

Tom & Doreen's notes:

We enjoyed our trip:

Melbourne-Innamincka-Brisbane-Melbourne during May/June. Travelling via Tibooburra, Cameron's Corner and The Strezlecki Track, our party encountered the full range of road conditions and normal challenges associated with such remote touring.

See October's Caravan World Magazine for more details.

Outback Touring: What's in it for the ladies?

Doreen Harding explains what it is that she enjoyed about her recent trip and what she considers important for the ladies to have a great time.

"So he's busting to do an off road trip with the caravan and his adolescent senior citizen mates. The mere thought sends cold chills down the back of your spine. But you know that sooner or later it's going to happen so you might as well prepare yourself"

Here are a few of my thoughts on how to make the most of it!

- Be challenged by the concept of survival. On our last trip it was about a week between major supply centres and I stocked our pantry accordingly. Frozen foods, tinned foods, dried foods and long life milk etc. supplemented fresh fruit and vegetables. Also consider the importance of packing the supplies in a secure and practical manner and having adequate containers to store the open packets of rice or milk.

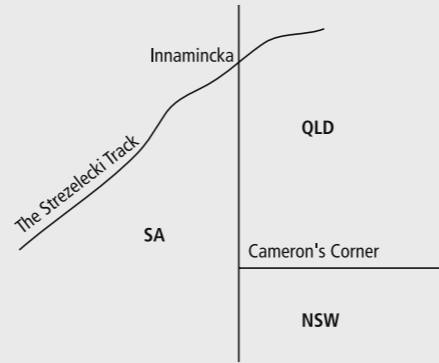
- Be prepared for the responsibilities that come with being a member of the party and the benefits and camaraderie will naturally flow. Be ready to: participate in communal meals, take your turn as convoy leader on the road, understand that sticking to the groups timetable will on occasions be demanding and that sometimes others will want to go to places that may not be of interest of you. However the benefits will be overwhelming. You will be brought closer together by the remoteness of the country but can still enjoy your own privacy by simply stepping into your caravan and closing the door at the end of the day.

- But what about the facilities? I hear you ask. Well of course these vary from caravan to caravan but at bush camps with minimal or no facilities it is amazing how quickly you adopt the concept of "Ladies to the right, Gents to the left, don't forget the shovel and tissues" This concept seems to work well despite the fact that we have a toilet facility within the caravan. Maybe the beauty of the country draws one closer to nature.

- Be prepared to step outside your "comfort zone" Many of our most memorable moments came from deviations down sidetracks or spur of the moment sorties into the unknown. Remember you have the resources of the party to keep you safe.

- Be well prepared: take an interest in the basic equipment such as water; spare fuel, fire extinguishers etc. Ensure that each vehicle has a CB radio for fun and games as well as safety on route and a well decked out first aid kit.

- Finally, anticipate and enjoy the moments at sunset or by the night fire with a drink in your hand, good friends around you and be glad that you came.



On road tips from Tom:

Ignore pressure from behind

The Pacific Highway typifies a difficult route with long single lane stretches, few overtaking lanes and plenty of ongoing road works. I found myself pressured to travel 10 kph faster than desired due to fast traffic flow and a high volume of traffic. Tom's Rule: Your responsibility is to travel at a speed that allows you to maintain the safety of your rig. The alternatives: Choose another option, travel at a time of lesser traffic, or travel at your "in control" speed regardless, and pull over to allow others to pass only at designated areas such as rest stops or passing lanes etc.

Carry spare fuel

Please Note: In unknown territory, detours will be occasionally forced upon you through road closures from flood, erosion etc. It is important therefore that you have 30-50% additional fuel range beyond map calculations. There is nothing worse than sweating over your fuel gauge. A twenty litre container of spare petrol will allow you to enjoy the views rather than focussing on the dial on your dashboard! Particularly when these deviations are "discovery events" to be thoroughly enjoyed.

Doreens outback accessories:

1. Outdoor matting, absolutely essential as the ground can be very rough.
2. Hat.
3. Good quality footwear.
4. Plenty of insect spray.
5. Unlimited good humour.

Spring 2000

Caravan Talk

Thanks for coming!

A big thank you to our former Murrumbidgee and first time customers who have made the trip across to Bayswater in recent months. It has been particularly gratifying to serve you. If it is your first time to our Bayswater store please advise us and we will be pleased to give you a tour of the workshop facilities and layout. This will help you feel more comfortable at our premises and you can see what sort of jobs others are doing to their caravans.

Regular Bayswater customers may have noticed some relocation of stock and a trend towards pre packaged goods with individual part numbers. As we continue this task over the coming months you will benefit from cleaner and better-identified spare parts and accessories. We also ask for your patience at the counter because our new computer system requires part numbers to be entered for each item, a process that is time consuming. - 'till we get use to it!

Dealing with Hardings

What can you expect?

Our approach to business is built on the following philosophy:

- Sell products that we are prepared to use ourselves.
- Promote to the customer a system that will give them the same caravanning lifestyle enjoyment that we enjoy.
- Never compromise where safety is at stake.
- Share fully our expertise with customers.
- Enjoy doing it.
- Give full value for money whilst charging a fair price that will enable us to complete work to the highest standard.
- Resolve product failures promptly, regardless to the attitude of our suppliers.
- Present to you the options, explain their relative merits and then let you decide which way we approach your job.

