

Preparation is the key:



"Caravanning holidays introduce the kids to some new family activities"

Many of us would assume our car mechanics' vehicles must be perfectly tuned and faultlessly prepared for the road. Similarly one might expect a caravan repairers van to be effortlessly hitched to the family wagon allowing a stress free and timely departure to the chosen destination with smiles all around. A likely story? Read on.

- Firstly the hitch had disappeared, Umm yes I remember now, it was sold as a second hand unit when we ran out of stock a few months ago.
- Hang on, wasn't I going to put a rope tie on the corner mould to help the annexe stay in its track? Shouldn't take long guys...Where's that screw gun? Blast, flat battery again.
- Umm... I think I was supposed to mend one of the kids camp stretcher beds. Oh well he's only nine he can't be that heavy.

- Gee that cupboard seems smaller, it all fitted in last time.
- No I didn't. We'll have to pick one up on the way.
- Squeezed the bikes in. Pity we couldn't use them because I forgot to take the helmets.
- No need to book in dear. There will be plenty of great spots there dear. Yes of course I'm sure dear! (Spoken whilst ensuring no eye contact made.)

Congratulations to our clients who attend to all those niggly jobs upon return from their trip before they pack the van away. You would think that I would learn from your fine example. Famous last words.... Next time!

But we made it to our destination and before venturing into the office I asked Fiona for her pre requisites for a site. Without hesitation and virtually in one breath came the response:

- Morning sun but out of the wind
- Not noisy, but close to other children
- Near the amenities, but not as a view
- Low traffic area and close to the BBQ
- Gentle slope for rain runoff
- Looking towards the mountain would be nice, and most important
- Make sure the neighbours are nice.

I sighed under the load and replied quietly. "You didn't mention anything about world peace" before trudging hopelessly into the office.

Diary Dates

- **Leisurefest**
Friday 25th to Sunday 27th October 2002 at the Sandown Racecourse, Princess Highway Springvale.
- **Get To Know Your Caravan Seminar**
Sunday 1st December at Bayswater
Please ring for a booking
- **Bendigo Show**
22nd to 24th November 2002 at the Bendigo Jockey Club
- **Melbourne Show**
9th to 15th April 2003 at Caulfield Racecourse (Before Easter!)
- **Driver Training** with Tom Harding
By appointment

Leisurefest

This year's spring show at Sandown Racecourse is called the RV and Camping Leisurefest. Virtually all the leading manufacturers will be on display along with plenty of accessory outlets and related products. This year the show features an interactive towing display where you can get involved in backing a caravan onto a site, changing a wheel or inspect a range of accessories and towing equipment items in action. Hardings will be participating in this area along with our normal seminar and information site inside. Please drop in and say hello, tell us what we did that worked last time or more importantly what we did that didn't work! And sit in on a free seminar at our stand. We do look forward to seeing you there!

Show hours are from 10am to 5pm daily.

- Admission \$10 per adult
- Pensioners and Seniors \$8 .
- Children under the age of 15 years attend free.

Parking is also free of charge.

Bendigo Show

For the first time our association will be holding a Regional Show at Bendigo, from the **22nd to 24th November** at the Bendigo Jockey Club Heinz Street Bendigo. This will have a similar flavour to the Sandown Leisurefest and again will be well attended by the major manufacturers. Hardings will not be participating.

Workshop news & information

Staff Profile: Mick

Mick's background is in motor and heavy machinery mechanics. His broad mechanical skills and aptitude make him ideal for the diverse tasks in the workshop. Along with his personal caravanning experience friendly approach you can be sure Mick will look after interests of you and your van.

Personal Profile

Likes:

Home Brew
Caravanning Holidays
Relaxing at Home

Doesn't Like:

Inadequate Towing Gear!



Mick

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be
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Brake Linings – the counselling continues.

Almost daily it seems we have to make the phone call to a customer recommending the replacement of brake linings on quite new vans in for service. This can be very disappointing when the caravan may have travelled only 10,000km. The lining won't be excessively worn down but will probably show hairline cracks along the surface. Apparently the American manufacturers are bound by different requirements regarding the asbestos content. We think this may be a contributing factor and installing locally made Bendix changeover shoes has worked very well for us. After overcoming your initial frustration at the cost (around \$175 per axle) you will be absolutely delighted with the result. Smoother braking and cooler brake drums along with long life linings and Harding's warranty will make it all worthwhile.

