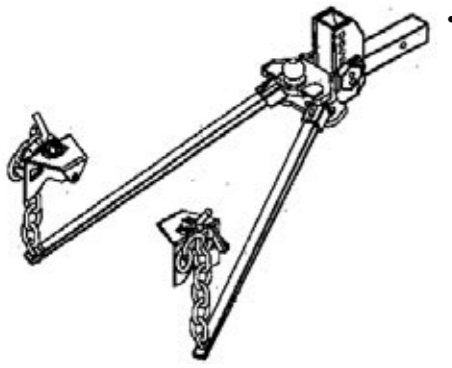


# Workshop news & information

## Frequently asked questions about Hayman Reese Weight Distributing Hitches.

They are widely acknowledged as the best safety equipment available. Here are some answers to common questions:



**How tight should my level ride bars be?** The spring bar needs to be under load to transfer ball weight forward. Without pressure on the bars the front wheels of the car will not increase their road traction. So if the snap up bracket is easily hitched up by hand or with minimal pressure your hitch system is working below capacity. We like to see a small amount of bend in the bar to indicate it is under load. This will require a reasonable amount of effort to hitch the bar up, usually requiring two hands on the pipe handle to do so.

## The hot topic: Towing Regulations:

Just when you thought it couldn't get any more confusing, just when you thought you had ATM, GTM and GVM under control, all of a sudden everybody is talking about "tow ball weight"

Let me preface my comments by an explanation/apology first. We are not 100% sure of the background to the "New" Towing Regulations, we are not 100% of the implications of the regulations, we are not even 100% sure of the content of the regulations. But we will tell you what we do know, even if the information is rather general. Furthermore we are confident that the overwhelming majority of car and caravan combinations that look well matched already meet the standards.

We understand that vehicle manufacturers are required to submit the maximum weight ratings that can be applied to the motor vehicle to the Federal Office of Road Safety. These limits as measured by gross towing capacity and maximum tow ball loads thereafter become the capacity for that vehicle.

On the surface these limits sometimes appear nonsensical and

• **How can I stop the horrible noise when turning corners?** This is caused by the "trunnion" on the end of the bar grinding in the ball mount. A small amount of grease on the top and bottom horns of the trunnion will quieten them down. (Tip: look for the shiny spots.) We have a special lube called "On The Ball" in our store for \$10 a bottle, which is absolutely guaranteed to silence those bars!

• **The bottom flanges on the ball mount are being distorted by the heads of the bars, it doesn't look right.** This is a normal outcome of a hitch bar under load. The wear is accelerated at first as the trunnion settles in to a pattern but continues at a modest rate thereafter. By using the cam adjustment over time you should be able to get 50,000 kilometres of caravanning out of your ball mount head.

• **What is this concept of "Four Working Links"?** Working Links refer to the number of chain links directly under load. Because the end of the bar moves forwards and backwards as you turn a corner there must be a minimum of four working links to prevent the bar placing undue stress on the snap up bracket.

• **After years of use my level ride bars have a slight bend in them. Should I dismantle them and turn the bar over to straighten it?** Don't be tempted under any circumstances to do this. You will snap it into two pieces.

• **The tow ball surface of the head is not horizontal. Is this a problem?** This was probably set up this way to

maximise ground clearance at the end of the spring bar. No it is not a worry because the coupling and tow ball have more than enough movement in them to accommodate this angle.

• **Is The Weight Distributing Hitch useable on a Tregg Red Nylon Block flexible coupling?** Yes but with a limitation on the ball weight. Because of the upward stress the loaded bars place on the coupling connection the nylon block can struggle to cope. Hardings recommend that for a ball weight in excess of 150kg you have to make a choice between the level rides and the Tregg Coupling. Note: as an alternative consider the Orac flexible coupling which is of an all steel construction that can handle the stresses of level rides.

• **What is all the fuss about with this Hayman Reese level ride gear? I have been using two bar round rod level rides with my 17' van for 15 years and never had a problem.** Thankfully you have not encountered any troubles in the past but the fact is that you are using equipment below its specified rating. Investing in a Hayman Reese Weight Distributing Hitch will make your rig significantly safer and more comfortable and in the event of some nasty situation confronting you on the road you will be better placed to handle it. You wouldn't drive your car uninsured so why would you compromise on basic tow safety equipment?

often don't seem to us to endorse the apparent strength of the vehicle or they show a miss match between the gross towing capacity and the maximum ball load. In other words the tow ball capacity is less than 10% of the gross capacity.

