

Trailer tent test

Les Phelps

The Conway Jayco Laser

THIS MONTH I want to take members on a guided tour of a Conway Laser Trailer. This trailer tent has been tested and approved by the Department of Transport and conforms to all current E.E.C. transport regulations.

Similarly to the Gobur folding caravan, this low profile trailer opens up to a comfortable but canvas bodied home. Six adults could sleep in this one. If they did the custom-built awning is an accessory that would be needed, since dressing would have to be carried out according to a strict routine. Nevertheless six adults can sleep in the Conway Laser if needs be. Basically the Conway sleeps two pairs of grown people in the two extensions that are formed over the A frame and the back of the trailer. Raising the roof is achieved by a totally different technique to that used by folding caravan manufacturers.

On arrival on site the trailer, which is built on an Al-Ko chassis with a Kober hitch, has to be levelled in both directions. The jockey wheel looks after the fore and aft pitch and, if necessary, a levelling block under one wheel would take care of the other way. It is vital that the solid sided caravanner's next move is not carried out by a Conway owner, you do *not* lower the steadies at this juncture. The roof is unclipped, the lower door opened, the winder key found and inserted in the winding hole for the roof raising manoeuvre to begin. The roof must be raised carefully making sure that it goes up horizontally. A child can do it! When the

red wire to the right of the extending pole (Figure 2) becomes taut, the roof has attained its maximum height and the canvas has become fully stretched.

Now is the time to find the steady handle and wind down all four on to pads.

The beds are pulled out to the stop point, lift the mattresses to find the support bars and place them in position. There are slots on the A frame for the front pair, to the rear a position on each steady winder is used.

The four corner zips are now closed down. The canvas is pulled over the mattress and secured with an elastic cord to buttons located under the bed board. The same operation is repeated with the rear bed.

Once inside, the kitchen unit can be hinged over into place and the mattresses and table attended to. Movement inside the trailer thus becomes easier. The bed end roof frame supports are under each mattress. These have to be raised and the framing secured, it is very easy for first timers.

The door is clipped to the roof and the hinged frame has to come down to be located over the lower part of the door. There are springs in the mechanism and the door clips simply into place. The canvas has to be inserted into the door frame channelling and your Conway Laser is set up. Nothing could be simpler and this is the first time I have towed and prepared this type of trailer.

Now for some details, and perhaps the

most important factor as far as canvas living owners are concerned stems from the fact that there is no pegging. This 1985 model has been considerably improved. Those bed bases pull out on rollers, they move in and out positively without a great deal of effort. At mattress level, the external canvas is backed internally with P.V.C. These wipe-clean surfaces make life that much easier. The front supports now fit into a special slot in the A frame, there is never a chance of restless sleepers collapsing the supports. Ingress of rainwater through the excellent, large toothed, plastic zips is prevented by a clear plastic protective strip. There are thoughtful touches everywhere in what is a quality product from a British manufacturer.

The layout, once the Laser is erected, will interest readers. The opened aluminium-framed door leads into the lino covered base area. The two double beds have been pulled out to the front and back of the trailer. There is a low chest just inside on the right and what could be described as a low room divider on the left. Opposite the door stands the kitchen unit and to the rear on each side, two seats which with the free-standing table as a base will form a four foot wide double bed at night, if required.

The low chest inside the door has a top drawer of 17½in. by 14¼in., that is 3¾in. deep. The lower locker has a depth of only 9in. but will take anything up to 13in. tall across its 19½in. width. Note the dry



powder fire extinguisher that clips into an inset on this locker. The top would make an admirable bedside table, breakfast in bed?

The 41½in. × 15½in. combination sink, stove, drainer comes in stainless steel with a Fellows double burner grill unit to the left, an 8in. draining board and a 11¾in. square sink. This has a Whale swivel tap and water is pumped up with a Whale foot pump.

The cupboard below the stove is 22in. tall and 9½in. wide. Pipework restricts the depth to about a foot. The centre cupboard has a strong shelf with a width of 19in and a depth of 21¼in. On the shelf anything up to 10in. in height can be stored; down below if it is 11in. tall that is all right. Underneath the sink that 4in. tall cubby hole has a depth of 21¼in. Just the place for a good cutlery drawer which you will have to provide. The 9½in. wide cupboard below that has a similar depth but will take anything up to 15in. tall. All woodwork is in light oak and the door furniture is excellent.

The low room divider to the left of the door is shelved. This unit has a depth of 19¼in. so it too is quite roomy. Above the shelf anything up to 10in. tall can be stored, in the lower locker you have another half inch in height with which to play, the width is 9½in.

Those seats are 4ft. long and the back rest stands on the seat base, nevertheless this still gives a seat width of 18½in., and you cannot complain about that. The buttoned tweed upholstery, principally in a green colour, has thigh rolls with a thickness at the front of 4½in. and 3in. for the seating proper. From the top of the thigh roll to the lino floor the seat height measures 17¼in. The large free-standing table has a length of 4ft.

The non-woven curtains well cover the windows and sleeping ends. The tropical leaf pattern, in shades of green, complements the rest of the decor. Up there in the roof a Labcraft 13 watt fluorescent lamp provides night time illumination, while a 8½in. square fly screened roof light gives adequate ventilation.

The bedrooms have a zipped cover to a mesh window at each end. The solidity of the bed bases was quite a revelation.

That G.R.P. gas locker will provide adequate cover for two 10lb. gas cylinders and these will give adequate weight to the nose for stable towing. Lighting is standard with both 12S and 12N plugs fitted. All road regulation lighting is provided through the 12 Normal plug; pins 2 and 3 (earth) on the 12S plug provide power from the car battery or a storage battery to the Labcraft lamp. There were no problems towing incidentally and I could just see over the top of the trailer.

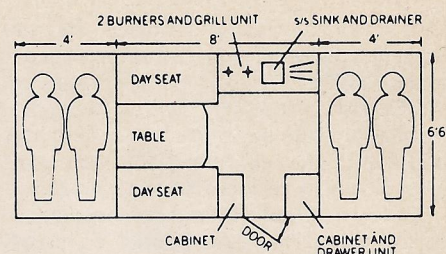
The door has a flyscreen fitted, can be locked and has a two position opaque window that can be raised to increase ventilation.

If you follow one of these trailers you will spot the Conway Jayco logo on the rear offside above the fitted number plate. This badge also appears on each side at the

front. The model name, Laser, appears on each side, at the rear. The sides and roof give the impression that bonded construction has been used but not the front and rear.

Optional extras include a refrigerator, a space heater and an awning which features a zip-in toilet tent and a wardrobe. No complaints can be levelled at the engineering, fittings, woodwork and general presentation, all in all this Laser thoroughly impressed me and from conversations I have had with Laser owners, I understand that after-sales service is superb. The trailer comes with an excellent handbook and other literature dealing with all aspects of maintenance including the care of the canvas. You need to dry the canvas within twenty-four hours.

Packing up is the reverse of putting up except that the canvas must be pushed in to allow the roof to be lowered. It fits into most garages, so canvas drying should present few problems.



Brief specification

Shipping length 12ft. 11in.; Body length 8ft. 10in.; Trailer height folded 4ft.; Campsite length 16ft.; Interior height 6ft. 6in.; Ex-works weight 10cwt.; Design weight 13cwt. giving a payload of 3cwt.; Recommended tyre pressure 35 p.s.i.; Noseweight recommended 80lbs.-100lbs. Tyres 155 SR 13. Manufacturers recommended price ex-works £3,095. Manufacturer: Conway Leisure Products Ltd., Skull House Lane, Applyby Bridge, Wigan, Lancs WN6 9DW.