And, more specifically when you bring your car or caravan in for work, you will be comfortable because:

- You will leave knowing what jobs are being undertaken at what cost.
- Hardings will contact you seeking approval of any extra work of substance that is necessary.

- All parts replaced in the course of your job will be retained for inspection.
- A road test with you will be carried out after any brake work done.
- You will receive a report on future maintenance requirements.
- You will be introduced to products and services that will improve the safety, comfort or enjoyment of your caravanning holiday
- You will leave with our guarantee that the work done will meet your expectations.

So we make it our business to ensure that you will be a happy caravanner, just like Gary Dower who recently wrote:

" Dear Sir/s

Prior to leaving Melbourne some two and a half years ago Mr Greg Harding had jacking points fitted to our van along with a wind up jack. We have been so grateful that he suggested this modification and the ease in which the van can be lifted. This and other items you installed for us have meant that we have had safe and trouble free vaning for the last two and a half years.

Thank you Hardings".

Well Thank You Gary! It means a lot that you took the trouble to write to us.

Hardings' seminars and training program dates

Get To Know Your Caravan with Tom Harding on Saturday 9th December 2000 2.00pm to 5.00pm

A "light technical" session held at our Bayswater workshop covering Electric Brakes, Towbars and Hitches, Chassis and Suspension, Caravan Fridges, Routine Maintenance, Important Accessories, On Road Tips and more! Ideal for new caravanners, intending caravanners seeking independent advice and those who would like to be better informed about the mechanical and practical aspects of their vans.

Cost: \$25 per head including refreshments.

Trip Planning seminar with Vera and Gerald Andersen held on Wednesday 29th November 2000 6.00pm to 9.00pm.

A fun and informative evening session hosted by experienced caravanners who take delight in sharing their tips and secrets gathered over ten years and tens of thousands of kilometres of travelling. Covering topics such as research and planning, preparing your car and van, what to take and what to leave at home, how far to book ahead, how much will it cost and much much more. Ideal for new caravanners or those preparing for an extended trip. Please note that this seminar will be held at The Mitcham Bowling Club 306 Mitcham Road, Mitcham.

Cost: \$25 per head including refreshments.

Driver Training sessions with Tom Harding: By Arrangement.

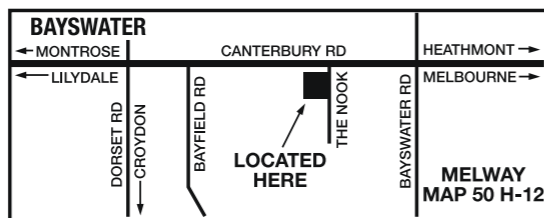
Spend 6 hours with Tom in your car and caravan travelling through a variety of road conditions and scenarios to build your confidence and expertise. Learn where to position your van on the highway and how to get the best out of your brakes and tow gear to ensure complete safety and enjoyment while you travel. Learn also, Tom's secret technique for easily reversing your van into the most difficult spot! A must for new caravanners!

Cost: \$225.

Ring us for further information on any of the above sessions.

See you at The Leisurefest, Caravan & Camping Show at Sandown Racecourse. Oct 27,28,29.

Opening hours 10 am to 5 pm. Adults \$7.00 with accompanying children under 15 free.



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Workshop news & information

Electric brake controllers

We have two preferred brake control units for your car. The Tekonsha Voyager and The Hayes Energize III (Kelsey Hayes) unit. We are completely satisfied with either of these models for your car but are predominantly fitting Hayes units as customer feedback suggests that they are slightly easier to adjust. Importantly, they are both pendulum type units that provide a variable current output to the caravan brakes according to the stopping motion of the car. In other words you get smooth and positive brakes in all stopping scenarios. Lost the instruction booklet for your controller? Don't worry, call us and we will send you our simplified version. Free of charge... of course.

Before you spend twenty thousands dollars

changing over your van, consider modernising your "old faithful" Join the countless number of people who update their existing van with the following jobs and keep thousands of dollars in their pockets, for dare I say it... Petrol!

- Install a microwave oven.
- Converting single beds into a double or visa versa.
- Remodel your kitchen or wardrobe.
- Install a shower and toilet.
- Replace a water damaged interior panel or ceiling.
- Install overhead cupboards.
- Convert existing beds into lift up units supported by gas struts.
- Make slide out kitchen pantry cupboard units.

"Attention: Sidewind Jack owners"

The primary component of your Sidewind Jack is an Italian product made to European Standards. You will be pleased to know that the Jack is currently undertaking rating testing for the purposes of meeting Australian Standards. An important requirement of the standard is a suitable label documenting the Jacks capacity and operating instructions. All existing owners will be sent a suitable label within the next month to apply to their Jacks. In the meantime it has been recommended that we advise you not to use your Jack until you receive and affix your label.