In the light of this some vehicle manufacturers are "scrambling" to change ratings so as to not be left unattractive in the new car market, for example Mitsubishi Pajero and Nissan Patrol, to name a couple of big players in recent months.

So it does appear that rational towing vehicles will ultimately tend towards a ball weight limit of 10%, which is after all, common sense. And for most of us that's just fine.

The question arises though, as to the situation for a van that is "heavy on" and weighs more than the down weight limit for the vehicle. This is where it gets a little curly.

"But that's what Level Rides are for" I hear you say. Yes we agree, Level Rides are essential for managing the ball load for safe towing but unfortunately they cannot be taken into account when considering the maximum permissible weights.

## So what to do?

We recommend you do some homework to clarify your own situation. Gather the following data:

1. The overall weight of your *loaded* caravan (ATM).
2. The ball weight of your *loaded* caravan.
3. The maximum towing capacity of your motor vehicle.
4. The maximum ball weight capacity of your motor vehicle.

**Items 1. & 2.** are easily obtained from a public weighbridge at a cost of around \$25. Check the index in your Melways for one near you. Stations not listed there also exist at The Nunawading Tip site, Burwood Highway and Fussel Road Kilsyth.

Ensure you get 1. The total weight with the jockey wheel on the bridge along with the other wheels and 2. The ball weight with the jockey wheel on the bridge and the other wheels off.

**Item 3.** The maximum towing capacity of your motor vehicle is generally available in the vehicle owner's manual.

**Item 4.** The maximum ball weight capacity of your motor vehicle may be more difficult and confusing to ascertain. It is unlikely to be found in the handbook and many of the motor car customer service enquiry centres simply don't know but are usually happy to follow the information up with their technical departments. Hayman Reese is an excellent source of this information (phone 03 7029222) and Hardings of course will also help.

## Battery access:

There is no doubt that an increasing number of people are choosing to install batteries into their vans, and why not, given the large number of great national parks (un-powered) available. Batteries require maintenance however and checking fluid levels is necessary every couple of months. Often fitted inside the van under seat boxes they tend to be difficult to get to and are often ignored, resulting in premature failure. Hardings suggest a better way: Install an external vented access door with a slide out tray. This allows for easy checking of fluid levels without busting your back lifting the heavy thing out of the van. Around \$375 installed but this could save your batteries life!

## The obvious question is: What to do if you feel you don't comply?

I thought that industry consultant Tom Olthoff's article in September Caravan World is alone worth many times the magazine purchase price. Tom advocates a whoa, steady, approach to the issue of expensive tow ball weight. He certainly implies that it may affect the vehicles warranty but questions the implications beyond that. It is true to say that others however have taken a more pessimistic view. My own thoughts would probably vary with the degree of nonconformity. I would be happy to discuss this matter with any of our customers.

As such Harding's recommend that our clients *work towards achieving* a rig that complies with both the vehicle tow weight and ball weight. We suggest the following steps.

- Comply with the maximum tow weight.
- Know what your current situation is in terms of ball weight.
- Be aware that if your vehicle's ball rating is not 10% then it may soon be.
- Consider possible modifications to the van (eg relocate water tanks) to help with the ball mass.
- Set yourself up with the best possible towing equipment to ensure your safety.
- Furthermore if you think the ratings are unsatisfactory write to the vehicle manufacturer and explain your displeasure because a bit of lobbying may help to change things.
- If you are in the market for a new vehicle then do your homework before you buy!

## Some frequently asked questions.

• **My towbar is rated below the maximum towing capacity of the vehicle. Why?** There may be two answers to this. Firstly you may have chosen for the lighter grade bar to be fitted or secondly the heavy bar (Hitch Receiver) may have been subject to an old capacity ratings stamp. If it is a Hayman Reese product it *may* be possible to receive a document stating the true capacity of the towbar. Note that in general Hayman Reese build their heavy bars to the maximum vehicle capacity in terms of ATM and Ball Weight but some compliance plates historically have not always reflected that.

