



# Owner report

*Terry & Maureen Acreman...* make a welcome return to campervans but the purchase is just the start of the process

## 2015 Auto-Sleeper Kemerton XL



I seem to have always been around campervans and motorhomes. I even learnt to drive and passed my test in the family's Bedford CA Martin Walter conversion, while starting as a mechanical apprentice straight from school at the main Vauxhall/Bedford dealership.

After marriage, I sampled trailer tenting and holiday homes, but soon came back to campervans, even with a growing family. Understandably, they all were Bedford-based in those days.

Over the years, we've owned several self builds, multiple Autocruise motorhomes (but none that were built to original specification), a Tracker FB

from Auto-Trail and, today, we own a modified Auto-Sleeper Kemerton XL.

Coachbuilt motorhomes always offer more 'space' per buck than a panel van. That's an argument which still holds true!

However, future plans to return to a panel van conversion were abruptly brought forward upon brain scans and confirmation of a medical condition. Oh, and the DVLA demanding my driving licence be returned within 10 days!

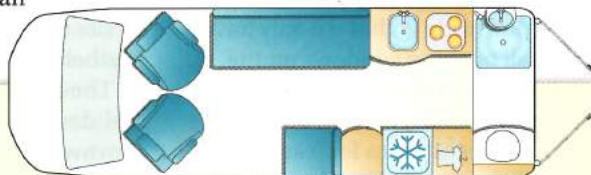
With a newly acquired 3,500kg licence – thanks to my doctor and consultant – and my driving days possibly ending earlier than

I would like, we went on the hunt.

Luckily, we had already researched a campervan that my wife, Maureen, would be happy to drive. This is despite the fact that she hates driving me in the car.

So, why the Kemerton XL? Easy, it's has an extremely high basic specification, plus the addition of Premium and Winter packs. These include alloy wheels, cab air-conditioning, cruise control, uprated heating, windscreen blinds, tank heaters, awning, choice of metallic paint and much more. Plus, we also have the across-the-rear washroom ▶

**Price from:** £48,995 **Berths:** 2  
**Travel seats:** 3 **Base vehicle:** Peugeot Boxer  
**Length:** 6.36m **Gross weight:** 3,500kg





The lounge is ideal for our needs, with an occasional third belted seat

### *Why we bought it*

High basic spec, ease of bed make-up, 3,500kg requirement due to illness, the across-the-rear washroom and the third belted seat, when required, which is loved by our granddaughter

### *What we love*

The look of it, driving is car-like and the interior layout works well for us, be it on a serviced pitch, rally field or race circuit

### *How we would change it*

Poor original TV aerial, washroom locker, flyscreen for the sliding door and the tinted privacy glass windows

### *When we buy our next 'van*

We have no plans as yet to replace; this one was well researched. But, as they say, never say never!

that Maureen loved from our previous Tardis-like Starburst.

We also considered the Auto-Sleeper Warwick Duo and Kingham, along with 'vans from other converters. Maureen's main pet hate here was the location of the kitchen in the doorway.

Bed make-up was another major factor. My shoulder injury was not repairable despite several operations.

The previous Tracker FB provided a bed at any time but, again, as with most fixed beds, nocturnal trips to the loo necessitated climbing over one's partner or scooting down the bed.

Downsizing, too, does not really apply here, either, as the camper is a tad longer than our beloved Autocruise Starburst. The Kemerton XL is based on the 6.36m XLWB Peugeot Boxer window van.

### **LOOKING IN AND OUT**

The interior works extremely well for our requirements. The tinted privacy glass adds greatly to exterior looks and we can easily see out.

The downside is that we only have two small opening windows on the rare hot days in the UK and every day looks grey outside, despite bright blue skies, making at times for a somewhat dark interior. We do have large wind-

up skylight and vents over the kitchen and washroom area, that counter this effect to a degree.

