

NENE VALLEY MOTORCARAVANS

FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY SALE

A report by
Penny Smith



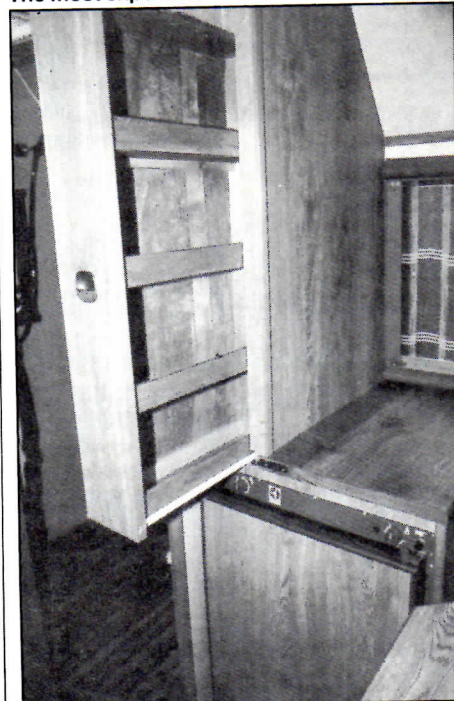
Three contenders for the smallest, amongst part of Nene Valley's secondhand display.

The weather was certainly not at all kind for the opening weekend of Nene Valley's Sale, which took place during the first nine days of February. The bitterly cold temperatures and ever threatening drizzle did nothing to encourage people to leave the comforts of their centrally heated houses, which was a great shame as there was plenty of interest to be seen. Alister Whitmore and his staff had no less than 98 'vans on show, 31 of which were new. Danbury, Devon, Glendale and Richard Holdsworth had sent along personnel to provide information about their own motorcaravans, and a representative from VW was also there. Last but by no means least Alister had arranged for advice on finance to be available. When customers felt that they could stand the cold no longer, quiche, crisps and coffee were provided in the warmth of the office. Needless to say, when I was there on the first Sunday of the Sale, the office was the most popular place to be!

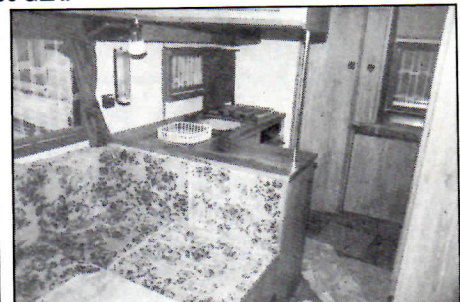
On show outside were models from Autohomes, Auto-Sleepers, CRV, Danbury, Devon, Glendale, GT Motorised, Holdsworth, Jurgens, Motorhomes International, Reimo, Tandy and Travelworld, plus other secondhand examples too numerous to be listed here. Amongst such a large collection of 'vans, it was difficult to know where to start. I decided to think about the extremes. Firstly, the most expensive! This was a Glendale 3000 GLX, on Fiat Ducato, priced at £19 500. As might be expected for the price, the interior was beautifully luxurious. The swivelling captain's chairs in the cab gave real comfort and support, and I liked the layout in which the living area was almost divided into two separate parts by the central work surface. In spite of this there was no feeling that the spaciousness of the accommodation had been sacrificed. I was particularly intrigued by the slide-out storage unit. I'd love one of those in my kitchen at home!



The most expensive — Glendale's luxurious 3000 GLX.



Valuable extra storage is provided by the slide-out unit housed above the Glendale's refrigerator.



Central work surface separates kitchen from larger dining area on Glendale.

Coming back down to earth, I next went to look for the cheapest 'van on show. This turned out to be a 'J' registration Canterbury on a Ford Transit, which was priced at £1550. It just goes to show that there was something to suit all pockets. Continuing with my idea of searching for the extremes, finding the smallest turned out to be not quite so straightforward. There were several possible contenders. Was it to be a Tandy's Fox, or possibly the Fiat Amigo? In the end the 550cc twin cylinder Daihatsu got my vote. A home-built conversion with a 'Y' registration, it was priced at £4495.

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There was no such problem in deciding which was the largest vehicle. Like the smallest, this also was a 'special build'. Walking inside was more like entering somebody's mobile home. Purpose made for continental touring, it was a Mercedes T09 with a Davik body. On that dismal day it looked rather sad and tired but must have given its two owners some luxurious travel in the past. I was amused by the radiators which had been fitted at either side of the cab. Perhaps that could be the solution which drivers of the Talbot Express are looking for!

In attempting to find some motorcaravans which were rather more 'middle of the range', yet still perhaps less frequently written about, I went on to explore the Jurgens Autovilla. On a Bedford CF 350 and



The Jurgens Autovilla, for sale at £16 295.



The largest — a Mercedes with special build Davik body.

having double rear wheels, it was priced at £16 295. I found that the dark colours and the net curtains combined to give the interior a slightly gloomy feel. I was also disappointed by some of the more minor details which I felt would quickly become annoying when living in the 'van. The crockery cupboard's upward hinging door was not self supporting when open and had to be anchored in place by two horrid little plastic catches which were most awkward to operate and didn't look at all long lasting. Similarly, the flaps covering the cooker and sink had to be propped open by means of a



Inside the Mercedes. It needed some smartening up, but no-one could accuse it of being cramped!

crude system of chains. It's hardly what one expects when paying that sort of money for a motorcaravan. On the plus side there was a huge ventilator in the roof and I liked the capacious shower room, the fact that the washbasin had its own water supply and the exterior television aerial controlled from the interior.



The cheapest — a 'J' reg Canterbury on Ford Transit.

On leaving the Jurgens I went to look at what appeared to be a new Danbury. Joy Dawson and Alan Cowhan showed me around the prototype of the high top Luxury Lounger. Immediately evident was the striking upholstery. I loved it but could imagine that others might not. When ordering, the customer is able to specify the type of upholstery, so not everybody has to be so keen on bright colours! Danbury's furniture is now all made from oak-faced ply and the Luxury Lounger will be equipped with an integral cooker/sink unit which will be removable for use outside the 'van, if required. This model will sell at £11 658 on the road, with all sorts of different options available as extras. Other ideas Danbury are working on include a special conversion for storing two sailboards and the inclusion of a full length lined wardrobe designed to take wet suits. Finally, Joy told me about the four wheel drive Subaru conversion they are due to bring out. It's a basic two berth which will be priced at £6993. More details about this will undoubtedly follow in a future issue. □



Danbury's new Luxury Lounger, from the outside.



Joy Dawson, Managing Director of Danbury, "lounging luxuriously" inside their latest conversion.

www.vwT25camper.info — a useful website for owners and enthusiasts of the VW T25 / T3 camper

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