

# AUTO-SLEEPER Magazine

1986/87



**\*INSIDE: John Hunt reviews all the latest Auto-Sleepers, new models and much more...**

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# AUTO-SLEEPER Magazine

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VW VHT



Bedford Clubman



L to R: Ford Legend, Flair, Frisky.

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The Hallmark of Quality

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Dedication to progress

Although you may find Auto-Sleeper models on virtually every salesground, many may be secondhand but still fetching good prices. As most customers will know, before offering a trade-in value on a secondhand motorcaravan, dealers will more or less furtively consult a little book. It is a trade guide to suggest (not mandatory) prices, updated every month. It is illuminating to discover that the very name 'Auto-Sleeper' often means a higher value is placed upon the vehicle than that of a similar conversion by another manufacturer.

## Desirable

I believe there are two reasons for this desirable state of affairs for those discerning enough to have bought an Auto-Sleeper, new or secondhand, in the first place: 1) They are built to last, and do so. 2) Dealers like them because, in the unlikely event of anything going wrong or requiring replacement, there is immediate back-up from the Auto-Sleepers' staff at Willersey.

As editor of a popular motorcaravanning magazine, I receive a trickle of complaints about things that have gone wrong or worn out on all makes. Before rushing into print, comments are sought from the dealer or manufacturer concerned. Usually that is all that is necessary. Things are sorted out and the supposedly aggrieved parties end up shaking hands. Response is usually fairly prompt. From Auto-Sleepers, on the very rare occasion that something does go amiss, I can testify that response will be immediate and businesslike - with a copy letter to me to save my spending any more time on the matter.

Again, there are two reasons for the reliability and longevity of Auto-Sleepers' products: 1) They are assembled with care and precision in the first instance. 2) Every type of bought-in equipment is first rigorously tested "on the bench" before a quantity order is placed.

Whilst it is not hard to track down a popular Auto-Sleeper model secondhand (for dealers seldom refuse the chance to acquire one), you will have to shop with greater

discrimination for a new model. These are sent to approved dealers only - those who have been monitored by Auto-Sleepers' staff and who can be expected to provide a satisfactory standard of service to the customer.

(It is fair to dealers to point out that the lack of an Auto-Sleeper appointment does not necessarily imply criticism. There may already be an appointed agent in that part of the country. Auto-Sleepers do not believe in saturating any particular area.)

## Incentive

As a further incentive to their dealers, Auto-Sleepers have now instituted a Gold Award Scheme. It is worth looking for the distinctive badge virtually guaranteeing, as it does, a standard of excellence above the normal.

Much of the success of Auto-Sleepers has been due to the constant critical appraisal of their own products by their own staff, many of whom are motorcaravanners. It is a process that has been going on for more than 26 years. This was illustrated in two ways during a recent week spent at the factory.

I was shown (with my wife, for the all-important female view) the new prototype Ford and Renault high tops. The designers were not seeking praise but constructive criticism. After driving and evaluation procedures had taken place, we were again asked if we could think of anything that might have been improved. It was difficult, for they had done their homework thoroughly. The very few small suggestions we were able to make were noted down and were due to be discussed at the next weekly meeting of department heads. There, one or two may be torn to shreds, others incorporated into production models.

And that, I would suggest, is the secret of Auto-Sleepers' dedication to progress. They listen to their own staff, dealers, journalists and customers.

They know they produce some of the best motorcaravans, are determined to make them stay that way every year. The opening of a new factory demonstrates their faith in the future.

by John Hunt  
Editor

Motorcaravan Motorhome Monthly


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**Auto-Sleeper — The Hallmark of Quality**

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Looking back from the present

1985-6 will go down as one of the milestones in Auto-Sleepers' history, for this year has seen the awarding of more accolades than the company (or any other manufacturer) has received at any one time, plus the introduction of the compact new Ford Transit high top with a completely new interior (along with the similar Renault Traffic announced at the same time - surely candidates for future awards?). There have been significant changes to the Talbot Talisman, along with the seemingly impossible improvement to finish and décor in other models. In the near future, we may expect a rising roof version of the Transit and, perhaps, a stunning new coachbuilt. The give-away was the glimpse of a Transit chassis-cab among the vehicles awaiting conversion in the compound at the new factory.

There was, too, this new factory itself, devoted to the coachbuilt side of the business and itself a memorable event in the history of the company that has worked from the same address for over a quarter of a century.

Late 1985 witnessed the introduction of the high top Bedford Midi and an improved, fully equipped high top Talbot Express, now called CXL. It was a design which originated on a Bedford but the Talbot was found to be a more satisfactory vehicle for the exercise, closely followed by the similar but more compact Renault RCX - still the only complete little motorcaravan on the short wheelbase Traffic.

One could go through the list, year by year, noting annual additions, changes and revisions. We have space here only for selected and noteworthy happenings. One of the most prominent must be the introduction in 1980, of the Bedford SV100, of monocoque construction in reinforced glassfibre, forerunner of the Clubman and Talisman.

The same year saw the first of the now popular range of Volkswagens.

1977 to '79 witnessed some kite-flying operations. The conventional coachbuilt called Bedford CB22 was a beauty in its own right, ran for three years before making way for that first SV100. An exercise on the American Chevrolet was an interesting diversion, angled towards the export market; at least it launched the firm into the now popular high top sphere. It was followed by an

exercise on the VW LT - an expensive base vehicle which, converted by Auto-Sleepers, picked up an award or two.

The first half of the 1970s saw the then 'standard' conversions of British vans ruling the market and there are still many Auto-Sleepers around from that period based on Bedford CF, Ford Transit and Leyland Sherpa, all with the well known rising roof, which has remained in use (modified) to this very day.

The Commer was the first of the more modern vans and perhaps the most popular Auto-Sleeper during most of the '60s, until it lost ground gradually to Bedfords, Fords and Leylands. But it continued in Auto-Sleeper shape until the van was withdrawn in 1982 when, in spite of offering the biggest internal area of the lot, its dated mechanical specification and the takeover by Talbot led to its demise.

It had all begun in the late 1950s with the Morris J2. The very first Auto-Sleeper was built for a family holiday in France. On return, the vehicle was the subject of several modifications in the light of experience. It is a practice which has continued to this day - but now, with all that experience behind them, Auto-Sleepers tend to get much more of it right the first time of trying.

customers have found that pleasure of ownership which can only come from a product designed, constructed and quality checked with care, experience and skill by traditional craftsmen working under the personal supervision of their family employer.

Rarely too, does one encounter such customer loyalty as that engendered by Auto-Sleepers. Mr and Mrs Newton, in the adjacent photograph, are shown taking delivery of their eighth new Auto-Sleeper, a Talbot Talisman, and we have many customers who now own their third or fourth Auto-Sleeper with 15 or 20 years of happy motor caravanning behind them - and many more to come. They are often pleasantly surprised by the high part exchange allowance we are able to make them for their old Auto-Sleeper, as we always have customers eager to purchase well cared for pre-owned Auto-Sleepers.

Finally, when my customers ask me which motor caravan I use myself for touring and holidays, I reveal that my own is a (Volkswagen) Auto-Sleeper - how could it be any other!

## Why choose an Auto-Sleeper?



Mr and Mrs Newton taking delivery of their eighth new Auto-Sleeper

Advice from Peter Hawes of Western Motor Caravans Ltd, Auto-Sleepers' oldest Distributor.

Over the twenty or so years my Company has been selling Motor Caravans, many of our customers have asked us for our personal advice about which conversion they should choose. My own advice, based on 10 years with the Company, and 5 years ownership of motor caravans prior to that, has always been that Auto-Sleepers are unequalled for quality and finish; they offer a wide choice of models, and provided that one of them suits your needs, it will offer many years of trouble-free enjoyment, and a good re-

sale value when you eventually decide to replace it.

No one Manufacturer, of course, can produce a model to suit every single purchaser, but the Auto-Sleeper range of Motor Caravans really does come close to that ideal. From the economical Renault RV 50, the compact but luxuriously appointed Talbot CXL and Renault RCX, the Volkswagens so practical for everyday use, right up to the flagships of the range, the Clubman and Talisman, all have one thing in common - a beauty of finish that only the highest quality materials, fashioned and fitted by craftsmen, can produce. Generations of Auto-Sleeper

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# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Awards for excellence

1985-6 has been a record year for Auto-Sleepers. Well used to picking up an award at virtually every function attended, the past twelve months have seen them virtually scoop the lot.

It began with the Caravan Show last November, when the name 'Auto-Sleepers' became almost monotonously repetitive as the chairman of the judges totalled points awarded by practising motorcaravanners.

First in the Elevating Roof class was the Auto-Sleeper Talbot Sportsman SL, with the Auto-Sleeper Renault Traffic RCX leading the High-tops and Auto-Sleepers' Talbot Talisman the Coachbuilds.

The overall winner (highest points regardless of class) was the Talbot Talisman, with the Renault RCX and Sportsman SL sharing joint second place and fourth, the Renault RV50. The high-top Talbot CXL was highly commended but, as Motor Caravan of the Year in summer '86, came out as the best conversion. The Volkswagen VHT took the same award in 1985. The Silver Snail Trophy, awarded by the Motor Caravanners' Club, went to the Renault RV50 as 'Best Conversion'.

Really worthwhile awards are made every two years at the Motor Show, which is run by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Auto-Sleepers have taken The Gold Medal four times, an achievement unequalled by any other motorcaravan converter.

All in all, a tribute to the high standards of quality and design to which their vehicles are produced.

## Master Dealer Association

I have again been asked to write an article for this magazine which is not surprising as the majority of Master Dealers are Auto-Sleeper Distributors.

A lot of the Association's work is done "behind the scenes" but for those of you who know nothing about us, I would mention that prior to 1982 there had never been a trade association for the specialist motor caravan dealer. This meant, and to put it bluntly, that purchasing a new or used motor caravan could up until then be a very haphazard experience! In November, 1982,

12 of the largest dealers in the country joined together to form the Master Dealers Association, the basic aims and rules of which are to improve on a national level liaison between yourself-the customer-the members, the converters and chassis manufacturers. All members must stock at least 21 new and used motor caravans and have on-site workshop facilities. Warranty on new and used vehicles must be carried out correctly and efficiently by all members of the Association, no matter which member was the supplying dealer.

Since 1982 we have, unfortunately, lost some of the original 12 members (who have closed down or left the industry), but on the credit side have gained a number of new members. The current membership is now 19, with further applications in the pipeline. There are regular meetings throughout the year at which members are advised on new legislation, marketing trends and technical advice, etcetera, and the Association is represented on the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. The specialist press, converters and chassis manufacturers now regularly attend our meetings as well.

For the first time, last year we had our own stand at the Earls Court Caravan Show. This was run jointly by the Association and North-West Securities who operate our national finance scheme. Because the stand proved such a success, we will be back again this year and will be offering another first within the industry - Motorcare Extended Warranty. This scheme has been tailor-made for the motor caravanner, is available with both new and used vehicles, and gives you AA membership, breakdown recovery charges and all parts/labour, etcetera. It also gives you the chance of hiring another motor caravan if yours breaks down, and even insures the groceries in your van - all this no matter whether you are at home or abroad.

Like Auto-Sleepers, quality, service and professionalism are the by-words of all our members. We have a lot to offer you and hope that if you are seriously considering buying a motor caravan you will contact a member of the Master Dealers Association.

For a current list of members write to me, David Saunders, The Master Dealers Association Ltd, Leigh House, 44/45, Devizes Road, Swindon, Wilts, or look out for the MDA logo in members advertising.

## High Standards

Auto-Sleepers' insistence on a high-quality product and a fair deal for the company's customers is not simply an 'in house' matter. The company has for many years been an active member of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders and a subscriber to the motor industry's Code of Practice.

Founded just after the turn of the century, the SMMT today represents some 1400 member companies, including all the principal manufacturers and official importers of cars, commercial vehicles, garage equipment, components and accessories, as well as motor caravans.