So, let's start at the front. The overcab locker is ideal for larger/thicker warm or outdoor wet coats. We do miss having a CD player in the radio but the reversing camera within the rear view mirror is great, but it took some getting used to.

Both front cab seats swivel. The loss of twin lounge seats to sprawl on while watching TV is countered by one of us sitting feet-up on the forward-facing seat, while the other sits on the swivelled passenger seat.

### **BEDDING DOWN**

This lounge area also makes twin single beds with ease. Storage below the nearside sofa is used for our bedding. A double bed can be made using additional infill cushions, but we do not carry these.

The backrest of the belted forward-facing seat angles for on-site comfort or sits upright if used with the seatbelt while driving.

Then, at the touch of a lever, it slides forward with ease and downwards forming the nearside single. So, the beds are ready in less



than a couple of minutes.

It's true that both singles are not over-generous in terms of width, but they are definitely comfortable and neither of us has fallen out of bed yet!

The boiler and leisure battery, etc, can be found under offside seating, with several upper lockers used for maps, guides and the DVD collection. The latter are essential as TV reception from the standard aerial is very poor.

### **COOKING ON GAS**

The kitchen has a stainless-steel sink and a Thetford three-burner hob with combined oven/grill below. The electric ring from the cooker unit in our previous motorhome is missed but is not a major problem.

Our stylish Corelle crockery set (a form of laminated glass), bought >



The interior is very light, even in the enclosed kitchen area



This teddy came from Amsterdam!



Nearside single bed is easy to make up

from the NEC show, is virtually unbreakabl, housed above in the twin-doored cupboard. Alongside a microwave is very useful, if a tad high.

Below is the extractor unit – you will recall that I did mention the high specification earlier. Larger lower cupboards house our tinned food and the essential bread, cakes and biscuits – there’s no diet while on tour here – along with the Sargent power management unit.

There is no cutlery tray, although a kitchen roll holder is standard. The other snag is that the swivel tap needs a cap to prevent water droplets falling onto the work surface.

On the plus side, we have numerous 230V sockets, which are placed in the right positions.

Worktop space, though, is at a premium near the cooker. Having the smoked glass tops down is not always possible while we are cooking or preparing meals.

Opposite, there is ample worktop at a great height above a stylish black AES refrigerator (the main chef reports that the fridge is just the right height, too) and a floating cupboard, which we use for tea/coffee and breakfast cereals. This does have a sharp lower corner, which has had a household child protector now fitted.

Below the fridge is a small floor-level locker used for shoes.

Upper lockers on this side house glasses and bottles, one being used on-site by our travelling cat, Marmalade, as her favourite high bolthole. That’s when she’s not asleep on the (covered) driver’s seat.



*“We have the across-the-rear washroom that Maureen loves”*

### **PRACTICALLY SPEAKING**

The wardrobe also houses the small cab table (the larger table is housed neatly at the rear of the shower cubicle) and chrome pole. This space is fine for shirts, etc, as we use the overcab for bulky outdoor items. We use the small table quite a lot; after all, it is a two-berth.

Other smalls are stored below in the useful three-drawer unit. The larger table can be used in the gangway or al fresco if needed.

The interior illumination sees task lights, swivel cab LED strips, swivel

reading lights and dome ceiling units and is good but, alas, no mood lighting. Those domed lights, along with the washroom tap, are a tad old fashioned (both were replaced in the next model year after ours).

The interior is light, aided no doubt by the light trim panels and our bespoke interior furnishing. The wood-effect cabinets, though, would never fool anyone (again, these were changed for the next model year). The radio has rear speakers as standard, but this is useless when on site, with the short radio cut-off!

### **WINNING WASHROOM**

As already mentioned, the across-the-rear washroom is a real winner. The shower has a clear tambour door and a deep drop-down sink. Some people dislike these types of basin, but we are happy with it.

