. It has had three owners in 4½ years and 46,000 miles, but it is immaculate. The only parts which look used are the tyres!

The Trident was originally known as the VHT when it was

launched in 1985 and won the Caravan of the Year Award. It features a semi-streamlined hightop roof which was designed by William Towns (of Aston Martin fame) and has been commended for its aerodynamic stability and low wind noise. Auto-Sleepers are highly acclaimed for their build quality, detail design and attention to safety.

The integral hightop has superseded the pop-up elevating roof as the preferred way to provide interior standing headroom and additional sleeping berths. However, with an overall height of more than 8ft, the vehicle will be too high for most domestic garages and some multi-storey car parks.

There is certainly plenty of space to stand inside the Trident and, with an upper bed which measures 5ft 9in x 3ft 10in when slid forward, to supplement the lower 6ft x 4ft double bed, it will comfortably sleep a family of four. (You need one or two portable folding chairs to seat four at the table, however).

The Trident is a fully-equipped



● (Above): The 1.9 litre water-cooled flat-four gives the 'van quite lively performance and should give many miles of reliable service.



● (Above): Embossed velour seat covers are clean and undamaged.

● (Below): Deep storage compartment beside rear seat is fitted with wire baskets. Wardrobe is on rhs behind rear seat. Furniture looks like new and doors open smoothly and close securely.



Used **CAR**



● **Over-cab storage includes the special cabinet for the crockery.**



● **Fridge can operate by gas, mains electricity or the vehicle's battery. Cooker and sink are spotless.**



● **Rear seat folds down easily to make a 6ft long double bed.**

mobile home with all mod cons including a connection for mains electricity, electrically-pumped water, a gas cooker with two burners and grill, an Electrolux fridge which can be operated on gas, the vehicle's battery, or mains, and a gas-fired 'blown air' auxiliary heater. There's an attractive 21-piece crockery set in a specially-designed storage compartment plus plenty of cupboard and wardrobe space.

A roof rack and a ladder for access, attached to the tailgate, are standard features. Extras on H472 AKR are a bicycle carrier and towing hitch (to tow a boat, say) which cater for practically every leisure activity and holiday requirement.

All the fittings and furniture are as good as new. The cupboard doors fasten securely and the catches operate smoothly. The seat coverings, in an embossed velour material, and the attractive yet durable-looking carpet are all spotlessly clean and show no signs of wear. The interior is in harmonious shades of brown, with light oak woodwork and salmon pink-coloured curtains. The exterior paintwork is white and unmarked.

The 78 bhp engine gives the 'van a respectable level of performance: when Chris Burlace tested this model in the March 1986 *VW Motoring* he reported a 0-50 mph acceleration time of about 12 seconds and said it would cruise happily at 70 mph. The *Wasserboxer* engine certainly has a better reputation for longevity than the old air-cooled models.

This Auto-Sleeper has a special appeal, not only because it is a highly-acclaimed, award-winning motorcaravan conversion in almost mint condition, but also because it is one of the last (and best) rear-engined Transporters.

W.H. Jervis's asking price is £10,995. If you would like a superb Camper for your '95 holiday I suggest you take a trip to Botteslow Road, Stoke-on-Trent, without delay! ■

● *A full test of an Auto-Sleeper Trident, based on the 2.1 Syncro Transporter, also appears in the September '94 issue of our sister publication Which motorcaravan, available for £2.40 from our back issues department Tel: (01778) 393652.*



● **Ladder and roofrack are standard; bicycle carrier and towbar are useful extras making this a comprehensively-equipped leisure vehicle.**