The Membership of the Society is represented through a number of Trade Sections, one of these being that specifically concerned with Motor Caravans. This section, of which Mr Anthony Trevelyan, Managing Director of Auto-Sleepers is Deputy Chairman, represents members of all the major British manufacturers and converters of motor caravans as well as a number of leading importers and concessionaires.

The SMMT's Motor Caravan Section meets at regular intervals and among other important activities, deals with technical standards. It also represents UK motor caravan manufacturers at the European Caravan Federation and the British Standards Institution, contributing to such vital matters as the safety of caravan heating and ventilating appliances and systems.

In addition to providing a number of important technical, statistical, legal and other services for its members and representing the views of the motor industry to Government and in a variety of other important areas, the SMMT also organises the now biennial British International Motor Show at the National Exhibition Centre, alternating this with the increasingly important Automotive Trade Show at Earls Court.

The latter exhibition, restricted to members of the automotive trades, features accessories and replacement parts for the aftermarket and also a variety of garage and other automotive workshop equipment.

In addition to his position as Deputy-Chairman of the Motor Caravan Section of SMMT, Mr Trevelyan is also a Council Member of the Society.

## 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 39, or you can contact any of the following:

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

**Bedford Commercial Vehicles,**  
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: 021-327 1591.

**Renault (UK) Limited,**  
Personal Export, Western Avenue, London, W3 0RZ. Tel: 01-992 3481

**Talbot Motor Company Ltd,**  
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-Sleeper '86/87

## The secret of our success

During the 26 years 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 Talbot Talisman the body shell of



**Anthony Trevelyan,  
Managing Director**

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



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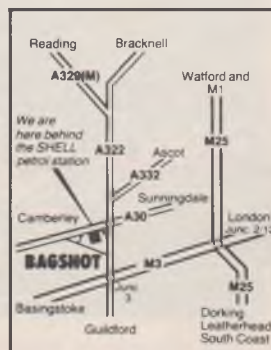
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## Auto-Sleepability

### A new freedom for the disabled

In recent years facilities for the disabled have improved considerably. When designing a new building the signs are that architects are now more aware that their buildings will be used by disabled as well as fully fit people. Particularly in public buildings, amenities for the disabled are now evident.

For all this recent improvement, the world is undoubtedly designed for the majority of us who are fortunate enough to have full use of all our limbs. We do not have to consider how difficult it is to gain access to a guest house in North Devon but can just book accommodation regardless.

The disabled must check these things first. In the more scenic areas like Devon and Cornwall the problem is accentuated by uneven ground and staircases to the front door of many guest houses which by their very nature have winding stairs inside going to three or four storeys, with toilets hidden in little rooms set right in the corners of the landings. Do we all realise the nightmares this can create for someone in a wheelchair?

More and more families with a disabled person are now turning to a new-found freedom of transport and leisure that until now has not been utilised to anything like its full potential. It is a potential the bounds of which have been widened by the advent of vans with front wheel drive and side loading doors.

Why have these made a difference? With all the vans that used to form the mainstay of vehicles converted into motor caravans, there was a prop-shaft. This means that vans like the Sherpa, Bedford CF and pre 1986 Transit have shallow load spaces. This in turn provides a rear door aperture of insufficient depth to freely wheel in a standard wheelchair and its occupant. Even for normal motor caravan conversion, this lack of depth necessitated low level worktops and a continual need to stoop.



It is no accident that the Talbot, Renault and VW marques now share the majority of the motor caravan market. As they have increased their sales, so all the other more dated designs have suffered.

Of the three models without a prop-shaft, the Talbot and Renault are especially well suited for adaptation to carry a disabled passenger. Front engine, front wheel drive means there is no intrusion by the power train into the loadspace. The worktop height is on a par with domestic cabinets and there is no need to stoop when entering the side door. Because there is no propshaft, the floor height is lower in relation to the kerb and wheelchair ramps do not have to be prohibitively steep. Because there is a side door, the van can be parked alongside the kerb and the wheelchair passenger transferred direct to the pavement.

We now have a base vehicle suitable for use by a passenger in a wheelchair. We require a conversion giving all amenities but still allowing space for an anchored wheelchair and perhaps an electric chair lift.

In my experience with Bowers, gained by supplying numerous adapted vehicles, there is none better than the Auto-Sleeper CXL. Only the nearside dinette seat box has to be removed in order to allow for the fitting of the Stowlift wheelchair lift and the anchorage points so that the wheelchair is safe to travel in. Both standard front seats are retained and the nearside bed remains as

usual. The CXL provides a full-sized roof bed adequate enough to sleep an adult. The front passenger seat swivels and transfer from the wheelchair to the seat is convenient, if required.

Bowers have also fitted a rear lift to the Talbot and with modifications to the toilet compartment it makes a practical alternative. The advantage with a rear lift layout is that the centre seat boxes are left intact for sleeping, meals etc. The wheelchair can still be clamped to the floor, albeit at the rear.

The Talbot CXL, when adapted in this fashion, enables a disabled person to share in the leisure activities of their partner in a way that no other vehicle can. When parked with the side door open, it provides an ideal vantage point for viewing outdoor sports and pastimes. It is a holiday home which offers a unique freedom to the disabled. The handling is light enough and its economy is good enough for it to be used as a daily shopping car because, with an electric lift installed, access is at least as good and usually much easier than any other form of specially adapted vehicle.

If a coach built motor caravan is preferred, then a different approach needs to be taken. With the Auto-Sleeper Clubman and Talisman for instance, wheel-in access for the wheelchair is not possible.

In this instance, we are able to fit a hydraulic lift to the front passenger seat. This places the seat outside the vehicle and at wheelchair level. After transfer, the seat is then hydraulically lifted into the travelling position. For the disabled driver, hand controls can be fitted as a further option.

What does it cost? Well, a motor caravan which has been substantially modified with lift and wheelchair clamps may be eligible for VAT and Car Tax exemption. On the Talbot CXL this could mean a saving of £2,000.00, however, the cost of fitting the equipment would just about equal this. A considerable saving can be had by fitting ramps which must be permanently attached and obviously not quite as convenient as a lift. VAT Leaflet 701/7/84 - Aids for Handicapped Persons, available through the local office of Customs & Excise will explain the requirements.

## SEND FOR YOUR BROCHURE



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# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## The facts behind a legend

How have Auto-Sleepers reached their present pre-eminent position? Twenty years ago, they were one of the smaller motorcaravan manufacturers, almost overshadowed by big names from enormous combines.

Where are they all now? Gone the same way as many post-war once-thriving industries, perhaps? But Auto-Sleepers have always been there, a family firm, content to grow slowly but steadily year by year. Never losing their unique identity.

Now, the legendary Auto-Sleepers are one of the biggest, yet still with that same family identity, and everyone who works at Auto-Sleepers really does work, there are no figureheads or passengers. Managing Director, Anthony Trevelyan, leads his team efficiently, is often working in his office, or in the plant, long after most others have gone home.

I remember the Auto-Sleeper models of early years. Even then, they were admired as approaching perfection for those days. Layouts were practical, finish always good, using not the cheapest materials but the most suitable.

Having got it just about right from the start, you'd think they would be content to rest on their laurels. Not so - Auto-Sleepers had to stay ahead of the others, year after year. So a professional stylist, William Towns, was called in. He is responsible for many designs, from the Aston Martin Lagonda to his own range of kit cars. His first effort for Auto-Sleepers was the award-winning Bedford SV100, all reinforced glassfibre and of monocoque construction.

Now redesigned internally and labelled Clubman, this special coachbuilt has, with its sister the Talbot Talisman, been so successful that new premises have been purpose built for its assembly. There just was not room at the original works.

The new factory, just across the road from the original premises (which continue to function flat out) has solved what was becoming a nightmare of shortage of space. Within the new secure compound are stored all the base vehicles before conversion, as delivered by the manufacturers from around the country and abroad. Chassis-cabs go straight into the new workshop, to receive their GRP body shells, which are then fitted out to become some of



*Inside the new factory, home of coachbuilts*

Britain's best looking coachbuilts. Vans are driven across the road to the old premises, where they first have apertures cut out for windows and roofs.

They then join one of three production lines - in at the back as mere shells, out at the front in the form of complete motorcaravans. There is no batch building. You will find all makes, mixed apparently at random but such is the stock control that there are no hiccups. Nobody is foolish enough to try to fit a furniture unit designed for a Talbot into a Renault, for instance. They all know their jobs at Auto-Sleepers.

The line planning is first class. As each vehicle inches forward to the next stage, the right equipment is there ready to be installed. So, at the near end is seen insulation being packed into a bare shell, followed by the one piece, ready cut wooden floor. As the van progresses down its own line, it gradually becomes more and

more like a motorcaravan, acquiring a roof, electrical wiring, plumbing, furniture, fittings and trimmings.

Installations may be checked at any stage and a final examination of every motorcaravan ensures that "all systems are go". Great attention is paid to the details of finish. I have seen a model returned for rectification because there was a spot of rough wood, detected only by running a finger along a hidden edge. It looked pretty good to me but failed to pass its "finals".

Finished motorcaravans do not spend long at the Willersey premises. Dealers are too anxious to get their hands on to them! They are collected, almost daily, by transporter, ferried to destinations all around the country. As the base vehicles are also delivered by transporter, customers may rest assured that new models received by dealers really are new.



*The new paint shop. Most vehicles need treatment only on roofs and styling*



*Installing mains electric hook-up prior to fitting of roof and windows*



*The factory where elevating roofs and high-tops are made*



*Transporter takes away Volkswagen, Talbot and Renault, already ordered by a dealer*



## THE NEW FORD TRANSIT. THE HOME THAT THINKS IT'S A CAR.

Since its launch in February 1986, you will have seen countless new Ford Transits weaving their way through high streets, nipping in and out of tight parking spaces, and gobbling up miles on the motorways.

Yet the new Ford Transit is equally at home as a motor caravan, as it is a business van.

In both instances, in terms of performance and maintenance, you might be forgiven for thinking you were driving a car.

Twenty years of superior knowledge, advanced technology and Ford's unique expertise have succeeded in producing a Transit that has broken new ground in economy, comfort, ruggedness and reliability.

Let's begin, however, with the Transit's stylish good looks. Its sleek aerodynamic form reduces wind drag and noise, while increasing fuel economy.

Thirty per cent more glass on the doors and windscreen allows unrivalled vistas of the surrounding countryside, road and kerbside.

The new, low-effort sliding side door can swallow any amount of equipment, luggage and souvenirs.

Under the bonnet (not under your legs) sits a 2.0 litre petrol engine, acknowledged as among the most reliable

and cost-efficient on the road. Which, coupled with Ford's own versatile and economical gearboxes, ensures that while you're clocking up mileage, you're not guzzling fuel.

So much for your encounters with petrol stations. What about your encounters with the countryside?

Even on the most hazardous hairpin bends, independent front suspension makes handling simple.

The Transit's high tensile steel underbody can withstand almost any amount of punishment from Mother Nature.

Should the worst come to the worst, the large energy-absorbing crumple zone will protect you and yours from front impact.

What's more, thanks to the Transit's rear wheel drive and accessible engine, reliable running and easy servicing couldn't be better.

The three largest and best known caravan converters in Britain are currently producing motor caravans for the Transit.

And we are rather of the opinion that Auto-Sleepers have excelled themselves.

But then, with a vehicle as outstanding as the new Ford Transit to work on, they probably had very little alternative.



### THE NEW FORD TRANSIT



# Designs that were or might have been

There are many ways of designing a motorcaravan, from a sketch on the back of an envelope (and it seems that more than one of those have reached production) to a full scale mock-up in wood or hardboard. Only the biggest manufacturers have separate design departments.

Among them are Auto-Sleepers. In the Development Shop many ideas are tried out – and some rejected or modified. Robert Halling is in charge of overall design and, as Works Director, initiates with his team the practical layouts that have earned so good a name among discriminating motorcaravanners.