PS. Very positive customer feedback on this matter leaves us in no doubt that we acting in your interests on this matter.

Serviced by Stickers: Shortly we will be attaching "Serviced By Hardings" stickers to your van. These will display our 1800 toll free phone number and will be useful reference for queries when you are on the road. Troubles on Route? Ring Us. We may be able to help with information or advice.

Furthermore here are the phone numbers for the various State Caravan Associations. Write them down and put it in the van because these organisations have a database of members and will cheerfully put you in touch with a reputable local service supplier who can meet your need whilst on route.

Victoria	03 93295311
New south Wales	02 96370599
Queensland	07 33574399
Northern Territory	08 89526111
South Australia	08 82604488
Western Australia	08 92431208
Tasmania	03 63363536

In brief:

Internet: Hardings Caravan Services will launch an Internet site during 2003.

The Victoria Cabin, Caravan & Camping Guide 2003 is on its way. Hallelujah we humble Victorians are finally going to join virtually every other state in the country and have a free comprehensive parks guide. It will be distributed early 2003. Get a copy during the April show at Caulfield.

Check your spare tyre pressure

before you leave. If you have one of those vinyl wheel covers that are like wrestling a crocodile to get off use a Stanley knife to remove it and throw it away! Lets face it if you can't check the tyre pressure you can be sure it will be flat when you need it!

Eight into seven does go!

When we install an electric brake controller into your car we need to access a wire from the stoplights. Once upon a time we would pick this up direct from the stoplight switch under the dash. But with the plethora of wires under there it was getting harder and harder. We now run another wire to the rear of the car and add it into pin 6 along with the trailer light feed for the stoplights. This is why there are two wires going into pin 6 at your trailer socket. Keep this in mind if you need to change the electrical socket on your car for any reason.

Caution: When you reverse onto your site and the car and van finish on an angle the pressure on the outside level ride bar will be extreme. Take great care in removing it and keep your toes well back! Note: Consider removing it before you reverse in.

Get to know your Caravan Seminars

Held at our Bayswater workshop these informative 3 hour sessions are essential for new or intending caravanners. Great value at \$25 per head.

Well done to customer Brain Bartlett who has attended no less than eight of these seminars. Brian your next ticket is on the house!

“On the A-Frame suited this rig”



Bikes

How to get them there (and back!)

Bikes are a wonderful asset on a caravanning holiday. Either as means for the kids to keep themselves occupied in a safe environment or for exercise and exploration away from the base camp. But let's be quite plain about it: the handling, carrying and storage of bicycles is a thorny problem.

We can help you with some options for transporting your bikes but as you will see there is no perfect solution.

“We will advise, you can decide. Together we will find the optimal outcome”

Install a heavy-duty bumper bar on the rear of your van and fit a conventional bike rack. (\$375 approx. plus bike rack) For: Reasonably simple, doesn't complicate your hitch up sequence and the bumper is an asset to the van. Against: May have undesirable chassis flexing implications (especially on a wind up camper), may destabilise the towing combination with extra weight now at the rear of the van and may struggle to fit onto bumpers already accommodating spare wheels. Furthermore with the bikes permanently out of sight whilst you travel there is a tendency to approach the back of the van with unease and apprehension when you arrive at your destination.

Fit a Folding type Bike Rack under the tow ball and have the bikes on the back of the car as normal. This type of carrier still allows you to tow at the same time. Carrier Cost approx. \$150. For: This is a simple arrangement whilst towing and is great when you arrive because it is very easy to take the bikes up into the hills for the day on the back of the car. Against: You need to consider the issues of increased weight on the back of the car and whether your level rides can handle it (most will not, unless you are using a Hayman Reese Weight Distribution System) You will also need to look carefully at the turning circle of your rig to ensure bikes won't run foul with gas bottles and spare wheels etc. Furthermore the hitch up sequence has now been complicated because you will fight with A-Frames, Handbrake

Handles, Level Rides, Bikes and Car Boots till the end. And just when you think you have beaten it your precious seven year old (or was that precocious) will want their pokemon game boy out of the back of the Station Wagon! Oh Happy Days!

