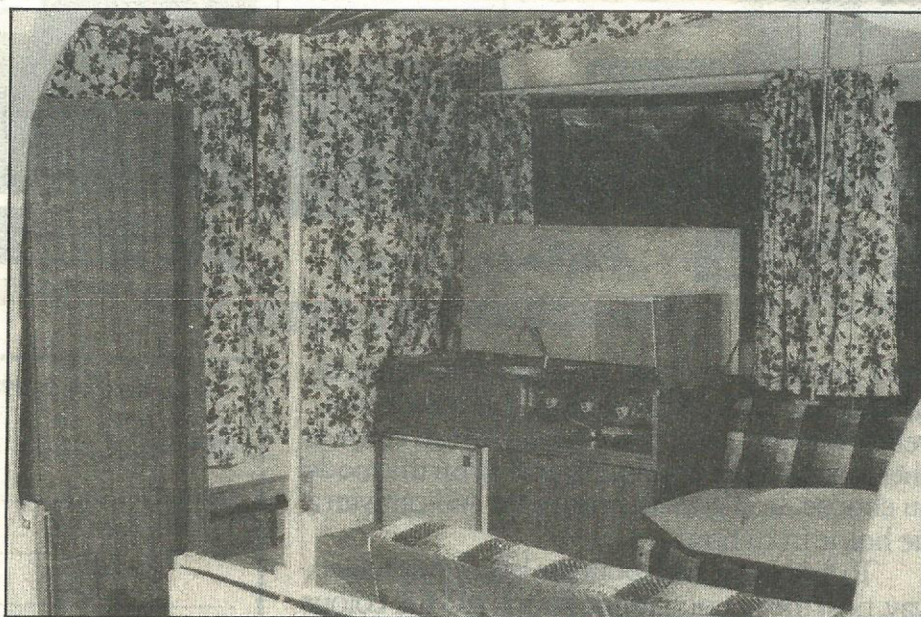


PENNINE PULLMAN



A very wet day is not favourable for collecting a new trailer tent, especially when you know that you are going to be camping in it the same evening. The wet weather does have some virtues, however, of finding out how weather-proof the unit is during transit. This was the situation which we faced when we collected the latest British thoroughbred from the Pennine factory in Accrington, the Pennine Pullman. Although never having owned a Pennine trailer tent before it appeared to be unanimously accepted amongst Pennine owners that the service offered by this relatively small company in the north of England was second to none. This statement we can now confirm to be founded as we got the distinct impression that Pennine had a very keen interest in its customers as well as the product they offer. Whilst all paperwork was attended to, we were given coffee followed by a stroll down to the finishing shop where we were invited to inspect our new unit at our leisure. Before hitching up and pulling away, we were given very careful instructions on the method of erection and dismantling the unit, during which any questions did not seem any trouble to the staff.

After transferring some of our gear from a rather full car into the trailer, the road cover was fitted, the trailer



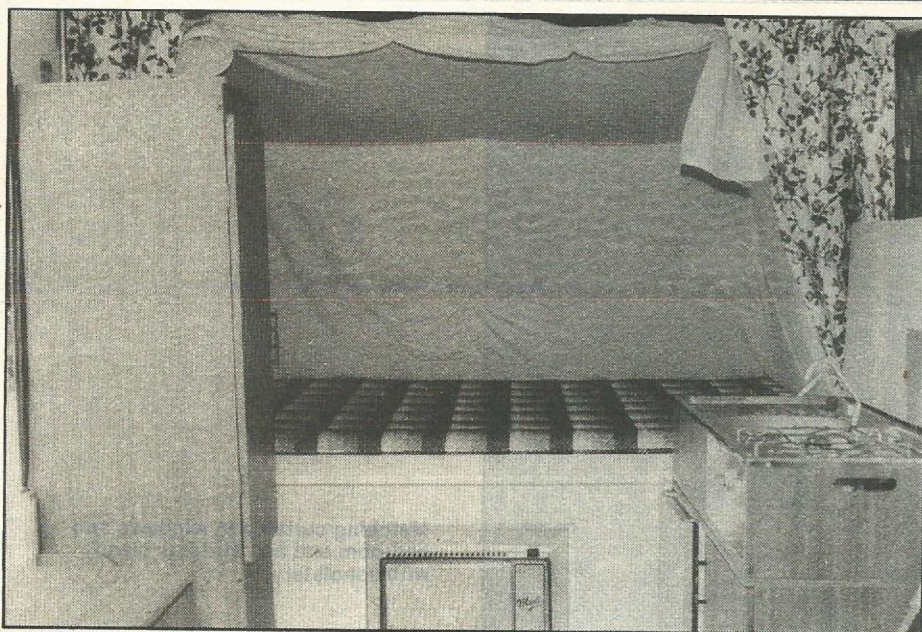
hitched up and lights checked, again by Pennine staff, before venturing out into the pouring rain for our long trek to our overnight site.