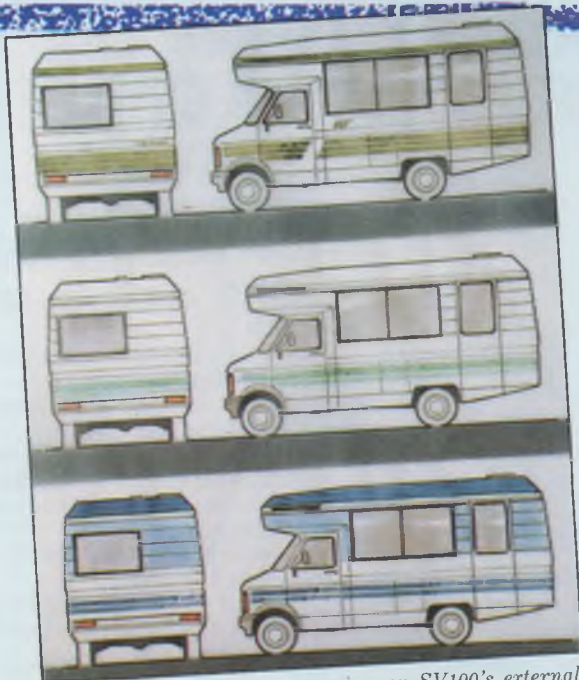
Robert works closely with stylist William Towns, of Aston Martin Lagonda fame. (He lives in a modern house in the Cotswolds, overlooking a Capability Brown landscape, and has an eye for beautiful

things. What's more, he has been a motorcaravanner).

Even so, things do not always work out right, as some of the photographs of first artist's impressions show (reprinted courtesy Motorcaravan Motorhome Monthly). It takes courage to reject a design after spending good money – but it would be more disastrous to go into production and allow lack of public interest to prove you wrong. Thorough groundwork ensures that Auto-Sleepers' motorcaravans are successful.



A few of the many Auto-Sleepers awards.



Brown, green and blue exercises on SV100's external treatment – all rejected.



1) Initial thoughts on a coachbuilt design, rejected as too futuristic for British tastes.

2) First thoughts on the body that was to become the Bedford SV100. A prototype was produced and rejected.

3) Rear view of first prototype SV100.

4) The final scale drawing for the SV100 – accepted and later to become the Bedford Clubman followed by Talbot Talisman.

5) Right first time! Auto-Sleepers' high top Volkswagen.



Bob Halling checks details in the first prototype Ford high top.



## NEW FROM AUTO-SLEEPERS. THE TRANSIT THAT THINKS IT'S A PALACE.

For 26 years, Auto-Sleepers have been renowned for making quality caravans.

The new Ford Transit Flair is no exception.

It combines the ultimate in luxury caravans with the latest in Ford technology.

The new Ford Transit is a vehicle that has passed all the milestones its much lauded predecessor achieved, breaking new ground in economy, comfort, ruggedness and reliability.

The Flair offers the mobile home owner the last word in interior design and craftsmanship, making it as pleasurable to live in, as it is to drive.

First, the kitchen. Superbly appointed, it boasts features that even the most serious cordon bleu chef wouldn't sniff at.

Stylish dark brown laminate surfaces house a glass topped cooker, grill, fridge freezer, and an abundance of storage space.



Co-ordinated furnishing fabrics add the final touches to this superior caravan.

If you would like to see the Flair, visit Auto-Sleepers on Stand 97 at the forthcoming Caravan Show.

Alternatively, write to them at Auto-Sleepers Ltd, Orchard Works, Willersey, near Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7PT



### THE NEW FORD TRANSIT

[www.vwT25camper.info](http://www.vwT25camper.info) - a useful website for owners and enthusiasts of VW T25 / T3 / Vanagon Campervans

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

John Hunt, Editor of Motorcaravan Motorhome Monthly, provides a personal evaluation on a selection of Auto-Sleepers

## Talbot Express Talisman

### Stylishly designed and beautifully made

There have been several changes inside the Talisman since it was reviewed in last year's Auto-Sleeper magazine. Most noticeable, perhaps, as one first enters the caravan's side door, are the cab seats which when turned to face the rear seats, provide two dining tables with an unobstructed gangway between.

For travelling, the front seats are easily reversed on swivels, the tables and legs tucked away out of sight in purpose designed storage spaces. There are then four forward facing seats. There has also been a slight alteration to the rear seats to make them even more comfortable when motoring. There must be more leg room here than in any car apart, perhaps, from a presidential saloon.

The well established inwards facing settees are still available at will and this arrangement of the versatile furniture provides seating for six – or eight or more if front seats are pushed forward and backrests fully reclined. This configuration is, in fact, the way twin single beds are provided, the raked backrests then being pushed flat to the wall to increase bed width. These backrests may be lowered to provide even greater width.

An alternative is a wide transverse double bed, formed by rearranging cushions. It extends across the width of the vehicle. Above, there is another double bed, formed across the top of the cab, normally used by children but perfectly capable of accommodating a couple of adults. The base of this bed may be hinged upwards through 45 degrees to provide both a commodious luggage area and walk-in access to the cab seats.

Customers who do not want the upper bed at all may specify the optional and attractive extra cupboards in its place, further increasing the already generous storage space in this adaptable motor caravan.

The rear is devoted to storage and facilities. There is a wide wardrobe, providing hanging space for long dresses. At its base is a thermostatically controlled space heater which will quickly warm the whole caravan in cool weather. Opposite is the refrigerator with electronic ignition which automatically lights its own gas jet – and relights should it be extinguished by, for instance, a strong puff of wind. There is also a two star freezer compartment. The refrigerator may be operated from gas, the vehicle's alternator or mains electricity. Beside it is another cupboard and both are topped by a useful working surface.

The kitchen is at the rear, with its own opening window, trimmed with both curtains and venetian blind. During travel, the whole kitchen area is turned into an attractive furniture unit. When doors are opened and flaps lifted, revealed are: sink (with h + c running water), two burner cooker, oven – and yet more storage space.

The pièce de resistance is adjacent to the kitchen, in the offside rear corner. The shower room has its own fixed handbasin, with convenient storage beneath for personal



items, an adjustable spray on a hose supplied by mixer taps, a curtain and, naturally, a fitted shower tray draining to the installed below-floor waste tank. The shower/toilet compartment gains a new colour scheme for 1987, a subdued but very attractive light fawn, with matching basin and curtain.

On the road the Talbot is a treat. Front wheel drive holds it firmly on course, yet steering is pleasantly light at all speeds, as are the foot controls. The 2 litre petrol engine propels this beautiful motorhome at respectable speeds up to and beyond the legal maximum, with surprising economy, thanks to the smooth lines of the body designed by William Towns. An optional 2.5 litre diesel engine gives virtually the same power output

with even greater saving on fuel costs.

Construction is unusual for a British motorcaravan. Whilst most motorhomes are assembled from pieces, often on a framework, the Talisman is all reinforced glass fibre and of a monocoque type construction. Tremendous body strength is claimed. There is certainly a complete absence of body creaks and groans sometimes experienced on lesser coachbuilds. The smooth exterior finish leads to low wind noise and must assist in the excellent fuel consumption figures. The Talisman is a worthy flagship for the Auto-Sleepers' fleet.

The Talbot Express Talisman was Overall Winner of the 1985 Caravan Industry Award sponsored by United Dominions Trust.



Large double bed can be altered to form two singles

# Nobody could improve an Auto-sleeper! Nobody except Bowers.



When you decide to buy an Autosleeper that decision will probably be based on the quality of craftsmanship and design. However many of our more discerning purchasers require a higher level of equipment. But they demand that the fitting of these accessories is carried out to the same high standard. That's what you get if you purchase an Autosleeper from Bowers Motor Caravans. So if you want perhaps a hot water system and shower in an

Autosleeper High-Top, or a cut-away cab in an SV100, or a Zig distribution system with second battery or, in fact, just about anything, if you want it to look as if Autosleeper fitted it then consult the experts for a quotation – Consult Bowers.



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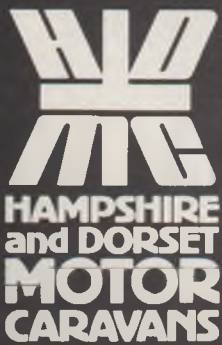
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# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Talbot Express CXL hightop

### Britains most successful Hi- top Motor Caravan.

There are only minor changes to this motorcaravan since its introduction as the CX1000 GTL. The complete specification has been preserved and here is a model that has proved popular with the very many loyal Auto-Sleeper customers looking for something a little more spacious, a spot more convenient than the standard rising roof conversions. The high roof, carefully styled by William Towns, means that the CXL has all the facilities instantly available as soon as a halt is called. Yet it is smaller than a full coachbuilt, can happily (and economically) double as a private car and for day to day transport.

And what car, however expensive, can seat four or six in spacious comfort and yet provide full cooking and washing amenities, beds for four with ample storage space for blankets and personal effects – and offers a toilet room which also has an optional shower with hot and cold water?

The latter is one of the more ingenious features. On the road, it looks like another cupboard – a wardrobe, perhaps. Opening the door reveals the chemical toilet (optional). It can be used where it is but, for extra space in which to move about, it is a matter of moments to pull a couple of curtains and open the triple-fold door across the rear gangway. This arrangement (simple enough to employ even for quick roadside stops) more than doubles the area within the toilet room, takes in the kitchen sink (which then becomes a handbasin) and gives ample room to use the shower and have space to dress without banging elbows. It blocks off the rear doorway but the rest of the caravan is available to other members of the family, who may come and go as they please through the sliding side door (itself greatly improved by Talbot Motor Co for 1987, being now a lot easier to open and close). Cooker and refrigerator remain unobstructed whilst the toilet/shower room is in use.



*Well positioned kitchen with refrigerator, wardrobe and shower opposite*



*Dinette for two can be altered to accommodate four people*

Forwards, there are the established Auto-Sleeper twin settees with raked backrests and table between, making a dining room for four. The settees may be extended to seat six or even eight adults by fully reclining the backrests of the cab seats to mate with their cushions or – an arrangement I have on occasion used when friends are popping in for drinks – the offside settee is left as described but the nearside one, by the sliding door, is made into a single, face forward seat and the cab passenger seat is reversed to face the interior. It is pleasant in fine weather with the door open and six can be accommodated, able to come and go at will. Yet the entire kitchen/toilet/storage area at the back remains unobstructed, allowing the brewer of coffee or mixer of drinks plenty of room to reach the stores and move about.

That versatile seating may quickly be converted to two long single beds or, with an optional pack of cushions, made up into a large double. Above the cab are the baseboards and mattresses for another double bed. The area can be used during travel as storage space for bedding and oddments. Yet, with its permanent high roof, this extremely spacious motorcaravan measures only 8ft 6in in height overall and, thanks to the smooth contours of the exterior, is surprisingly economical on fuel, whether the petrol or diesel version is chosen.

As a Talbot owner myself, I can testify to the rugged reliability of the base vehicle and its confidence-inspiring behaviour on the road. With the optional 2.0 litre petrol engine and five speed overdrive gearbox, it will motor happily all day at our legal maximum with no sign of strain and has sparkling acceleration when passing, for instance, knots of "heavies" on the motorways. Yet the controls are light, the turning circle is tight and the steering wheel remains easy to move at parking speeds.

This is, to my mind, the ideal multi-purpose vehicle, happy as a car, big enough to be a real load carrier, comfortable as a caravan with all its life-support systems and yet capable of long distance cruising without strain upon driver or passengers.

All in all a superb vehicle.

The Talbot CXL was judged Best Conversion in the Motor Caravan of the Year Awards, 1986 and was highly commended in the caravan Industry Awards, 1985.



## Talbot Express SL

### One of the most spacious elevating roof motor caravans

This must be one of the most spacious of the conventional, rising roof conversions on the market and will suit those who demand a low profile vehicle yet one which becomes, in a few minutes, a delightful home from home on the campsite.

Describing it as "traditional Auto-Sleeper" in layout will immediately convince the thousands of satisfied owners of the firm's products that here they will find clever design, proved over the years yet still constantly upgraded in the light of experience of both customers and the staff of Auto-Sleepers, many of whom are personal users of the firm's products.

