



TYPE 3  
SYNCROS IN ACTION

# SYNCROS GET DOWN AND DIRTY

Text: David Photography Julian Hunt

The Synchronauts had stopped off at Camper Jam to round off their Syncropendence event, held on a hill farm in Wales each weekend falling closest to July 4. This year they were accompanied by guys who had travelled from Denmark and Holland, as well as four French couples, giving the event an international flavour

For many years I have known there was an off-road course at Weston Park, and finally this year we managed to get the go ahead to use it. The main aim this first time was to see what was possible to integrate in future Camper Jams, so the Synchronauts stepped in took the chance to check out the track and safety aspects. It was deliberately kept low key, but far from being a chance for just a lucky few to play, after checking out and marshalling the course, the Synchronauts then spent several hours taking passengers, including children, around the course for a thrill ride. It was not possible to open up the area to spectators this year (health and safety), but after the success and first-hand experiences, already plans are being discussed for the Synchronauts, with all their experience of organising and marshalling off-roading events, for making the off-road action a bigger part of next year's event.



To say one thing for the torrential rain, it created the ideal conditions for the syncros to really show their 4WD capabilities - Clive and Jenny took me round the muddy forest tracks in their Doka, negotiating steep inclines, protruding tree roots, mud slides and deep puddles, while Clive's running commentary explained how he was working the bus, but made it look effortless of course! All agreed it was great fun and a unique chance to really experience just some of what a Syncro can do. Special thanks to all the Synchronauts for putting this on and also to Pete and Sharon Pollard (and Georgia) for organising the marshalling, support, and keeping everyone safe. ☺



**G922 UUC**

**OWNER:** Dai Williams  
**MODEL:** 14-inch Syncro panel van  
**YEAR:** 1990  
**ENGINE:** EJ25 (2.5 litre NA) Subaru engine with RJES bellhousing and Smalcar mounts  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Ordered new as a 2.1 panel van with Reimo pop-top by the owner of a surf shop in Brighton. Acquired by Dai in 2002 as a totally standard vehicle with an overheated engine. Subsequently has had an engine fire and accident damage.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Caravelle front doors, sliding door and middle window panels, front and rear wheel arches stretched, LPG conversion, single cab locker door grafted into driver's side below window, remade front bumper to sit further back, and accept jacking points for Hi-Lift jack and to take 12,000lb winch, underfloor storage box cut into floor panel, Mach 5 competition wheels, heavy-duty lift springs, Devon Moonraker interior.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Now a striking expedition Syncro with many more mods than listed, watch out for the forthcoming feature.

THE SYNCRONAUTS THEN SPENT SEVERAL HOURS TAKING PASSENGERS, INCLUDING CHILDREN, AROUND THE COURSE FOR A THRILL RIDE



**G208 THV**

**OWNER:** Clive Smith and Jenny  
**MODEL:** Double Cab Pick-up  
**YEAR:** 1988  
**ENGINE:** 1.9 diesel AAZ  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Possibly first used by BBC as OB unit, then abused by a builder and stored after an engine fire.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** The Doka has been actively off-roaded at all but one Synchronauts official event and many others since 2005, so that's unique for a start... possibly 40 UK events as well as Bus Stop Overs, Vanfests, Dubfreezes, and Camper Jams.



**F570 OTA**

**OWNER:** Patrick Townsend  
**MODEL:** 16-inch LHD Syncro Caravelle  
**YEAR:** 1989  
**ENGINE:** 2.1 DJ petrol/LPG  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Originally from Belgium, ordered as a Syncro Caravelle. A Westfalia elevating roof was added by previous owner.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Interior now converted to a camper.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Factory 16-inch wheel model featuring bigger brakes, additional chassis strengthening and modified wheel arches. Caravelle twin headlights.



## Synchronauts at CamperJam July 2012



**89-D-52955**

**OWNER:** Paul Gillet  
**MODEL:** Westfalia Joker high-top 16-inch  
**YEAR:** 1989  
**ENGINE:** Original 112 bhp wasserboxer DJ  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Travelled to Nepal before coming to Ireland and being stored in a barn for many years. Full service history and paperwork.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** One of only a dozen or so high-top syncros made. The entire body is rust-free and in original paint. Everything is present and correct and works as it did from the day of purchase with front and back diff lockers, a 5.43 ALK gearbox code, a DJ engine, front swivel ISRI seats, round headlights, standing heater with additional seven-day timer, a grey Westie interior which sleeps four with massive amounts of storage, and a genuine Westfalia 3m wind-out awning. It is double glazed, has a mint genuine VW wheel carrier, and Westfalia towbar with even the Westfalia towbar cover, as well as a stack of original spares and genuine accessories in original packaging, including mosquito nets.