Fit a mount on the front of the caravan to accommodate either a fixed or folding bike rack. (Around \$250 plus carrier) This will make your hitch up process more comfortable because the bikes will be hard back towards the front wall of the caravan rather than over the tow ball. Of course they will foul the caravan front boot door now instead (if applicable) and the turning circle and level ride issues still remain. We may also have to relocate a gas bottle etc to make it achievable.

If you have a camper trailer consider also the option of bikes on the roof. Fit a twin bar boat rack for \$285 and strap the bikes on top or add a lightweight mesh large cargo basket to the boat rails for carrying folding chairs etc too. Yes there is a catch. The roof winding mechanism is not designed for extra weight so you will need to clear the roof of goodies before you wind it up!

Put them inside the van. Make sure you take a rug or two to stop them rubbing on cupboards etc, or

Leave them home and take up fishing. Now where to store those rods.

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Go South to Tassie

Take your car and caravan to Tasmania on one of the new Spirits of Tasmania. Here is a guideline of the relevant costs depending upon your choice of time. This example assumes a car and caravan total length of 10 metres.

Peak:	6th December to 26th January	\$273 each way.
Shoulder:	27th January to 27th April and 29th August to 6th December.	\$147 each way.
Off-Peak:	28th April to 29th August.	\$75 each way.

For *each* metre more or less than 10 metres overall you need to add or take away the following amounts: **Peak:** \$63 **Shoulder:** \$49 **Off Peak:** \$25.

Compare this to car only prices as follows:

Peak: \$55 each way **Shoulder & Off Peak:** Free.

That's not the end of it however: You will also pay around \$100 per person each way in an "airline chair" or around \$200 per person each way for a cabin twin share.

Consider this information as a guide and please check these prices carefully because the combinations are many. See www.spritoftasmania.com.au or phone: 132010

They said it!

In amongst all the hard work we do love a laugh with our customers. Here are a couple of recent chuckles to share with you:

As I was climbing into the driving seat of an elderly couples car to do a road test, the gent said to his wife in the passenger seat "Here's a new man for you Lois." To that she promptly replied. "Give me a break, I don't want to have to train another one!"

Mick was demonstrating a hitch up/backing guide to a lady. He affectionately described the product as a "marriage saver". "Too late" she said. "I needed one of those five years ago!"

Tom & Doreen's information

Fine tuning your rig

If you are heading off the bitumen then the security of your electric brake wiring across the axle needs extra attention. Many manufacturers attach the wiring loom to the axle using plastic ties, which are fine in most circumstances, but gravel may cut these ties causing the wiring to come loose. Suggest wrap gaffer tape around the plastic ties as extra protection for off bitumen use.

Outside taps: Most late model vans come complete with outside taps which can be useful for connecting a second hose for car or van washing, filling water tanks etc without the need to disconnect your water supply. The majority of these taps are fitted low down on the A-Frame necessitating a lot of bending. Consider extending the hose and mounting the tap on an upright post or the gas bottle holder to save your back. This also gives the added advantage that you can fit a soap holder to the A-Frame or in the front boot allowing easy washing of hands outside. Leave a towel in the front boot and watch all those "brownie points" add up for not messing up the inside of the van. *PS Harding have the tap fittings for easy do it yourself installation.*

Save your back: Make sure you use your jockey wheel to help fit your level rides. By hitching onto the tow ball and then winding up both car and van with the jockey wheel it makes hitching up your bars so much easier. The best outcome is

Grumbling about the cost of Caravan Park Sites?

Here are some estimates of set up costs for you to keep in mind.

- \$18,000 per powered site includes the building of laundry, office facilities, playground and a BBQ
- A minimum of \$30,000 per cabin
- \$200,000 for a basic amenity block
- Plus running costs: wages, electricity, maintenance etc.
- And on top of this is the cost to purchase or rent the land itself.