Opposite is a bench-style cassette toilet with ‘wet’ locker behind and high-level locker above. The bench-style loo has larger capacity and no odd corners to clean like the swivel bowl-type. Here, lighting is in excess with an illuminated mirror and the shower has an extractor fan.

The problems here are with that upper locker. No, you don’t bang >

Adding the bling was essential, of course



your head whilst seated on the throne; it's the dividing shelf that prevents taller shower, shave or hairstyle products from standing upright. Also, with the mirror effectively on its side due to the available room, the blue feature lights of the mirror do dazzle.

### MAKING THE MODS

From the photographs, you can see my history of custom vans coming out, with the addition of 'bling'. Other DIY mods include a fixing strap for lounge seat to prevent movement whilst travelling, a swivel TV mount, a magazine holder and brackets to carry picnic chairs slung on the rear doors. These, of course, were never an issue with under-fixed-bed storage; hence the luxury loungers remain at home!

Something to prevent insects taking advantage when the sliding door is open is in the planning, as is the repositioning of the sliding step (because of the side bar I added).

Our best buys include a Garmin Camper 760LMT-D sat-nav, which is a piece of magic, plus a Garmin Dash

Cam 35. Finally, and importantly, is our Outsmart the Thief Titanium tracker alarm system, which allows the engine to be safely stopped and locked remotely after theft, if required.

Yes, we've had silly snags, but all have been courteously and quickly rectified by our dealer (Derby Motorhomes) or Auto-Sleepers' excellent service centre, which has carried out both habitation services so far.

The base vehicle service turned out to be more problematic. Yes, I can no longer service my own vehicles and have to shell out hard-earned cash. This in itself is very painful.

Our local Peugeot dealer insisted we needed a major service (despite the low mileage), quoting nearly £500! The next phone call was to a dealer in a nearby town and common sense prevailed eventually.

However, turning up for the appointment, the service receptionist told me that as it's a camper it would only fit on the MoT ramp. All was fine on appointment number two several days later... MMM

### FACTS AND FIGURES



#### PRICE

Price new today: £53,200 OTR  
Price of similar aged 'van today: £48,995



#### BASICS

Berths: 2  
Travel seats: 3  
Length of ownership: 2 years 3 months  
Annual mileage: 3,000



#### DIMENSIONS

Length: 6.36m (20ft 10in)  
Width: 2.20m (7ft 3in)  
Height: 2.64m (8ft 8in)  
Gross vehicle weight: 3,500kg  
Payload: 365kg



#### BASE VEHICLE

Type: Peugeot Boxer XLWB  
Engine: 2.2-litre 150bhp  
Fuel economy: 30+mpg



#### BEDS

Nearside single: 1.98m x 0.68m (6ft 6in x 2ft 3in)  
Offside single: 2.05m x 0.70m (6ft 9in x 2ft 4in) or lounge double: 1.98m x 1.88m (6ft 6in x 6ft 2in)



#### RUNNING COSTS

Base vehicle service cost: £159.65  
Insurance: £435 Caravan Guard (business incl)  
Habitation service: £170.10  
Road tax: £245

#### OPTIONS

Options fitted new: Premium & Winter packs, soft furnishings, 80W solar panel  
Additions: Tracker/alarm, side bars, door handle and rear bumper, thermal screens, magazine holder

#### WHAT WENT WRONG

Leak behind drop-down sink, leak on kitchen rooflight, poor TV reception (still), leak on gas tank. Dim dash warning lights - instrument assembly replaced, Recalls by Peugeot for ignition switch mod and Auto-Sleepers to fit fridge vent gaskets

#### FURTHER READING

Read about Terry's aftermarket mods in MMM September 2016, January 2016 and May 2016

### WANTED

Want to earn £250 for writing about your motorhome? Send up to 1,700 words • Info for 'Why we bought it', 'What we love', 'How we would change it', 'When we buy our next 'van' and details for our facts and figures panel • Ten or more photos, including one of yourself.

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