"Traditional Auto-Sleeper" means that the superb quality of finish which we have all come to expect is maintained and even improved year by year. So you will find the same attention to detail, the extraordinarily fine finish in this cheapest of the Talbots as you will in the most expensive, the coachbuilt Talisman.

But why buy a rising roof when a high-top, we are told, is more convenient? The fact is, although the swing towards high-tops is undisputed, there remains a core of motorcaravanners who prefer the more compact appeal of the rising roof. They want the low profile for motoring, when using the vehicle as a car. Many have garages which will accommodate a rising roof but not a high-top.

With the proven Auto-Sleeper lift-up roof, full standing room is available whenever needed - in seconds. The roof is insulated, of course, as is the rest of the caravan. It is snug and draught-free in inclement weather but, if more air is needed, both side panels may be locked partially open to provide a through draught - or one may be completely lowered to provide, as a bonus, a grandstand view of the surroundings. Auto-Sleeper owners can often be seen at outdoor events, taking advantage of this unique feature, safe from the elements in their motorcaravans whilst the less fortunate face the rigours, unprotected.

The forward facing rear passenger seats may quickly be transformed into twin settees which face the table in the centre gangway. Another quick rearrangement takes in the cab seats with their fully reclining backrests



*Good looking with roof lowered*

to provide a pair of long single beds. Optional equipment allows these to be converted into a king sized double. Above, and beneath the raised roof, are twin rollaway bunks, each capable of carrying a 12 stone adult but more usually the delight of children, who love them. They are neatly hidden by day in their own long lockers, just below the roof line.

The front wheel drive Talbot Express, with its stubby bonnet and transverse power unit, gives more space behind the dashboard than any other standard van - space which Auto-Sleepers have used to the fullest advantage providing, on one side, a long kitchen unit at the rear with more than adequate storage beneath and, opposite, a refrigerator with locker below and not one, but two tall cupboards. Both may be used as wardrobes (his 'n' hers?) but the rearmost one is unobstructed by wheel arch and will accommodate the largest size of chemical toilet.

The Talbot's road holding and handling is described elsewhere in this magazine. Here is an opportunity to study some of the very full standard equipment of the driving cab. There are, for instance, two door operated courtesy lamps and two door pockets. This is one of

the few vans to offer opening quarter lights (with thief-resisting catches); they may be used in summer to supplement the fresh air available through the dashboard heater/ventilator system. The latter has a three speed booster fan. Then there is the instrument display itself, with a trip odometer as standard, plus speedometer, temperature and fuel gauges. These are supplemented by a low fuel warning lamp which I can tell you from experience begins an occasional flickering when there is still about 50 miles of motoring left in the tank; so there is plenty of warning and no excuse for running out! The tank itself is big, with a range of over 300 miles. In addition to the more usual warning lamps, there are sidelamp and headlamp indicators and another which warns of brake failure or disc pad wear.

You get a lot for your money with the Talbot Auto-Sleeper.

The Talbot Express Sportsman SL was Class Winner in the 1985 Caravan Industry Awards sponsored by United Dominions Trust and Second Equal with the Auto-Sleepers Renault RCX.



*Roomy interior for an elevating roof motor caravan*



*Roof side panel can be folded down to provide 'Grandstand' viewing*

# Behind the scenes



*Bob Halling, works Director*



*Anthony Trevelyan, Managing Director*



*Tony Johnson, Sales Manager*



*Joyce Stanley, Secretary to MD*



*Pam Hadley, Sales Office*



*Stuart Clements, Production Sales Manager*



*Margaret Ellison, Sales Administrator*

# On the production line



All furniture units are individually prepared prior to installation



Part of the vehicle storage compound outside the new factory



All furniture units are individually prepared prior to installation



Carpet and trimming shapes are cut from template guides in a separate workshop



Hazel Smith, Assistant to Accountant



All employees at Auto-Sleepers are specially trained and work to very high standards



Electrics for a Talbot CXL



William Cook, Accountant



The three production lines in main factory ensure that Auto-Sleepers are able to meet the ever-growing demand for their vehicles.



Alan Major, Foreman in charge of each coachbuilt production carries out a quality check.



A trio of Volkswagens awaiting the transporter

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87



## Volkswagen VX50 rising roof

### Rising roof model with the luxury specification usually found in hightops

This will appeal to Volkswagen enthusiasts, who can be numbered in their thousands: Top motorcaravan converters, Auto-Sleepers, have combined with top vehicle manufacturers, Volkswagenwerke, to produce a supremely adaptable multi-purpose vehicle. Overall length and width are no greater than those of many estate cars but the VX50 offers its owners so very much more.

There are, for instance, forward facing seats for four or five with a commanding all-round view and more leg and shoulder room than any car could offer. The carrying capacity is phenomenal, with a rear "boot" where contents are hidden from view, and a central floor area spacious enough to carry items of furniture, easily loaded through the side nearside doorway. By removing the shelf above the rear luggage compartment, further bulky items may be carried. So, it is a passenger carrier plus removal van.

But VX50 is also a motorcaravan, capable of sleeping four in a couple of comfortable double beds. The lower bed is quickly made by an easy conversion of the rear settee, whose cushions match perfectly to give a ridge-free sleeping area. The upper double bed is only visible after the roof has been raised - an operation that takes only a few seconds. This rising roof, developed over more than 20 years to its present state of near-perfection, is warm and draught free

when raised, yet allows vehicle height to be kept to less than 7ft when in its travelling position.

The VX50 has a kitchen unit stretching the full length of the offside of the vehicle from behind the driver's seat to the tailgate, where it ends in a wardrobe where five or six garments may be stored on clothes hangers. So, there is a long, flat working surface.

Opening the hinged tops reveals a two-burner cooker with grill beneath, then a stainless steel sink with drainer and, towards the rear, an enormous chest capable of accommodating the tallest wine bottles. Fitted with adaptable sliding baskets, it will also take a host of smaller items which will not be lost in the recesses of this commodious locker.

continued Page 20



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ASM

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

Beneath the cooker there is a storage cupboard and next to that a large refrigerator with freezer compartment and electronic ignition. (Auto-Sleepers have, sensibly, located the refrigerator further towards the rear than some I have seen) to keep the exterior flue well clear of the vehicle's fuel filler, which is at the base of the driver's door pillar. Rearwards from the refrigerator is another storage cupboard and below it there is a separate compartment where the chemical toilet (standard equipment) may be carried out of sight. There is further storage space beneath the rear settee.

A table is securely located behind the driver's seat. It is the work of a moment to insert its single leg into a socket in the central floor area and slot the table top on to the leg. This provides adequate dining space for two, sitting on the settee, yet things are arranged so that the refrigerator, cooker and sink remain accessible to the cook, who still has plenty of elbow room to work in the central area.

If four people are to live in the VX50, another and smaller table top may be specified. It is placed, on its island leg, in the gangway between the two cab seats. These can then be swivelled to face the table, providing a separate dining room for another couple.

Whether or not the extra table is specified, the cab passenger seat may be completely reversed to face the interior. When using this VW, my wife and I found this arrangement particularly useful after the bed was made up. It's not every motorcaravan that can offer a chair in the bedroom!

Naturally, the upholstery and furniture are made to the highest standards and the safety of occupants is a prime consideration. The mains electric hookup is provided with an earth leakage circuit breaker and, if the optional, blown air heater is fitted, it is properly vented (like the refrigerator) to the exterior and incorporates a flame failure gas isolator.

The base vehicle, the renowned Volkswagen Transporter, is probably the safest (and most comprehensively tested) van on the roads today. I have written hundreds of pages about the delights of motoring in it, purring along almost silently as it does, yet with impeccable road manners. I especially like the higher powered 78 bhp version, although many motorcaravanners have assured me that they find the 60 bhp model entirely adequate. That's another point in favour of the VW - the number of base vehicle options.



*Uncluttered interior makes for easy living*



*Passenger cab seat swivels to provide yet more room*



*Good sized solid type bed in roof*



*Huge storage locker with removable baskets*



#### **SUPERBLY STYLED**

The Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper is extremely attractive and is most 'car-like' to drive. The beautifully styled high-top roof has been designed with aerodynamics in mind with the resultant benefit in fuel consumption.

#### **A MOST BEAUTIFUL INTERIOR**

The inside has to be seen to be believed — it is superb.

The kitchen has a matching stainless-steel sink and two burner/grill cooker, both of which are fitted with specially designed lids so that they can be closed away when not in use. Below the sink there is a large refrigerator/freezer unit which is designed for use with gas/12/240 volts and is fitted with mains hook-up and full safety protection.

Adjacent to the refrigerator are two good sized lockers for the storage of food, etc, whilst there is further storage in a large locker which has shelves which can be adjusted for position as required.

#### **DESIGNED FOR PRACTICABILITY**

Practical features abound in the Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper, the design of which is such that there is always plenty of

free floor space. In the front of the high-top roof there is a large storage locker, adjacent to which there is an eye-level cupboard for the china — even this is supplied as standard.

Behind the cooker and sink there is a louvred window, complete with an integral fly screen and which provides maximum ventilation as and when required. Above the sink there is an electrical control panel which includes a water level gauge so that you can see exactly how much water you have.

Possibly one of the most practical features of the Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper is the fact that it is fitted with a parcel shelf to the rear of the dinette seats which enables shopping, etc, to be put in the area under it and safely out of sight.

#### **LUXURIOUS LIVING**

The beautiful rear dinette is designed to seat two people in total comfort. When four people are living in the vehicle there is an option enabling both cab seats to be swivelled and a table fitted between the two of them.

At night-time the rear dinette converts to a large and comfortable double bed, whilst

there is a further double bed in the roof.

High-quality curtaining and recessed fluorescent lights are fitted as standard.

Whilst the good insulation will keep you warm throughout, those requiring extra luxury have the option of specifying a thermostatically controlled externally flued heater unit.

#### **HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIFICATION**

The Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper is extremely well equipped and the high level of specification includes full carpeting throughout, a swivelling passenger seat enabling maximum utilisation of the interior space, and even a chemical toilet in a specially designed locker.

The external appearance of the Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper is eye-catching, as not only is there an attractive paint scheme with contrasting coachlines, but the wheel trims, roof rack and ladder are fitted as standard.

Auto-Sleepers and Volkswagen have produced the ideal combination: a perfectly planned, fitted and equipped interior powered by precision engineering, ensuring economy and reliability.

# Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper Hi-Top Motor Caravan of the Year 1985 Best Conversion







# Now when you've had enough of the neighbours, just change them.

Have you ever wished you could swap the bleating of next door's hi-fi for the baaing of lambs in a next door field?

Consider this. You pack a bag. Leave a note for the milkman. Walk down the drive. Start the engine.

That's it. That's as complicated as motor-caravanning gets.

The Talisman is a perfect example of the joy of a motorhome.

It was styled by Mr. William Towns. (He made his name designing Aston Martin/Lagonda so you can just imagine what he's done with a motorhome.)

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The kitchen is equipped with a two-burner grill/cooker with a separate oven below, and a stainless steel sink. (And when you're not using it, the whole caboodle can be closed away out of sight.)

There's loads of cupboard space throughout - with china for four and even a cocktail cabinet as standard fittings.

As are the fridge, shower unit and toilet, dinette and table, wardrobe and thermostatically-controlled heating.

So much for the home. What about the motor? The Talbot Express's powerful 2-litre engine

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So, unlike certain competitors' vehicles, the Talisman has all its motor up front and all its home at the back.

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No other comparable compact van has lower fuel consumption.\*

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Of course, it's more than possible that you're firm friends with the folks next door.

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\* 1300Kg fully laden - 26.65mpg. (Commercial Motor, 25.9.82)



Talbot Sportsman SL



Talisman



Talbot CXL

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**Renault Rapport**  
from Auto-Sleepers



With the introduction of the Renault Rapport, 1987 promises to be a vintage year for motor caravan enthusiasts.

This new vehicle, based on the latest Renault Trafic, abounds in exciting features, all designed to provide the user with the ultimate in comfort and convenience.

