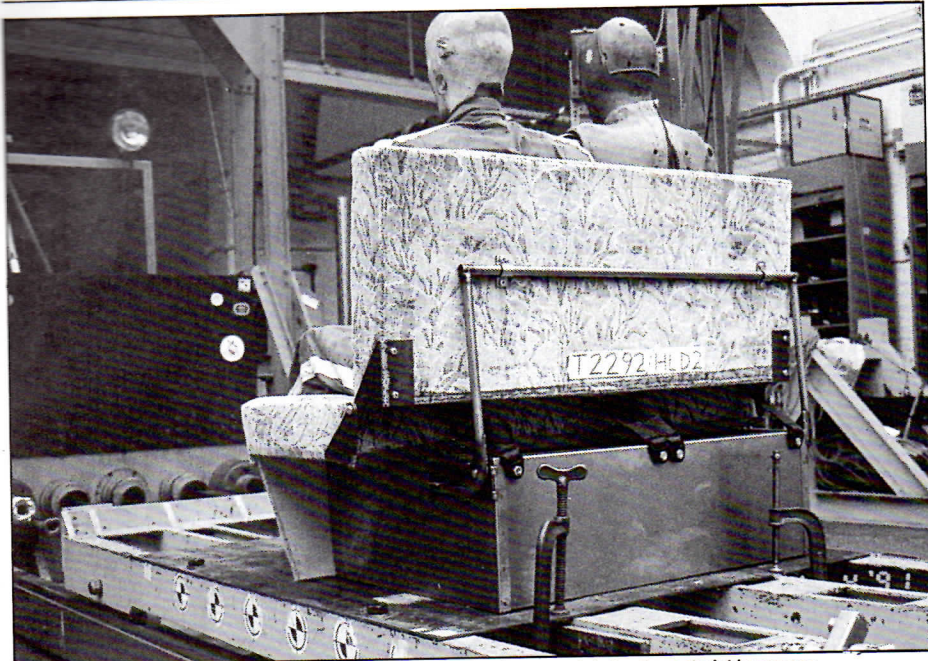


INVESTMENT IN SAFETY



This shows clearly the construction of the seat base and the anchorage points for the restraint harnesses.



Adult dummies are strapped to the rear seat ready for their impact, involving a force of 20G.

"There's no profit in safety features," has often been the reported cry of car manufacturers. Motorcaravanners have not been convinced, as evinced by demands for rear safety restraint belts. We seldom have to print nowadays in our road test reports, "I would have liked . . . rear seat belts." Responsible converters fit them as a matter of course.

Now Richard Holdsworth has taken the campaign one stage further and is making his new Volkswagen as safe for the occupants as is reasonably possible. There has not yet been a consumer demand for metal framed rear seats; in fact, most of us have been content to strap passengers on to the wooden boxes which serve a dual purpose as seats and storage.

In co-operation with the Middlesex College of Technology, Holdsworth tested a wooden seat box in a simulated crash. It collapsed into many tiny pieces, suitable only for kindling a fire. A metal seat base was therefore designed, one which still offers the expected

storage provision, and tested with a couple of twelve stone dummies. As those who saw the video on the Holdsworth stand at the Earls Court Caravan Show will now know, the new framework held together under similar test conditions.

The system is incorporated into the Holdsworth VW T4 conversions. It adds a bit to the price of course. As to whether the construction will be featured in other conversions from the firm remains largely up to customer reaction. If you are prepared to pay, Holdsworth will work on it. The decision is, collectively, yours.

Another safety feature available is the Firetrace automatic fire extinguisher. The video (which will be shown at other exhibitions around the country during the year) demonstrates how a fire in a motorcaravan is automatically extinguished without any action from the occupants. They could be miles away. This is available on Holdsworth conversions but must be ordered at the time of build. And of course . . . it costs.

Comfort, too

The bed described in the test report on the T4 Villa had been given a lying-in test by the Holdsworth team and a couple of journalists. None expressed any dissatisfaction. MMM, or rather, the Hunt hips, felt differently and the unpopular (with us) head-to-the-front attitude had to be adopted.

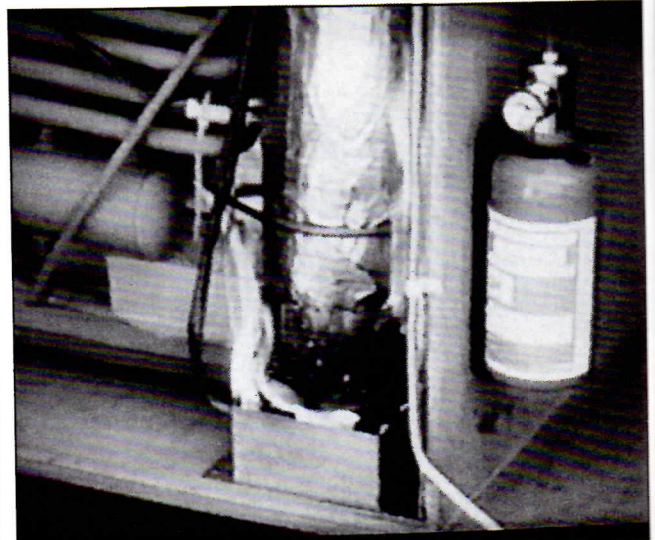
It would have been easy for the converters to have dismissed the complaint as being due solely to the peculiar sensitivity of a particular anatomy. Instead, midnight oil was burnt in Reading and the system redesigned — 'officially'. The conversion had been approved by VW and notified to the British Standards Institution. It was not therefore merely a matter of altering the furniture. The right forms had to be completed and a declaration made under BS5750, providing a working diagram and full details of the smallest changes.

It's been a hassle for them but I hope — and believe — that customers will think it worthwhile. They will, as always, be the final arbiters.

John Hunt



An attempt at photographing the video. As long as the table has been removed, they will be safe.



From the video: here the Firetrace system is dealing with a fire at the back of the refrigerator.