The first impression of the towing characteristics of the Pullman were to say the least very favourable. The exworks weight of 430Kg was hardly noticeable behind our 2 litre Cortina. What was noticeable was the lack of vision through the interior mirror as the 1.17 metres (3ft. 10in.) closed

height completely blocked the rear view mirror. Also noticeable was the extra width of trailer either side of the car, which necessitated the car to be fitted with exterior towing mirrors.

Braking at low speed through traffic made no difference to the performance of the car brakes, as the hydraulically damped rod operated brakes performed perfectly with no hint of shunting.

Out onto the open road and down the



Facing page, top: The erected unit complete with underbed skirts.

Bottom: Interior view of kitchen end combination sink and cooker.

This page, left: Separate bedroom liners to each bed with roll-up fronts.

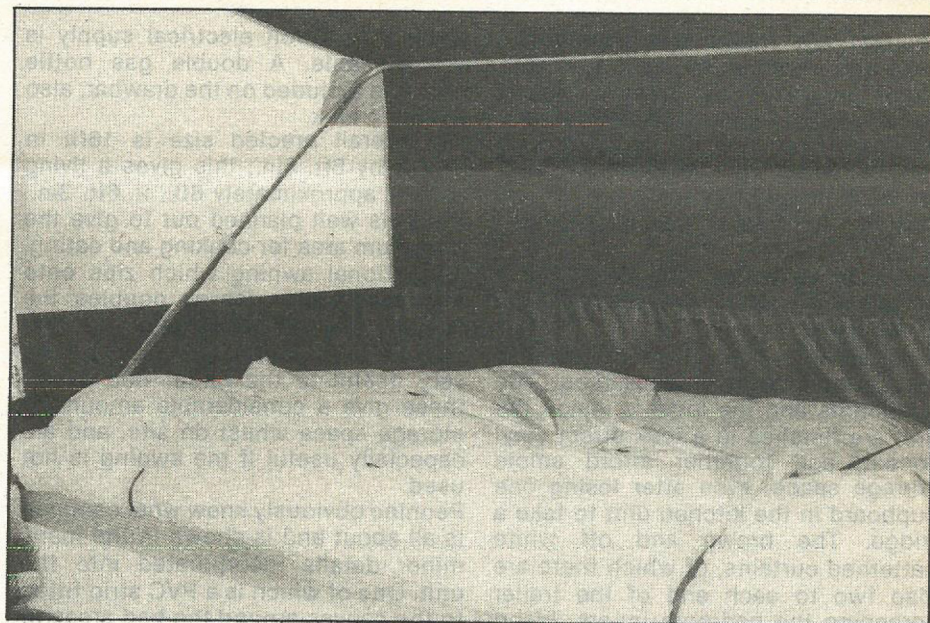
Bottom left: The final tensioning of the canvas by extending the frame and tightening the locking screws.

Right, The bedroom liners fold up with bedding inside and are held in position with straps ready for folding the bed boards.



M6 (still in the pouring rain) there was no sensation of having a trailer hanging on behind, and without careful watch of the speedometer it is quite easy for the speed to build up with no adverse affects from the trailer. The torsion bar suspension smooths out all bumps to give a perfectly smooth ride on either motorway or normal class roads. Having now towed the Pullman for something in excess of 1500 miles, I have not yet experienced any pitching or rolling under any situation.

On arriving at our pitch for the night, now in fine weather, we were a little apprehensive about removing the road



cover after 150 miles of torrential rain, but our fears were soon overcome when having unhitched and levelled the trailer on the four screw jacks we removed the road cover to find a totally dry interior.