Take the kitchen, for example. In the Rapport you'll find it at the rear of the vehicle. It is in the very latest style, with vitreous enamel set into specially chosen laminate working surfaces. The cooker is fitted with an extractor fan as standard to keep the interior free from cooking odours. The sink has a hardwood chopping board plus a sensibly positioned soap dish and towel ring. To complete the kitchen's 5-star specification, there's an eye-level locker for kitchen ware and a large 2 cu.ft. (gross) Electrolux refrigerator with freezer compartment and electronic ignition as standard. The refrigerator is suitable for gas, 12 volt or mains power, with full safety protection.

In the all-new Rapport, our designers have worked miracles with storage space. They've built it into every item of furniture, in

addition to the eye-level lockers.

Sensible space utilisation is also evident in the ingenious seating arrangement whereby, by swivelling the cab passenger seat, you can either have a dinette for two, or an inward-facing dinette for four.

At nighttime your comfort is assured by the two single beds which, if required, convert into an optional double. A further double bed is fitted in the roof. To add to your comfort, there is an externally-flued heater plus full body insulation to keep you snug and warm even in the most inclement weather. Underfoot you will find luxury carpets, and the choice of furnishing fabrics reflects the general ambience of good taste and quality.

Everywhere you look in the Rapport, you'll find detail touches which make this motor caravan so excitingly different. There's a chemical toilet, two 4-way position roof ventilators, a five speed gear box, and radio fitted as standard. If you wish, there's the option of a hot water system.

It all adds up to what is surely the ultimate compact motor caravan ever. Designed and built to the now legendary Auto-Sleeper standards of workmanship.



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

## New Renault Rapport

All new for 1987, Auto-Sleepers fourth conversion of the popular Renault shows some original thinking.

This is the third model to use the unique high roof which gives standing space inside throughout the length of the vehicle. Features common to other models include the hinged side entrance door, the easy pull-out double bed in the roof and the four forward facing seats for travelling from which may quickly be made (a) the longitudinal settees with table between, (b) twin single beds and (c) a wide double, using the optional equipment.

But now the difference begins. The cab passenger seat swivels (as in some others) to face the rear but, between it and the nearside forward facing rear seat, a table may be mounted on an island leg. It is a pleasant place to take meals, with the side door open in fine weather. In the roof is a ventilator which may be opened in any of four directions, according to prevailing wind, or raised completely for maximum airflow.

It is to the rear of the seating area, however, that most noticeable changes begin, for here everything is different. Behind the seats on the nearside is the refrigerator – a big one, as usually found on coachbuilts, with 2 cu ft capacity, two star freezer, three way operation and, of course, electronic ignition. This refrigerator has a small cupboard below and a wide shelf above covered in dark brown laminate, heat and wear resisting. Above this are the earth leakage trip (for safe mains electricity), a 13 amp mains socket and the neat Auto-Sleepers monitor panel with fuses, switches, a water gauge for the built-in tank and socket for 12 volt power. A recessed fluorescent lamp is let into the wall above this panel and the lot is topped by a glass fronted cabinet housing Auto-Sleepers traditional crockery set.

Between the refrigerator and rear door is the cooker top, slightly lower and thus creating a functional and attractive split level appearance, visually separating the kitchen from the seating area. The two-burner-and-grill hob is in the modern style, with brown enamel top including a plate warmer, and hinged dark glass cover. (It was only after these good looking hobs had been proved durable in practice that Auto-Sleepers took the decision to use them on some of their popular models). In the wall above the cooker is an extractor fan and storage locker.

Beneath the hob is a drawer for cutlery and, below that, a large cupboard with twin, hinged doors. Opposite, and again right at the back of the vehicle, is the sink unit, again in modern style, with square enamel bowl and matching drainer let into the dark brown laminate surface which matches those surrounding the cooker and above the refrigerator. For other woodwork, the traditional Auto-Sleepers light oak finish is retained. Subjectively, I preferred the combination of light and dark furniture to the all-over light oak appearance of most other models. It is eye catching without being overdone or oppressive.

The drainer has a real wood chopping board cover which also fits the sink. A gold



*New style paintwork and wheel trims*

faucet tap, soap dish and towel ring add to eye appeal. Walls behind cooker and sink are lined with light fawn washable material and the floor is covered with flecked brown carpet throughout, from back doors to front of cab. (From personal experience, carpets fitted by Auto-Sleepers are long lasting and easy to clean).

On the wall above the sink there is a storage locker which also houses four glasses. As with the cooker, the sink is visually separated from the seating area, this time by the wardrobe, which extends to the ceiling and provides generous hanging space for



*Sink and drainer with plenty of storage space below*

plenty of long garments. On a panel at the base is mounted an externally flued, push button ignition space heater which, being in the centre of the caravan, will quickly distribute its output to all parts. In the roof

above the kitchen is another of those versatile ventilators.

A "blind" is provided for isolating the seating area from the rear. Consequently, a dressing room is available merely by pulling this curtain and those on the rear doors. (There are no side windows at the utility end and advantage has been taken to use the wall space thus provided). This screened area may also be used as a toilet room, for a Porta Potti is provided, stored in a locker beneath the seat in front of the refrigerator. With the roof vent and extractor fan already described, there will be no ventilation problems.

The interior is most pleasing to the eye, with new upholstery piped as in the Talisman. It is light in colour, has a delicate diagonal motif which adds a feeling of space to the interior. The pink velour latticed curtains make the whole package easy on the eye – an impression which continues at night, thanks to the generous artificial lighting of three recessed fluorescent lamps plus a spotlight over the rear offside seat.

The vehicle, the Renault Traffic with 1700cc motor (optional diesel) is a worthy base for this delightful little motorcaravan, being lively, easy to drive and very light on petrol consumption. For further impressions, see the other Renault Auto-Sleepers reviews in this magazine.

But, among so many changes, one aspect remains constant: that acknowledged Auto-Sleepers quality.



*Twin Dinette provides plenty of room*

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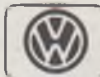
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# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Volkswagen VHT high-top

**High-top, high specification, highly attractive conversion of Europe's highly popular base vehicle.**

Essentially, the VHT is the high roof conversion of the Auto-Sleepers' VX50 – both full specification models. From the windows downwards, there is the same enormous storage capacity with estate car/removals van/passenger carrier versatility, all combined with the acknowledged Auto-Sleepers' finish and durability. There is the same gas/12 volt/240 volt large refrigerator/freezer, with electronic ignition and ELCB protection when operating on mains. The modern, purpose-designed electrics monitor panel incorporates fuses and switches. A water level gauge ensures that this vital commodity is always ready to be delivered to the sink by an electric pump.

There is the same long kitchen fitment on the offside, neatly turned into an attractive sideboard when not in use by closing the well designed hinged lids. Behind the kitchen, the louvred, flyscreened window allows control of ventilation. The front passenger seat may swiftly be reversed to face the interior of the caravan which, incidentally, is covered throughout at floor level with an attractive, mottled carpet, known from experience to be hard wearing, highly stain resistant and easy to brush clean.

If the optional front table is specified, both passenger's and driver's seats will turn inwards to form a compact little dinette for two. Children love it but adults can use it.

Among other options offered are a second battery with charger – an asset to those who spend more than a day or two without motoring to charge the vehicle's battery. Also available is a blown-air gas heater, fuelled to the exterior of course, which, with Auto-Sleepers' thorough insulation, make the VHT into a year-round camper.

It is in the roof area that the difference becomes apparent. From outside, the shape is carefully designed to add visual appeal, aerodynamic qualities and increased usefulness – for a roof rack is supplied in the stepped rear portion, easily accessible by a ladder mounted on the tailgate. This, together with the Auto-Sleeper wheel trims, is standard equipment.

Inside, preserving the tremendous integral strength of the Volkswagen, standing space is limited to the central area above the kitchen. There are roof bows fore and aft. Volkswagen themselves advise against their removal, for doing so must weaken the entire structure.

Thanks to clever design, the only place where one would want to stand, anyway, has been left unobstructed. The rear roof bow is above the settee, supports the upper bed in its travelling position. The front bow is encompassed by the large storage locker above the cab roof. Its contents are neatly hidden by a hinged door with automatic stay. Next to it, and conveniently situated for the kitchen area, is another door, glass fronted, which displays the traditional set of crockery for four.

The rear upper double bed is more than just that, of course. Couples without children



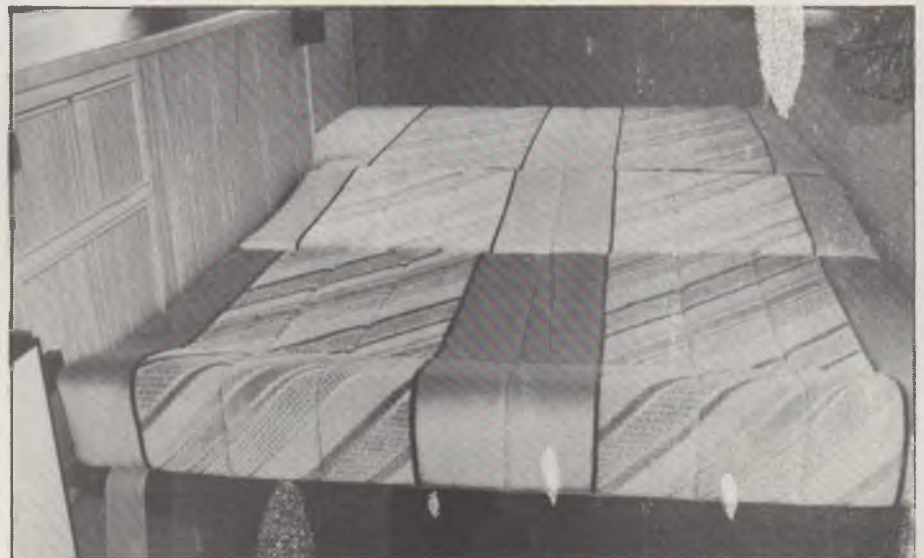
(or accompanying adults) will be equally glad of its presence, for it becomes an enormous storage area. The access ladder, with wooden treads comfortable to bare feet, does double duty; when placed across the front of the bed and bolted into position, the ladder holds any luggage carried up there in place. In use, one section of the bed is pulled forward. There is still enough room in the compact Volkswagen to climb from "ground" to "first" floor level.

Just about my favourite vehicle for motoring, the Volkswagen began life ahead of all others and has, in my opinion, maintained its lead. Those who have driven only the old aircooled models will be impressed by the extreme quietness of the '80s watercooled versions. For lively and responsive performance, the petrol versions

are advised. For sheer economy, there is the diesel, but now also available at extra cost with turbocharging to increase the power output.

The range of Volkswagen options surely exceeds that of any other manufacturer. The customer may specify a four or five speed gearbox, 60, 78 or even a 112 bhp fuel injected motor – or the two 1.6 litre models mentioned above. For the disabled or simply lazy, there is automatic transmission. Those who expect to do a lot of off-road motoring may have the successful synchro four wheel drive.

Whichever Volkswagen you may choose, it will be the best of its kind – a fitting match for the perfection of the Auto-Sleeper design and finish.



*Large, easy to make, double bed*



*Removable parcel shelf provides 'Boot'*



*Over cab storage and china locker*

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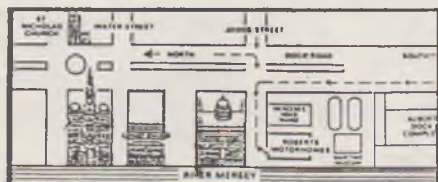
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# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Volkswagen VT 20

**First VW Auto-Sleeper still offers many unusual features, continues with only minor changes for 1987**

Introduced many years ago now, the original VW conversion by Auto-Sleepers remains unique in design. The kitchen is at the front, with sink unit just behind the driver's seat. An unusual cover hinges forward through 180 degrees over the back of the seat, to extend the work surface into the cab. It is an unusual, yet essentially practical feature.