You can do the maths and work out the return required on such an investment. No wonder there is a shortage of caravan parks in some areas. Furthermore this is being exasperated by spiralling land costs which are making new ones too expensive to set up and threatening existing ones with lucrative redevelopment plans.

Side Wind Jacks

For safe and easy changing of a caravan wheel. Insist on a demonstration next time you come in!

Cost around \$295 fitted.

with a jockey wheel in the centre of the A-Frame but some assistance will still be gained by use of the wheel to fit one bar. *If you find it difficult to hitch up your bars talk to Greg's team. They can help.*

Spare Springs. Take on with you and you won't need it!

Leaf Springs are generally a very durable and reliable piece of equipment in the running gear of your van. On our last trip however we managed to break one and had to call upon the spare, which was bolted to the chassis of the van. Having ready access to a replacement took all the anguish out of the situation. There are plenty of places on route to have such a thing fitted, but getting hold of the right size and type of unit is the difficult. Get the boys at the workshop to fit one under your van when it is in for next service. It's peace of mind when you don't use it and very satisfying when you do. (Don't forget to take some spare U-Bolts too!)

Usage pattern of items in Tom & Doreen's Caravan

We have developed a process/routine that works for us. Your own list will grow and change over time.

Items Used **Every Stop**

- Outdoor Matting
- Wheel Chocks
- Leg Beds
- Power Lead
- Chemical Toilet
- Hot Water Service
- Long Matches
- A-Frame Level
- Sullage Hose
- Shower Footwear

Items Used **Most Stops**

- Clothes Airer
- Fantastic Hatch/Vent
- Folding Table
- Folding Chairs
- Mains Pressure Hose
- Bed Lights
- Happy Hour Nibbles

Items Used **Some Stops**

- Wheel Wedges
- 2nd Power Lead
- Folding Steps
- 12 Volt Lighting
- Roll Out Awning
- Card Games
- Computer E-Mails
- TV/Radio
- Mobile Phone

Items Used **On Road**

- Level Rides
- Mirrors
- Friction Sway Control
- Log Book
- Drink Bottle
- Travel Sweets
- Hema Road Atlas
- Local Tourist Information
- Tapes/CD's
- Cleaning Rags
- Pre Cut Lunch
- Morning Tea Basket
- Thermos
- Wet Weather Gear
- Hats
- Notebook & Pen

Some more brief points from our last trip into far North Queensland

- On occasions road works or an accident can create a long line of traffic. Pull off the road at an appropriate area and have a cuppa. Let the "Mob" disappear (usually quicker than you think) and then resume comfortably.
- Where there is a choice of highway the Inland route will usually be quieter, making more comfortable travelling.
- Queensland have many raised bitumen roads with significant drop a-ways into the gravel. Reduce speed and ensure your car side mirror clearly shows the position of the caravan wheels in relation to the road edge.
- Fantastic Vents/Turbo Vents are consistently used in the tropics for climate control.
- Turn off your 12 volt pump to travel
- Know your fuel range with the van attached
- Queensland rest areas are smaller and less publicised than we are used to.
- Cooktown access is adequate for Caravans
- A water bottle in the car is an essential item.
- Talk to Greg or Ed about the Fantastic Hatch and Turbo Vent. These two 12 volt products are large reversable fan blade hatches with thermostats and variable speeds. They are a great asset to warm climate control without the expense of an air conditioner.



Important accessories for your caravan: Check the list.

✓	Outdoor Matting	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
✓	Sullage Hose	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
✓	Mains Pressure Hose	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
✓	Level Wedge	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)
✓	Anti Theft Lock	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.	\$32.50
✓	Wheel Chocks	Light weight and strong blocks for positive & safe parking on a hill.	\$9 each
✓	Two Way Level	An accurate and easy to use level indicator. Screw it to your a-Frame.	\$10 each
✓	Coupling Mates	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 \$55
✓	Hitch Pin Lock	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
✓	Vanguard Polish	Puts a protective shine on aluminium that beautifies and protects. Especially good for revitalising old surfaces and making them shine!	\$15 per 350ml bottle
✓	Hema Road Atlas	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



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