• **I have checked out the car's capacity from a number of sources and am getting conflicting figures, what now?** Unfortunately this seems common. Our answer to this is to keep working at it. Many industry people are grappling with it (us included) but with persistence you will find the answers.

• **What are the insurance implications?** I have spoken to two (only two) insurance companies on this matter. One knew of the situation and said that they had never denied a claim and could see no reason why they would start now despite tow weights. The other one did not know of the regulations and didn't seem particularly concerned about rushing off and studying them. The strong message from both companies was this: **that they are not in the business of finding reasons to deny claims.**

# Tom & Doreen's Trip

Tom & Doreen's Trip between June and October sought answers to such questions as:

- How do you perfect Kangaroo Stew
- Is the fishing really that good
- What are the 16 ways to pluck an Emu
- Just how much money can you spend on mobile phone calls
- What is the true holding tank capacity of a Cassette Toilet
- Should we have gone to London after all
- Would Doreen completely confuse Caravan World Readers
- Would the Maverick make it back, and...
- If they returned, would they still be talking to each other?

Still on route as we go to print, these answers are yet to be made public, and I suspect some may never. In the mean time I have been able to extract a morsel of trip information for our readers pleasure. For example, according to Tom: Towns with the prefix letter "K" appear often in the North West. It is synonymous with some great spots.

**Katherine:** No matter where you come from it's been a long haul. It is a terrific spot to rest caravan, vehicle and bodies before the next stage ahead. Enjoy the region's vast area of extremes & delights hosting towns such as Pine Creek, Borroloola, Mataranka, Timber Creek & Daly Waters. Of course Katherine Gorge is a must for a tour or flight, but don't forget the hot springs and caves.



**Kununurra:** We booked for four days and stayed for eight! Maybe it was the excitement of the Barramundi that Doreen & Tom each landed helped!!! Heading east it's a wonderfully green contrast to the Pilbarra/Kimberly region. Heading west it's just a great place to stop. The Ord River Scheme has enabled it to develop as a huge market garden, now also with sugar and cotton. Stop & Explore! The River Cruise defies comprehension, The Argyle Dam, the reason for it all is nine times larger than Sydney Harbour at maximum flood level and is a must see. Furthermore Kununurra itself is a nice place to be in it's own right and as a departure base for The Bungle Bungles, Derby and others.

**Karratha:** Set in the Pilbara, a town created by the mining/salt/natural gas industries. Cirled by Dampier, Roebourne Harbour complexes are launching points for Tom Price, Newman, Kurijini and Millstream National Parks. All of these are individual stories that need to be explored and the Pilbara

landscape must be seen to be appreciated together with its story. It is a tour base departure point and a pleasant stop over for caravanners to explore. Try to be there for a full moon. "Simply stunning"

**Kalbarri:** "Land locked" by National Parks and wildflowers everything centres on the Murchison River. We had been travelling long distances and found this coastal resort very welcoming. A fishing port where boat skippers thrill the onlookers at their skill in negotiating the river port entry from the ocean. The Indian Ocean coastline is accessible, river sand, National Park gorges and wildflowers are abundant. Kalbarri has a warm community feeling and is a minimum 2 day stop over.

**Crossing the Nullarbor?** It intimates a sense of danger, a dreamlike void of emptiness and harshness, with ram's horn skulls, burnt earth, dust and tumbling tussock weeds... And the reality? Stay tuned for Tom and Doreen's report in our next edition.

## Electric Brake Controllers: Head to Head!

Once again Hardings have ruffled a few feathers in the industry by stating their opinions in relation to Brake Controllers. Specifically some feel that we don't give Hayman Reese units a fair representation when customers are considering their options. So here we go: **Bill Kelso from Hayman Reese is in the blue corner and Greg Harding for the home team in the red, will slug it out and let you the customer be the judge and decide which unit best suits your needs.**

**Bill's comments:** The benefits of the Hayman Reese controller to the user are that it is small and compact and can be mounted in any position under the dash or on the side or centre consol. It is easy to adjust and will provide a consistent output at your chosen level.

**Greg's comments:** The primary benefit of the Hayes unit is its ability to send a variable level of braking effort to the caravan depending upon the stopping motion of the car. The Hayes unit will provide smooth braking in all stopping scenarios without the need for continual adjustment.