Beneath the stainless steel sink is the gas/12 volt refrigerator with electronic ignition. Alongside is the matching cooker, with two burners and grill, plus mirror-finish, folding aluminium splash guards as seen in many Auto-Sleepers. There is a spacious cupboard below.

Across the gangway, behind the passenger's cab seat and adjacent to the nearside sliding door is another storage unit with three shelves and hinged door. The top shelf is shaped to take the well known set of crockery for four. The lower two provide convenient storage space for tins and groceries. The top provides yet more working surface.

As this forward cupboard is fixed, the cab passenger seat cannot be reversed to face the interior as in other VW models from Auto-Sleepers. With this ingenious layout, that does not matter, for there is seating for four at the rear. A comfortable settee extends the full width of the vehicle, has forward extensions which make it U-shaped, allowing four to sit around the central table mounted on an island leg.

The seat extension on the offside conceals a locker which houses the chemical toilet, again part of the standard equipment. The inward-facing seat on the nearside demonstrates yet another clever design feature. It looks just like yet a further storage locker (which it is) but it is the work of a moment to remove the top cushion, fold away the sides - and it has disappeared, increasing the already adequate floor area - when a bulky load is to be carried, for instance. For this Auto-Sleeper is a workhorse as well as a passenger carrier and leisure vehicle.

The bed is made by removing the two small seat cushions and pulling the base of the main settee forwards. The backrest goes to the horizontal, aligning with the cushion covering the engine deck to provide a double bed, over 5ft wide at its forward end, a little narrower at the rear of the vehicle because the small but accessible wardrobe is sited in the nearside corner.

Above the backrest of the settee and hence over the bed is a recessed fluorescent lamp, flanked by further storage in the form of cubbyholes. Another similar fluorescent is sited over the kitchen. Behind the sink and cooker is a double louvred window with flyscreen. So ventilation at that end is adequate and controllable.

It's the same in the Auto-Sleepers' patented rising roof system. Easy to put up, without going outside, one or both sidewalls of the roof may be opened fractionally, for a little ventilation or through flow. Up here is another double bed, easy to climb into, using



*Easy to operate, insulated roof, in raised position*

one of the closed work surfaces. Normally used by the children in the family, this second bed is easily capable of accommodating a couple of adults.

The VT20 is, indeed, a well planned compact motorcaravan, unlike any other but essentially practicable.

What of the base vehicle? No worries there. The Volks is just superb for motoring and, with its low roof line, carefully faired in at the front to lessen wind noise and drag, capable of cruising all day at and beyond our legal maximum with surprising economy. It is a delight to drive, with responsive yet light controls, good directional stability,

reassuring braking and very low engine noise.

There are probably more factory produced versions of the base vehicle than any other manufacturer can offer. The customer who cannot find the Volkswagen variation he prefers must be very hard to please!

Auto-Sleepers ring the changes, too, ensuring that all VW lovers can choose the caravan conversion which suits them best. All models are properly insulated and may be "winterised" by the addition of the optional externally vented, thermostatically controlled blown air heater.



*'U' shaped dinette provides maximum comfort*



*Very large double bed, parcel shelf can be removed*



*Sink and cooker on the right, china and storage locker on the left*



*Styled by William Towns of Aston Martin Lagonda fame*

## Bedford Clubman British vehicle, British coachbuilt – a development of Auto-Sleepers' first reinforced glassfibre motorcaravan

"They'll never keep it up!" said the critics when the first Bedford SV100 appeared. For this was something entirely different. Most British coachbuilts in 1981 were boxy things, with lots of square corners and little attempt at external styling.

Auto-Sleepers and William Towns of Aston-Martin Lagonda fame got together, produced a monocoque glassfibre body for the Bedford chassis-cab. The two merged beautifully and anyone not in the know would have imagined that the entire package had been built as one from the wheels up. The external corners are rounded, making the vehicle not only look good but slip easily through the air. The result was excellent behaviour on the road allied to better-than-average fuel economy.

The critics were wrong. The SV100 was immediately accepted by discriminating motorcaravanners. It was particularly popular among the dedicated who attended meetings and outdoor events, who often used their vehicles to entertain a few friends. "Clubmen", in fact – and that was the designation chosen by Auto-Sleepers when the interior was redesigned, giving a seating capacity for several more people and the choice of single or double beds.

The same beautiful body shape was retained but interior alterations were fairly extensive. Layout of furniture at the front now more closely resembles the proven Auto-Sleeper arrangement, with twin facing-forward seats which can be converted to inward-facing settees or, with reclined cab seats, into longitudinal couches which become single beds. Thanks to an interior that is over 6ft wide, the alternative of a transverse double bed is always available. The extra width has been achieved without making the exterior cumbersome and,

internally, it provides an extra feeling of spaciousness.

Above the cab there is a wide, transverse double bed, suitable for adults or children, with a flyscreened ventilator in the roof above. Cunningly, the roof of the cab has been completely cut away (with Bedford approval, of course); the mattresses on their baseboards may be hinged up out of the way, allowing walk-tall access right from the rear kitchen to the seats in the cab. This – and many other features – make the Clubman a delightful place to live, whatever the conditions are like outside.

To the rear of the seating area is a generous wardrobe with, in its base, a thermostatically controlled gas heater for chilly evenings or winter months. Opposite is a work surface (or place to stand the television) with a large refrigerator below, concealed in a cabinet which matches the remainder of the furniture.

The kitchen is placed unobtrusively at the rear. Closed, it looks like another of the light oak furniture units. Covers and doors are opened to reveal a stainless steel sink and

drainer, matching hob and grill, an oven and storage space. There is an opening window for extra ventilation when cooking and, above that, a storage shelf. There are two rows of wall cupboards – along each side of the caravan area.

In the offside rear corner is the toilet room, beautifully finished in toning colours and equipped with a fixed handbasin, mirror, striplight, and a shower head on a hose and a flyscreened roof ventilator. There is ample room for the chemical toilet.

The latest Bedford CF2 with 2.0 litre petrol engine is quiet and easy to drive. Many prefer the 'conventional' layout of engine, gearbox, propshaft and rear wheel drive – certainly those who carry out some or all of their own maintenance. The whole front grille panel, with headlamps, is quickly removable; making this an easy vehicle for major servicing – but, with the noted Bedford reliability that does not happen very often!

The Clubman is a compact coachbuilt, pleasant for motoring, easy to park and yet, on site, it offers real comfort and complete independence.



*Two large single beds*



# Auto-Sleeper '86/87



Tail gate open showing the boot and parcel shelf with cover

Probably the prettiest looking midi

## Bedford Midi

### Unique layout in a compact high top conversion of a full specification vehicle

Having now driven several Bedford Midis, both plain vans and motorcaravan conversions, I must confess that I like the vehicle, despite what some would term its old-fashioned arrangement of engine-between-seats, rear wheel drive, recirculating ball steering and column gear change.

The point is, I suppose, that everything new is not necessarily perfect and dated components, perfected as time passes, can in fact lead to greater reliability and faultless function year after year after year. It is no secret that the Midi was Japanese-inspired – and it may be as well to recall that products from that country have a well deserved reputation for reliability.

All the Midis I have driven have been trouble free and performed entirely satisfactorily. The "engine in the cab", for instance, could be noisy and hard to get at. In practice, it is one of the quietest – with excellent accessibility, thanks to easily removed front seats. Steering column gearchange can be a horror; the Midi's is precise and little more involved than using the turn indicator. Fairly speedy ratio

changes may be made without faltering. The dual circuit, disc/drum brakes are positive and gently progressive. The recirculating ball steering holds the vehicle on the desired line at speed, seems to exhibit no quirks on twisting country roads and is almost feather-light when parking. The 1.8 litre petrol engine (optional 2 litre diesel) provides a respectable 75 bhp which propels this compact vehicle and provides, in fact, a better power/weight ratio than many found in larger and heavier vans of 2 litres capacity.

Vehicle equipment is more generous than most, with standard features including a heated rear window with wash/wipe, radio, dashboard clock, cigar lighter (the socket is always useful for accessories), locking fuel cap and tinted glass windows all round.

As a bonus, there are Bedford service centres all over the country and the works at Luton reckon to have an 80 per cent British content in the Midi.

Auto-Sleepers have made an interesting job of the interior, after adding the high top, designed by William Towns and approved by Bedford. That top houses a double bed which doubles as luggage space.

Below, the settee (which makes up quickly into the main double bed) is set fairly well towards the rear, giving a large clear floor area inside the nearside sliding door. Across the front, but behind the cab, is another smaller bench seat which conceals a useful storage compartment.

The kitchen unit extends along the entire offside from behind the driver's seat, provides the 'best look' enamel hob with glass cover and matching square sink and drainer. The latter has a wooden chopping board cover which also fits the sink. Beneath, there are capacious cupboards, a large refrigerator with freezer compartment and storage for chemical toilet (standard) and gas bottles. There is also a deep storage chest with sliding containers. The wardrobe is right at the back.

Opening the tailgate reveals a large 'boot' contents may be completely hidden from sight with a push-buttoned cover. Below the boot there is yet another storage locker – an excellent place for tools, walking sticks and even muddy boots.

Above the boot is yet another storage locker and, next to it, the cupboard which holds the racks which secure the Auto-Sleepers' crockery set for four.

The cab forms no part of the caravan's living area. It is possible to scramble from front to back, over the wide central console and storage unit. This is a design that will appeal particularly to those who like to keep the driving room separate and immediately available at any time, day or night.

The Auto-Sleepers' Midi is an interesting conversion, equipped and finished to the highest standards. It is worth more than a cursory examination.



Plenty of room inside



Cooker/Sink/Fridge unit with chemical toilet below and seat on the left

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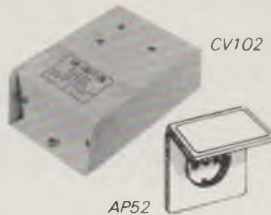


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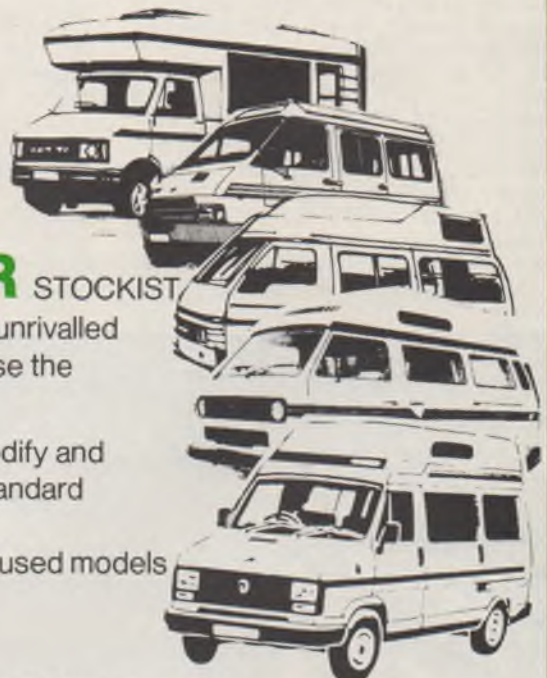
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# WESTERN MOTOR CARAVANS (Formerly Penta Motorhomes)

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## Renault Trafic RV 50

**Economical four berth, six seater, with outstanding fuel economy, low overall height and short length.**

"The Trafic is extremely well engineered", I was gratified to hear this from an enthusiastic professional mechanic who spends his time working on expensive cars and vans from another country, themselves the acme of reliability. Renault, who have been making vehicles in France for longer than most of us can remember, have the reputation for producing real classics from time to time. The successful Traffics are certainly numbered among them, may be seen all over Europe (so there is no shortage of service depots).

Although the profile of this simplest of the Auto-Sleeper Renault conversions is low, with overall height of just 7ft (and consequently often garageable), there is a surprising amount of standing space inside, even with the roof lowered. The front wheel drive Renault has a lower floor than any other similar van, allowing greater interior height within the same overall dimensions. For that reason, it is a popular van with the not-so-agile and the disabled. A simple ramp will allow wheelchair access; most other vehicles require a more expensive and heavier hydraulic lift.

