

Motoring

By Tim Saunders

"You can move a house with that, mate," the delivery driver smiles, as he hands over the keys to the green Volkswagen Crafter.

"It's just as well," I reply, "because I've got loads of furniture to shift."

There's no denying that it is a large vehicle, so large it fills the length of our top driveway and is so wide that there is only just enough space to walk down the side of it.

It's always a little daunting going from driving a car to a van and even more so going to the Crafter because it just looks so huge. But the delight is that once behind the wheel it's just like driving a car... without the rear view mirror - for the simple reason that you can't see behind you. VW has got that covered though by fitting an extremely helpful reversing camera that feeds the image to the dash and really boosts the driver's confidence.

Reversing off the drive is a little awkward due to our neighbour's car, as usual, being parked on the pavement outside but fortunately there's enough space to my right to be able to overcome this problem. As long as you are sensible and consider the width of the Crafter then driving is a pleasurable experience.

We arrive in Ringwood naively anticipating that only a couple of hours of heavy lugging will be required and we'll be home for lunch. Wife Caroline agrees that we should park by the roadside and she spies a perfect spot, which happens to be directly under the window of the flat. So we park up and put a

Tim Saunders is an advanced motorist and journalist. He has always been passionate about motoring and regularly reviews cars from the leading manufacturers. His first report on a BMW 520i was published in the Dorset Echo when he was 17 (just after passing his driving test) in 1995. He went on to become business and motoring editor at the Bournemouth Echo.



note in the windscreen for the traffic warden. I fold the driver's wing mirror in to prevent it getting knocked.

It takes a couple of minutes to walk from the van to the flat, negotiating slow electric gates every time, and walking up a staircase.

We decide to move the largest item of furniture first, a sizeable six foot two door pine cupboard. It's heavy and awkward. With care, a bit of thought and some heated discussions, we slowly make our way through the pokey flat, along the landing and down the stairs. We can then properly carry it on its side and eventually get to the van where we open the back right door first. I soon realise that I can push the door right back and it will helpfully hold itself open without smashing back into me. This is particularly handy as we are parked on a slope. It takes me a minute or so to figure out how to open the left hand door - there's a black sort of lever on the inside of it that you move to do this. Again, push it out as far as possible and it holds itself open. Good design.



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