Model Preferred By:	Hayes Lemmerz Hardings	Hayman Reese Hayman Reese
Size: Width/Depth/Thick (mm)	80/135/35	75/135/25
Solid State (no moving parts)	No	Yes
Pendulum Sensor	Yes	No
Manual Override	Yes	Yes
Mounting Position	Horizontal	Anywhere
Fitted Price	\$220	\$220
Warranty	5 years	3 years
Installed By:	Hardings	Hardings

### Trailer Calamity: Consider the following sequence of events:

A tyre blew on the box trailer whilst travelling to a recent camping weekend. This was unfortunate but forgivable. It was only after this that things really went astray.

- There was no trailer jack.
- There was no wheel brace of a suitable size.
- After limping to the next town and borrowing a wheel brace it was found that four out of five wheel nuts were thoroughly rusted to the studs and had to be broken off to remove the wheel!
- Robbing a rusty axle in a paddock of a hub and replacing the broken hub, the spare tyre (yes, there was one, although a little flat) was fitted with four cross-threaded nuts and much prayer.
- The trip continued albeit with unease and apprehension.

Clues to the owner of the trailer: Name starts with "T" and rhymes with "bomb"

**Moral of the story:** maybe that good friend the rusty old 6' by 4' needs a little of that maintenance that we always carefully afford our caravans.

### Tom's back, seminars are on!!

Join Tom for his famous "Get to Know Your Caravan" seminars. These 3 hour power packed sessions cover Towing Equipment, Electric Brakes, Caravan Fridge Operation & Management, Maintenance Tips, Pre-Purchase Advice, On-Road Tips and much much more. Ideal for new caravanners, intending caravanners and everyone else too! At a cost of \$25 per head they are great value and are always a full house. Ring to confirm your seat now. NB. Payment at point of booking is required. Dates on page one.

## Important Accessories for your Caravan: Check the list.

✓ <b>Outdoor Matting</b>	Tough, non slip and endorsed by Caravan Parks. It keeps you off the dirt, dust gravel or concrete and is an absolutely essential item. The matting is 2.5 metres wide.	\$40 per metre
✓ <b>Sullage Hose</b>	If you are still using a bucket then it's time to upgrade. This 25mm corrugated hose is tough yet flexible, smooth on the inside and comes with quick release screw fittings for convenient attachment to the van.	\$5 per metre
✓ <b>Mains Pressure Hose</b>	Nylex hose which is absolutely guaranteed not to taste! Copes with high water pressure, is kink resistant and doesn't set like concrete when the temperature falls below 10 degrees.	\$3 per metre or \$55 for a 20 metre coil
✓ <b>Level Wedge</b>	Lightweight, durable wedge which allows infinite adjustment up to 90 mm high. Allows you get the fridge absolutely level on a sloping site.	\$35 (single axle) \$65 pair (tandems)
✓ <b>Anti Theft Lock</b>	A visible and simple security device which prevents others from hooking onto your caravan. It is well designed with a "shield" to prevent the use of bolt cutters. Padlock not supplied.	\$30
✓ <b>Wheel Chocks</b>	Light weight and strong blocks for positive & safe parking on a hill.	\$8 each
✓ <b>Two Way Level</b>	An accurate and easy to use level indicator. Screw it to your a-Frame.	\$18 each
✓ <b>Coupling Mates</b>	Save your bumper and your marriage! Guide the coupling over the towball without damage or expletives. Two models: Couple Mate universal model and Backing Guide to suit a 2 bar level ride system.	\$30 to \$48
✓ <b>Hitch Pin Lock</b>	Lockable pin to secure your trailer ballmount or level ride ballmount. Especially handy when you are on tour, saving daily handling of the heavy, greasy piece.	\$38.50 each
✓ <b>Vanguard Polish</b>	Puts a protective shine on aluminium that beautifies and protects. Especially good for revitalising old surfaces and making them shine!	\$15 per 350ml bottle
✓ <b>Hema Road Atlas</b>	A convenient A4 size national map book fully updated and easy to read. It comes spiral bound for easy flip over pages to keep the navigator happy.	\$27.95 each