Inside, there is of course the usual Auto-Sleepers quality of finish, with that superb cabinetwork at the rear hiding the kitchen sink and cooker. There is a gas/electric



**Solid type construction, insulated elevating roof in raised position**

refrigerator and a wardrobe that is bigger than you would be entitled to expect in so compact a vehicle.

Ahead of the kitchen and wardrobe are the facing forward twin passenger seats; access to them can be gained from the hinged side door, from the rear or from the cab. These seats may quickly be converted to twin, inward facing settees. (Incidentally, many couples travelling without families leave one or both of them this way for the benefit of the increased under-seat storage so made available). The table stands between them to provide a dining room for four. The backrest of the nearside settee is ingeniously attached to (and detachable from) the hinged side door – a convenient arrangement that would be impossible with a sliding door.

Pushed forward and reclined, the cab seats match up with the base cushions of the rear settees to form two single beds. These may be jointed to make a large double if the optional cushions are specified.

In the raised elevating roof are two stretcher bunks, each 6ft long, rolled neatly when not in use into their concealing, hinged cases. This is a further example of the attention to detail and appearance to be found in every Auto-Sleeper. The bunks are slightly tapered towards the rear, allowing the kitchen/storage area to be used even when all the beds are occupied. Creature comforts are looked after by the chemical toilet housed below the nearside dinette seat and the optional, externally flued, thermostatically controlled heating system.

The RV 50 is a simple but essentially practical conversion of a delightful little vehicle, less than 15ft long and well able to double as a compact motor car or even a small removals van with its access to the load space from side or rear.

A few more words about the Renault itself: In 1400cc form it is as economical on fuel as most medium cars, provided it is used for relaxed cruising and not speeding down the fast lane of the motorway. For most drivers, however, I would agree with the scores who have written to me proclaiming that the five gear 1700cc version is well worth the slight extra cost.

Friends tell me that I am not a light footed driver and usually burn up more fuel than others who have driven the same vehicle. Yet, on my last extended test of a Renault Trafic 1700cc, fuel consumption consistently remained at better than 30mpg. My assistant editor, with daintier right foot, achieved over 35mpg on a tankfull-to-tankfull test. This is highly commendable for a motorcaravan that is no slouch.

Extraordinarily, most reports from readers do not reveal such savings with the diesel Traffics. There may be other reasons for preferring a diesel motor but, in the UK, where cost of this fuel is high, it would seem unwise to expect significant savings on this particular marque.

Controls are light, engine and wind noise are low, even at speed. The Renault Trafic Auto-Sleeper is an altogether delightful little vehicle.

The Renault RV50 was placed Fourth in the Caravan Industry Awards, 1985, being beaten only by three other Auto-Sleeper models!



**The luxurious dinette**

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Renault Trafic hightop RHT

**A high roof version of the RV50 with an upper double bed replacing stretcher bunks.**

The RHT is similar to the rising roof RV50 below gutter level, having the same convenient kitchen and storage layout and the same face forward seats that may be converted to settees with the dining table between them. Likewise, bringing the cab seats into use allows twin single beds or, with the optional cushions, a large double.

Beneath the insulated glass fibre hightop, however, things are entirely different. The RV50's stretcher bunks have gone, to be replaced at the front end by a generously proportioned double bed.

When travelling or not required, the bed lives in sections, one above the other, in the roof space over the front seats. All may be hinged upwards by about 45 degrees to give increased headroom above the front seats and to allow walk-tall access to them from the caravan part of the vehicle. Alternatively, the sections may be left in the horizontal, creating the effect of a cab of normal height but providing extra storage space for bedding and so freeing the underseat lockers for other duties.

These sections of the upper double bed are quickly pulled towards the back when making the bed. They then extend over the lower seating/bedding area, reducing headroom but still leaving ample room for sitting and moving about. So, in this little motorcaravan, children may be put to bed early whilst their parents sit up and have full use of the caravan's facilities without restriction. Furthermore, even young children may fidget and wriggle but there is little likelihood of their rolling out of bed, for they sleep longitudinally, with feet towards the front of the vehicle.

Whatever the position of the upper double bed, the kitchen remains completely usable



*Sleek exterior with side opening door*



*The well positioned refrigerator.*

and its full standing height is always available. Because the hightop is permanent (ie cannot be lowered) it has been possible for

the designers to include extra storage space. In one upper rear corner there is the drinks locker, with a set of four glasses and cutouts for bottles. Opposite is a similar but glass fronted cupboard housing the traditional Auto-Sleepers real crockery set for four people – easy to reach and held by tensioners to prevent rattles. Forward of each of these wall cupboards are little lined troughs suitable for paperback books or oddments. Then, when the upper bed is not in use, its wide support shelves each side, below the roof window line, will accept cups, glasses, books, spectacles... it is so useful to have a little dumping space without the need to put up the table. Finally, above the back doors, is another useful trough, wide and deep enough to take large books. On test, we found it ideal for umbrellas.

As is the case with all Auto-Sleepers, the whole interior, when not covered by furniture or wood trim, is carefully lined with a light coloured carpet material at high level, darker lower down where scuff marks could appear. It not only looks attractive but reduces condensation to the absolute minimum.

Lighting, by bright fluorescent lamps which consume little current, is perfectly adequate. Ventilation is by an insect screened adjustable roof light, supplemented by tinted glass sliding side windows and, of course, the winding windows in the front doors.

The cab of the Renault is well appointed, with a map pocket on the driver's door, a recess for pencils and oddments boxes on the dashboard, twin sun visors, an effective heater with demisters for the side windows as well as the windscreen. Particularly appreciated by owners is the fascia panel's hinged small table, designed for delivery drivers' notes but equally suitable for motorcaravanners' refreshments.

Instrumentation includes speedometer with trip odometer, water temperature, oil pressure and fuel gauges and a dimmer for the lights. The latter include oil pressure warning, hazard lights, foglight, choke, low fuel level and brake wear. Standard Renault specification incorporates sound proofing which no doubt contributes to the low noise level in the vehicle.

The Renault Trafic is, indeed, thoughtfully put together and a delight to travel in. We thought it was more like a car than a van.



*Fold away shelf in cab, radio is standard*

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

in its stored mode above the cab, the baseboard may be held at 45 degrees to allow walk-in access to the front seats.

Right at the back, on the offside, is the enamelled sink and separate drainer with wooden chopping board cover. Towel ring and soap dish are provided. Opposite is the matching cooker with two burners and grill. There is a cutlery tray and ample storage space below.

Forward of the cooker is a large refrigerator with freezer and electronic ignition. A work surface above, at a higher level, effectively separates the hob from the seating area. Above that is the modern electrics control panel with water level gauge, the mains electric socket and earth leakage trip. In a wall cupboard is the fitted crockery set, with a matching storage locker next to it. The drinks locker is above the sink.

The sink is separated from the seating area by the wardrobe – surprisingly commodious for such a compact vehicle. In line with the full specification, a water heater occupies a part of the cupboard above the wardrobe whilst, in its base, is the gas fired, thermostatically controlled heater, making this a year-round motorcaravan.

A "blind" is provided for isolating the front of the caravan from the "utility" rear. Among the generous storage provision beneath the sink is a compartment for a chemical closet. With the central blind drawn, the rear becomes a toilet/dressing room, with adequate light when needed from two fluorescents and excellent ventilation from the four-way roof vent plus, when needed, an electric extractor fan.

Whilst retaining the high quality cabinetwork of its predecessors, this new motorcaravan from Auto-Sleepers shows several innovations in interior décor. The dark brown work surfaces tone in beautifully with the light wood and paler brown flecked carpet, complemented by light fawn washable walls at the rear and carpet-type trim elsewhere.

The new upholstery, with a delicate diagonal motif and piped edges sets off the full, latticed velour curtains.

It is a most attractive motorcaravan in terms of equipment, space, décor and compactness – a triumph of the designers' flair and the craftsmen's skills.



*Large refrigerator with electrical control panel and china above glass topped cooker/grill beyond*



*A view from the rear doors show the large amount of room in Auto-Sleeper's conversion of the new Ford*



*Sink unit with h & c water storage and chemical toilet below*

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Ford Transit Frisky

**The first rising roof conversion of the new Transit makes its welcome debut.**

In the past there have been conversions of tiny, car-like vans. None remains on the market, for they were expensive to make into motorcaravans and suitable for only an occasional night or two away - in fine weather.

Why bother about such extremes when there are real motorcaravans like the Ford Frisky? It is no longer nor wider than many an estate car and, with an overall height of less than 7 feet, could be driven into many a garage if that is your wish. (Personally, I believe fresh air is far less harmful to a vehicle than the condensation which takes place in most locked garages).

Frisky is a real motorcaravan, with beds for four, ample seating, a proper kitchen and lots of storage space for clothes, bedding and food. The latter is supplemented by a large refrigerator with freezer compartment, working from 12 volts when motoring, gas or mains electricity on site. Using 240 volts mains, there is earth leakage circuit breaker protection. Electronic ignition takes care of the gas, ensures that the flame is never extinguished unintentionally while there is gas in the bottle - and warns if there is no gas.

Frisky is compact and a delight to drive, to the extent that it is likely to be used as a car frequently. There are four forward facing seats for travelling and the smoothly sliding side door provides an easy exit for occupants even when space is restricted, as when parking close to another vehicle, for instance. For short trips, such as school runs, it can quickly be changed to a six seater. The seats may be made into two long single beds or, with an optional pack, a double extending to the full width of the vehicle. Beneath the rising roof are two bunks, neatly concealed during daytime in individual lockers which match the superb finish of the rest of the furniture.

The kitchen at the rear is built of the same light oak finish furniture and the cooker and matching stainless sink are hidden away until required for use. There is plenty of storage space in cupboards and drawers for utensils and food, in addition to that big refrigerator. A set of crockery for four travels safely in purpose made holders yet is instantly



available for use when needed. The wardrobe will take seven or eight garments on clothes hangers and a bank of shelves is provided therein for small personal items.

The roof, with insulated rising cap and solid, hinged side and end walls, is of the Auto-Sleepers' proven design, being easy to raise and lower. Securing catches are inside the vehicle: thief proof and protected from the weather. An integral roofrack is located at the front, above the cab, and may be reached by standing on the front door sills. The whole caravan is insulated, making it suitable for use in summer or winter. Among the optional equipment is a thermostatically controlled, blown air gas heater, with

products of combustion safely vented to the exterior. The electrical control panel is an Auto-Sleepers' special, contains a battery condition monitor, a gauge to indicate contents of the large under-floor water tank, a socket for 12 volt appliances (a mains socket is nearby) and a range of easily recognised cartridge fuses.

Provision is made for the storage of the chemical toilet adding to the versatility of this delightful little motorcaravan. With its carefully chosen soft furnishings, toning curtains and full (hard wearing but easily cleaned) carpeting, Frisky is a truly adaptable little home on wheels.



## Ford Transit Legend

**First coachbuilt on the new Transit is compact on the road yet spacious on site.**

The new Ford Transit is not a big vehicle. I doubted whether Auto-Sleepers would be able to produce yet another good looking on the short wheelbase chassis.

My fears were groundless. There is no doubt about its attractive external appearance. William Towns has done it again, has evolved a distinctive monocoque glass fibre body line which mates happily with the stylish cab and yet marks it clearly as a member of the handsome Auto-Sleepers' family of coachbuilt motorcaravans. Closely related to the Bedford Clubman and Talbot Talisman, my personal opinion is that the Legend may well be considered the best looking of the three.

The body is immensely strong and fully insulated. A prominent but smooth flowing peak over the windscreen contributes to the distinctive good looks and serves the practical attribute of housing a generous double bed which may be folded away during the daytime to provide walk-in access to the front seats. If the upper double bed is not needed, the area may be used as a storage space for bulky items or replaced, as a factory option, by a set of cupboards.

Both cab seats may be turned on swivels to face the rear, making two individual dinettes where four people are able to dine in comfort. The central gangway remains unobstructed; any of the four may leave the dining room and walk to the rear without having to squeeze past furniture or stumble over legs.