THE TORRENTIAL RAIN HAD CREATED IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR THE SYNCROS TO REALLY SHOW THEIR 4WD CAPABILITIES



**H781 FDD**

**OWNER:** Andy McClements  
**MODEL:** VW Syncro Single Cab Pick-up  
**YEAR:** 1990  
**ENGINE:** 1.9 TDI  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Bought from Synchronauts in late 2006 with little known of its past. It's had a mild lift of about 20mm using spacers; anything more than this and you have to start upgrading the CVJs and add an additional spacer to correct the front geometry. I also recently fitted a 110hp TDI with full electrics, including cruise control... the new engine has transformed the vehicle.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** I tend to keep it stock unless there's a compelling reason to change. VW mostly got it right and Syncros are generally very tough. It's had a mild lift of about 20mm using spacers; anything more than this and you have to start upgrading the CVJs and add an additional spacer to correct the front geometry. I also recently fitted a 110hp TDI with full electrics, including cruise control... the new engine has transformed the vehicle.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Fibreglass Vindic canopy option which came with new locks and only needed a little tlc before fitting. It's a very useful item as it provides a huge, dry, secure load space, and its big enough to kip in quite comfortably should the need arise!



**E152 DNA**

**OWNER:** Aidan Talbot  
**MODEL:** Syncro Caravelle C  
**YEAR:** 1988  
**ENGINE:** 2.1 MV Petrol engine 95bhp with Digifant fuel injection.  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Bought in 2006 from first German owners.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Upgraded by first owner with CL options of big sunroof, powersteering, cloth upholstery, carpet, electric big mirrors, twin square headlights, glovebox, armrests on front door cards, opening 1/4 lights, vented rear 1/4 glass, chrome trim and Flash Silver metallic paint.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Converted to twin diff lock and LPG. Multivan interior modified to camping with kitchen units now fitted. VW drop-down wheel carrier. Original VW Syncro bullet hole alloys run on 205R14C most of the time, but for weekend or longer off-roading trips, a set of Metro steel rims in 15-inch with BFG Mud Terrains are fitted.



**D922 ERU**

**OWNER:** Richard Haslock  
**MODEL:** RHD Caravelle  
**YEAR:** 1986  
**ENGINE:** 2.5 DOHC Subaru (orig 2.1 DJ)  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Tow vehicle for bouncy castle company.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Westfalia pop-top, Seikel springs, OME shocks, uprated brakes.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Custom interior, 16-inch Syncro wheel arches.



**C841 NMB**

**OWNER:** Mat Davies  
**MODEL:** Westfalia Camper  
**YEAR:** 1986  
**ENGINE:** 1800 cc petrol  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Bought from the German eBay. Previous owners, a well-travelled German couple who went across the Sahara and to Chernobyl among other places. Since owning it I've been to Syncro events in France, Germany, Ireland and the UK.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Four-cylinder 1800 Scirocco engine.  
(Picture not taken at Camper Jam.)



THE MAIN AIM THIS FIRST TIME WAS TO SEE WHAT WAS POSSIBLE TO INTEGRATE FUTURE CAMPER JAMS

**F790 WNH**

**Owner:** Max Barry  
**Model:** Caravelle GL7 2.0 Syncro, seven-seater, RHD UK Spec.  
**Year:** 1988  
**Engine:** Petrol 2.1 DJ  
**Modifications:** LPG conversion, 15-inch steel Metro wheels, BF Goodrich AT 215/75/15 tyres, stainless steel exhaust, chequer plate trim to sides, seats removed for installation of a rock 'n' roll bed and removable storage.  
**Special Features:** Female owner.



**G798 TBD**

**OWNER:** Pete & Sharon Pollard  
**MODEL:** Multivan  
**YEAR:** 1989  
**ENGINE:** 1.9 MTDI  
**KNOWN HISTORY:** Imported from Germany by us in Feb. 2009. Transplant engine winter 2009.  
**MODIFICATIONS:** Engine 1.6TD to 1.9 MTDI, custom built fuel pump. Pace 3 core charge cooler and gearbox by Aidan Talbot with long gears. Fitted a mosaic Westfalia roof to accommodate the family. Upgraded brakes all-round with rear discs to help the extra power. Syncro Pete rear wheel carrier. Complete suspension rebuild with galvanised parts.  
**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Goes anywhere you want and then you can camp! Following the build we travelled to Syncro 25 where Sharon trialled and won 2nd place. Only woman to trial, co-passenger was Pete. (Picture shows Sharon driving it at Syncro 25, as they were busy marshalling at Camper Jam!)