### Hardings provide you with all the necessary products and services for your caravan.

- Accessories and spare parts
- Towbars, level rides and sway controls
- Electric brake controls
- Caravan repairs
- Trailer Parts
- Camper trailer windup service and repairs
- Resealing
- Caravan refrigeration & stove service
- Caravanners education programs
- Brakes and undercarriage servicing
- Caravan travel resources
- Chassis upgrades and repairs
- Aerolite chassis strengthening
- Sway problems corrected
- Caravanners advice
- Insurance repairs
- Caravan insurance
- Solar equipment & installations
- Curtains made for your caravan
- Upholstery service
- Lino and carpet laid
- Jacking systems



**Hardings Caravan Services** ACN 005 584 0476  
6 The Nook Bayswater 3153  
Phone: 03 9729 8477 Fax: 03 9729 3096  
Toll free: 1800 647 021

Spring 2001

# Caravan Talk

Hardings Caravan Services

## Winter sun for some

Sometimes we hate our customers! Sometimes we would like to jolly punch them in the nose! Do you know when?... We'll tell you when... yes we're going to tell you right now.... It is when "they" come in, about now in early Spring after we have suffered through a cold winter and "they" arrive: tanned, relaxed, cheerful and joking and keen to tell us all about their three month holiday away in the van. Not just content to gloss over the details, we have to hear about the size of the fish, the duration of the bush sunsets, the appallingly low price of the fresh prawns and the views of gorges, whales, waterways and bush sands! Well we have had enough! We can't take it any more! It is just too much to bear!..... Ahh that's better, no we jest. We congratulate those of you who got out of town for winter and are pleased that your trips went well. "We reckon you deserve great holidays."

So welcome to Caravan Talk for the Spring/Summer season 2001. As always we offer greetings to new Hardings' customers and those receiving our magazine for the first time. It is clear that the higher fuel prices, whilst a nuisance, did not deter travellers north with the largest number of caravanners seeking warmer climates ever reported. Our industry "gurus" Tom & Doreen Harding have been confirming this fact whilst enjoying their trip around Australia. Read all about it in this edition.

### Sales Up!

The industry is still rocking along with approximately 5,000 new vans manufactured in the first half of 2001. This is on target to achieve the target of 11,000 units for the year, which

will reflect a growth factor of approximately 10% in our industry. Many manufacturers are showing their confidence in the industry and investing heavily in new production facilities to meet demand. Regent and Coramal are two cases in point.

### Don't miss The Caravan & Camping Leisurefest!

The spring indoor/outdoor show is on October 5,6 & 7 at Sandown Racecourse, Princes Highway Springvale. The show is brimming with exhibitors of Caravans, Pop Tops, Motorhomes, Tents and Camping Gear. Most of the leading manufacturers will be on display and it is a great opportunity to see the latest design trends and innovations all in one location. Hardings of course will be there. Our focus will be on saying g'day to you, answering your questions, providing towing equipment information and conducting our seminar sessions to discuss:

- Electric Brakes
- Towing Regulations
- Correct Towing Equipment
- On Road Driving Techniques
- Locations not to be missed on your trip around Australia
- Plus your questions answered.

As you know, these sessions are of a casual nature so feel free to come and go as you wish. We warmly invite you to join us.

Show Hours are 10.00am to 5.00pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Adult admission is \$8.00 with children under 15 years admitted free. Complimentary car parking is available at the complex.

### In this edition:

Diary Dates

Industry News

Leisurefest Sandown Show

Weight Distributing Hitches

Towing Regulations

Electric Brake Controllers

Get to Know Your Caravan Seminars

Trailer Calamity

Tom & Doreen's Trip Notes

Top Accessories

### Diary dates:

- **Leisurefest:** Sandown Racecourse October 5th to 7th 2001.
- **Melbourne Fishing Show:** Melbourne Exhibition Centre October 25th to 28th 2001.
- **Melbourne Caravan & Camping Show:** April 23rd to 30th 2002. Please Note: To be held at Caulfield Racecourse.
- **Get to Know Your Caravan Seminar:** Held at our premises at Bayswater.  
Sunday October 28th 2pm-5pm  
Saturday December 1st 2pm-5pm

**Tom Harding Individual Driver Training – by appointment \$275 (5 hours)**