The seats, upholstered in a quality material with rolled edges for thigh support and comfortably raked backrests, may quickly be converted into twin settees, facing inwards and again with raked backrests. Further alternatives include a wide transverse double bed or two singles of ample length.

The kitchen is at the rear, well separated from the seating area. Closed, it has the appearance of an item of furniture. Opening doors and lids reveals a stainless steel sink and drainer, hob with grill, separate oven and good storage space in cupboards. A cutlery tray is fitted in the locker beneath the draining board, which has a drop-down door to add horizontal space. A venetian blind ensures privacy when needed yet allows adequate ventilation through the opening window above the kitchen unit.

Within easy reach of the kitchen is a flat worktop with 2 cu ft refrigerator below, possessing the boon of electronic ignition. Above this worktop is a glass fronted drinks cupboard, supplied with four stemmed glasses and clips which will accept bottles of many sizes. Topping that is the electric control panel, with battery condition indicator, water level gauge, switches and fuses. 12 volt and 240 volt sockets are supplied. The traditional crockery set is housed in a high level wall cupboard; further matching cupboards on each side of the caravan provide a lot more storage capacity.

A sizeable wardrobe has a shelf at the top and a thermostatically controlled flued gas heater in its base. This is on the offside of the caravan and, next to it in the rear corner, is the shower/toilet room with a fixed basin and



vanity cupboard beneath. Ventilation here is assured by a four way adjustable roof vent with insect screen (there is another above the kitchen).

Hot and cold running water are piped to both sink and toilet room. Cold water comes straight from an under-floor tank, hot goes via the constant flow heater on a kitchen wall. Plumbing runs are short, ensuring no waste of water – just another of Auto-Sleepers' thoughtful touches.

Outside, there is a big locker for gas bottles (supply is protected by isolation cocks inside for all appliances) and a lockable cap

for the water filler. The external mains electric socket takes the standard BSI 16 amp supply lead and the whole system is made safe by an earth leakage trip. A strong, stainless steel ladder at the rear of the vehicle leads to the roof rack which provides yet more storage space.

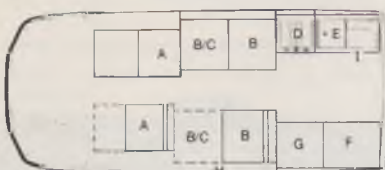
The Legend, although compact for a coachbuilt, thus provides ample storage capacity for a family of four and, in summer or winter, the occupants will find it to be a comfortable motorcaravan, easy to live in and a pleasure when travelling.

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Ford Frisky



4 berths  
Height 6'11"      Width 6'4"  
Length 15'4"

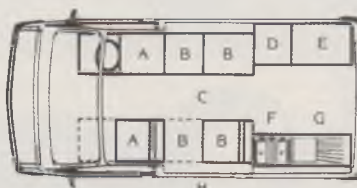


- A. Swivelling cab seats.
- B. Dinette converts to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or optional double bed.
- C. Tables.
- D. Cooker/grill with cupboard below.
- E. Sink/drain with cupboards below.
- F. Wardrobe.
- G. Refrigerator/freezer with cupboard below.
- H. Side sliding door.
- I. Chemical toilet.

## Renault RV50



4 berths  
Height 7'0"      Width 6'11"  
Length 14'8"



- 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. Refrigerator with cupboard below.
- E. Large wardrobe.
- F. 2 burner/grill cooker with cupboard below.
- G. Sink with cupboard and china below.
- H. Side door providing access to rear seats when in front facing position.

## 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.

## Renault Rapport



4 berths  
Height 8'9"  
Width 6'11"  
Length 14'8"



- A. Luxury cab seats (passenger seat swivels).
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or optional double.
- C. Large table.
- D. Small table.
- E. Wardrobe with externally flued heater below.
- F. Sink and drainer, cupboards below and above.
- G. Cooker/grill, cupboard below and above.
- H. Extractor fan.
- J. Refrigerator/freezer with cupboard below. Crockery cupboard above.
- K. Side door.
- L. Drop down over cab bed.
- M. Chemical toilet.

## Ford Flair



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

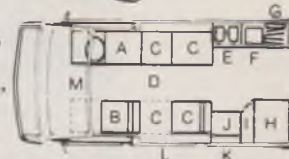


- A. Swivelling cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or optional double bed.
- C. Tables.
- D. Wardrobe with water heater above and thermostatically-controlled heater below.
- E. Sink and drainer, cupboards below and above.
- F. Cooker/grill. Cupboards below and above.
- G. Extractor fan.
- H. Refrigerator/freezer with cupboard below, crockery cabinet above.
- I. Chemical toilet.
- K. Drop down over cab bed.

## Renault RCX



4 berth  
Height 8'7"  
Width 6'11"  
Length 14'8"



- 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.



# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper VT20



4 berths  
Height 6'11"      Width 6'8"  
Length 14'9"

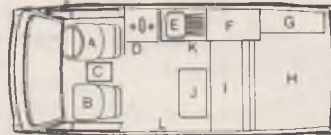


- A. Adjustable cab seats.
- B. Sink with refrigerator below.
- C. 2 burner grill/cooker with cupboard below.
- D.) Form U-shaped dinette.
- E.) Convert to a large double bed or, by removing cushion, a large load carrying area.
- F. By leaving parcel shelf in position, F forms a boot.
- G. Wardrobe.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

## Volkswagen Auto-Sleeper VX50



4 berths  
Height 6'11"      Width 6'8"  
Length 14'9"



- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats (swivel option).
- B. Swivelling fully adjustable seat.
- C. Optional table.
- D. 2 burner/grill cooker with cupboard below.
- E. Sink with cupboard below.
- F. Large storage locker with removable trays.
- G. Wardrobe.
- H. Parcel shelf with storage below.
- I. Dinette seat.
- H.&I. Convert to large double bed.
- J. Table.
- K. Chemical toilet in special cupboard above H,I,J, double bed.
- L. Side door.

## Volkswagen VHT



4 berths  
Height 8'3"      Width 6'8"  
Length 14'11"



- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seat (swivel option).
- B. Swivelling fully adjustable 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.&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

## Talbot CXL



4 berths  
Height 8'6"

Width 6' 4 1/2"  
Length 15'8"



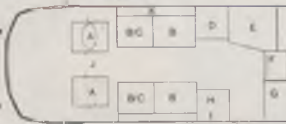
- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats (passenger seat swivels).
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or B and C convert to a transverse double bed.
- C. Table.
- D. Cupboard.
- E. 2 burner grill/cooker, cupboard and drawer below - crockery cupboard above.
- F. Sink. Cupboard below - cocktail cabinet above.
- G. Toilet compartment with optional shower.
- H. Wardrobe.
- 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.

## Ford Legend



4 berths  
Height 8'10"

Width 6'11"  
Length 17'3"

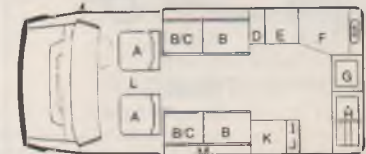


- A. Swivelling cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to front facing seats. Alternatively A and B convert to two longitudinal single beds or a large transverse double bed.
- C. Tables.
- D. Wardrobe with thermostatically-controlled heater below.
- E. Shower/toilet compartment.
- F. 2 burner/grill cooker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

## Talisman II



4 berths  
Height 8'10 1/4"      Width 7'1 1/2"  
Length 17'7"



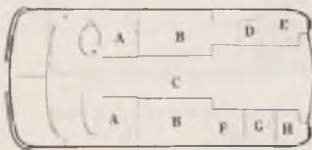
- A. Swivelling cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats. Alternatively, A. and B. convert to two longitudinal single beds or a large transverse double bed.
- C. Tables.
- D. Cupboard with shelves.
- E. Wardrobe with thermostatically-controlled heater below.
- F. Shower/toilet compartment.
- G. 2 burner/grill cooker with oven below.
- H. Stainless-steel sink and drainer with cupboard below.
- I. Cupboard with shelves.
- J. Cocktail cabinet.
- K. Refrigerator with freezer compartment.
- L. Cut-away cab with pull-out double bed.
- M. Gas storage with external access.

# Auto-Sleeper '86/87

## 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.

## Bedford Midi



4 berths  
Height 8'0"  
Width 5'6¼"  
Length 15'5"



- A. & B. High-backed cab seats.
- C. Storage box.
- D. 2 burner/grill cooker with cupboard below.
- E. Sink.
- F. Drainer with chopping board and crockery drawer below.
- G. Large storage locker with removable trays.
- H. Wardrobe.
- I. Parcel shelf with storage below.
- J & I Convert to large double bed.
- K. Table.
- L. Cupboard for chemical toilet and two gas cylinders.
- M. Electrolux 212 refrigerator with freezer compartment.
- N. Cupboard housing gas control taps, water pump and earth leakage trip switch.
- O. Sliding door.
- P. Seat with storage box below.

## Bedford Clubman



4 berths  
Width 6'9"  
Height 8'10½"  
Length 16'0"

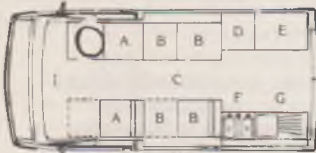


- A. Fully adjustable luxury cab seats.
- B. Dinette converting to two front facing seats.
- C. Table.
- A. and B. convert to two longitudinal single beds or B and C convert to large double bed.
- D. Cut-away cab with pull-out bed.
- E. Wardrobe with thermostatically controlled heater below.
- F. Shower/toilet 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.

## Renault RHT - high-top



4 berths  
Height 8'7"  
Width 6'11"  
Length 14'8"



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

## Two Winners...



Derek Bell, World Champion race driver took the opportunity between race practice at Brands Hatch to test the award winning Volkswagen Autosleeper VHT. Derek was the first to take advantage of Bromley Motor Caravan's new demonstration vehicle with the new 2.1 fuel injection power unit.

After a very close scrutiny Derek commented "It is incredible just what the designers have achieved - this vehicle has absolutely everything".

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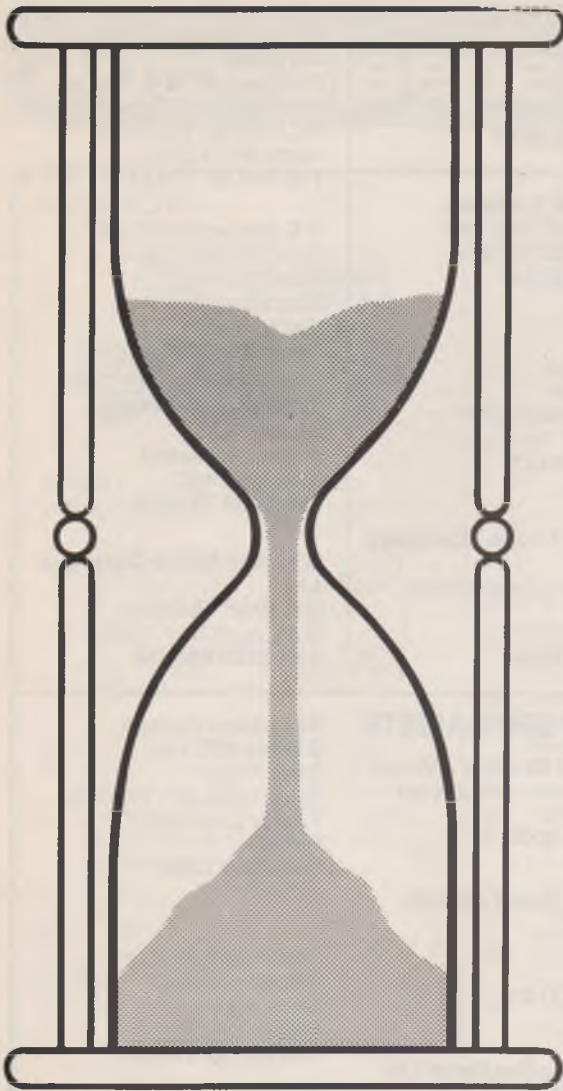
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