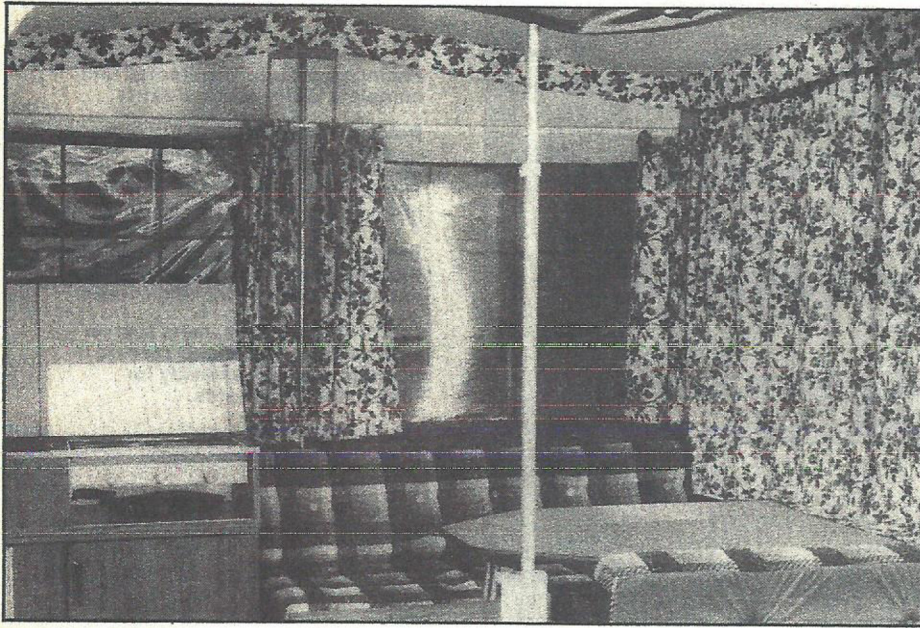
Erection of the Pullman is simplicity itself. After levelling the unit on the four screw jacks, the beds are swung over to rest out-board at the front and rear of the trailer, and are supported on poles which drop onto pegs on the chassis. With both beds secured into position, the three main frame members of the trailer are swung out into position, after which the canvas is fitted to the trailer body and bed boards by means of press stud fasteners with velcro tape, to eliminate

drafts, which run all around the unit. The final erection is completed from the inside of the trailer by extending the three main frame members and locking in position to tension the canvas. Finally extend the frame in each bed end, and the unit is then erected.

All that remains to complete the unit is raise the table from the travelling position, this position also doubles on site to provide a third bed, raise the wardrobe and lift the kitchen unit into position. The curtains once fitted onto the rails are simply clipped onto the main frame with nylon clips, this idea we found to be not altogether satisfactory later on.

The bedroom inners in the travelling

Trailer Tent Test



Matching curtains to windows and bedroom end and curtains blend with upholstery.

position are folded down onto the beds and strapped into position with straps provided. The straps we found to be very useful as once the bedding has been put into the inner, it can remain in there when the unit is folded up. Each bedroom inner is suspended from the tent frame on six elastics and clips.

The Pullman comes complete with a ceiling lining which stays in position all the time.

Once erected, the Pullman appears to be very smart, both inside and out. The cupboards and the lockers inside the unit are finished in a teak effect vinyl veneer, and together afford ample storage space, even after losing one cupboard in the kitchen unit to take a fridge. The brown and off white patterned curtains, of which there are also two to each end of the trailer screening the bedroom inners, blend well with the brown check seat covers and floor covering. The floor is covered with carpet between the two seats with vinyl over the remaining floor area in front of the kitchen unit. Altogether we find the interior of the unit attractive.

The Pullman appears to be an updated and improved version of the Alpine with a change in body design away from the square box appearance to a more streamline and attractive looking trailer, but Pennine assured us that this is not the case.

The basic unit comes complete with many attractive features in the form of electric pump for the water, together with a priming pump, which incidentally can be used for delivery of

water if a 12-volt electrical supply is not available. A double gas bottle carrier is included on the drawbar, also is a hitch lock.

The overall erected size is 16ft. in length by 6ft. 6in., this gives a living area of approximately 8ft. x 6ft. 3in., which is well planned out to give the maximum area for cooking and eating. An optional awning which zips onto the main trailer canvas doubles the overall size of the unit. Another optional extra which has proved to be very useful is the under bed skirts, these give a considerable amount of storage space whilst on site, and are especially useful if the awning is not used.

Pennine obviously know what camping is all about and is shown in the many minor details incorporated into the unit. One of which is a PVC strip fitted to the canvas around the bed areas to prevent bedding coming into contact with the outer canvas during wet weather. The same material is also fitted to the canvas behind the seats to prevent the seat backs coming in contact with damp canvas.

After numerous weekends' use plus three weeks' holiday, we have found the Pullman to be a well-designed and well-built unit which any owner could be proud of. As with any trailer tent, however, there has to be some faults and after much examination and consideration we have only found two. These being, a rubber draught strip is fitted at the front and rear of the trailer which folds over to form a seal when the bed boards are opened up into position, this in theory is a good idea

but in practice, we found the draught strip was pulling out of position. The second fault, which I might add Pennine have now altered, is the method of hanging the curtains. On the unit supplied to us, the curtains were hung on the conventional household curtain rail which in turn is screwed onto a timber batten, the whole assembly is then clipped onto the tent poles with 2 nylon clips. We found that after a relatively short period of use, the clip becomes strained and the curtains fall down.

All those who have looked at the hard-topped American trailer tents and long for the canvas roof, as we did, then this is the trailer to go for. After all, the Pennine Pullman is British design, British made and tailored for the British camper.

With a price tag of £1900 for the basic unit rising to a little under £2,500 for all extras, the Pullman is not cheap, but there again, neither is the quality.