- If you have any questions please call Greg to discuss them as soon as possible

"Attention: All other Caravanners"

Thankyou for your patience. New Jacks complete with labels will be available before the end of November.

Consider this!

Do you have access to the Internet? Check out the following sites from two of our leading suppliers:

www.camec.com.au Camec are the primary wholesale supplier to our industry and display all of the parts and accessories in their product range. They will even send you one of their comprehensive catalogues absolutely free. Take advantage of this, because it is a generous offer indeed. We supply all of the goods listed in the catalogue.

www.haymanreese.com.au Hayman Reese has an informative site with towing advice, product news and the opportunity for feedback direct to company. Don't forget that Hardings are a stockist of all Hayman Reese parts and accessories.

And this!

Firstly, here are some tips to help you spot the native species "dothebigone" courtesy of Marg & Arthur Ingram fresh back from their 22,000 km trip:

- A Four Wheel Drive combined with Off Road Caravan.
- He has a beard.
- She wears shorts.
- Vehicle has a tinnie on top that never got taken off
- Bread maker in caravan.

Secondly, a spare wheel is as useful as a comb to a bald man if it either does not fit on the caravan or has no air in it! Check it out before you leave.

Thirdly, If you have a roll out awning and haven't lubricated the ratchet thumb lever at the rear end of the roller recently, make a point of doing this pronto and save big money on future repairs. Usually silicon spray is suitable for the purpose. If you don't have a roll out awning then you should get one installed by Hardings before your next trip. Why? because they will enhance your holiday enjoyment. Budget around \$100 per foot plus \$150.

Destination anywhere on an unpowered site!

Battery options for your caravan.

1. Rely on the towing vehicles primary battery.

This is the most simple of systems where you either leave the caravan plugged into the car or use an auxiliary extension lead to connect the caravan plug to the cars socket. This will allow you to use caravan lighting powered by the car battery.

Advantages: Low cost option, requiring only a "hot wire" between the car's battery and seven pin socket.

Disadvantages: Lacks flexibility because the car must be in the vicinity of the caravan for it to work. Only usable for a couple of nights of modest power consumption before the car battery be drained flat.

Cost: As little as \$50.

Best suited for: The occasional one night stop in a national park or unpowered site.

2. Install an auxiliary battery in the car with an automatic isolating system.

Fitting a second battery under the bonnet of your vehicle provides a battery dedicated for auxiliary power.

Advantages: No chance of the car not starting in the morning because even if you flatten the auxiliary battery the car's primary battery is not effected.

Disadvantages: The car must still be in the vicinity of the caravan and whilst you need not worry about the car's primary battery you still have a limit on the amount of power available to you because the car must be driven to charge the battery.

Cost: from \$500 (Note: this is not a job for HARDINGS, see your auto electrician).

Best suited for: Caravanners with a portable fridge in the back of their car or those staying away from power for only a couple of nights.

3. Install an auxiliary battery in the caravan and maintain with a 240-volt charger.

Fitting a battery into the caravan and a charging unit means that whenever you leave a powered site the battery will be fully charged and ready to go.

Advantages: Flexibility, because the caravan is powered independently from the car. Installed in its most simple form is quite economical.

Disadvantages: You cannot charge the battery without access to mains power, thus ultimately limiting your stay. If you are staying for some time on mains power you may need to disconnect the charger to prevent damage to the battery.

Cost: Will depend greatly upon the manner of installation. From \$350

Best suited for: Caravanners who would like to be able to enjoy a couple of nights in a National park.

4. Install an auxiliary battery in the caravan and maintain with a solar panel.

Mounting a removable solar panel on the roof of the caravan and wiring to the battery through a regulator and volt/amp meter is the ultimate battery maintenance system.

Advantages: Completely self-sustaining, allowing you to stay until the fish go off the bite. Environmentally friendly and virtually maintenance free. Reduced site fees over time.

Disadvantages: More costly to install.

Cost: Will depend upon the type of installation from \$1000

Best Suited for: Caravanners who want to be able to enjoy the best of outdoor living at their leisure on their own timetable. Come in and see Tom's van as an example of this set up.

Issues and options when installing a battery in a caravan:

- Where to put it? On the A-frame, under an internal seat box or on a slide out tray in a purpose built access door.
- Isolate the fridge from the lighting circuit: A blocking diode needs to be installed to prevent the caravan fridge drawing off the battery whilst still allowing the car to run the fridge on 12 volts whilst driving along.
- Battery Charger type: A basic charger costs around \$80 but will continually charge the battery until damage occurs, thus relying on you to disconnect it. A regulated charger is more expensive at around \$250 but will turn itself off when the battery is fully charged. Your choice.
- Ventilation: May be required depending upon battery type and location.
- Battery Maintenance: A conventional battery requires you to check the fluid levels every three months or so.
- Fuse It! Make sure the circuit has a fuse or circuit breaker installed to protect the wiring in the event of a short circuit.
- In conclusion: Making your caravan user friendly away from mains power allows you to enjoy some of the most spectacular locations around Australia. You don't have to set it up with the ultimate package to get underway; most people build their kits up over a period of time. **Our advice is to GO FOR IT!**

