



In Deep with Brian Poole*

And I just thought it was a senior's moment . .

Bought myself a box trailer on Ebay. I am very pleased with it. Good price, good condition, helpful seller and pick-up half an hour's drive away.

After I had used it for 3 months it developed a slow leak in one tyre. No problem: just put the spare wheel on and fixes the problem. Ten minutes work at the most, so I shall leave it till just before I need the trailer.

I have just sold my home with a large workshop and moved into a waterside home unit with my boat on the beach outside. A lot of my tools went up to my daughter's farm at Bellingen NSW and I carefully selected the tools I will need for my much smaller, new workshop, including a good hydraulic jack and a wheel spanner that I checked fitted the trailer wheel nuts. One never learns, and there is a bit of a risk taker in all of us, but the risk level was very low in this case.

So I needed the trailer

yesterday, and set about changing the wheel. I knew I had the jack and correct spanner. Then the trouble started. The wheel nuts had not have been off for years and were too tight to unwind with the cross type wheel spanner.

No problem - shall spray with WD40 and get the two foot length of inch and a half diameter steel waterpipe. "Give me a lever long enough, and I shall move the world . ." an old Greek gentleman was known to have said.

Where was this ever handy piece of kit? Up at Bellingen, of course. So I hunt around in the near empty material box and

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find a foot length of two inch alloy scaffolding tube, that was, in my lone opinion, too good to chuck out. You know the type, 'come in handy, some day'. Off came the nuts, and I prepare to jack up the trailer.

Now one thing my father told me is never throw out old bricks, you never know when you will need them. However, when you have a wife and three daughters this valuable knowledge falls on deaf ears. Now I needed a couple of bricks and remembered the dozen or so under the old house that I was not game

enough to bring to the unit. I had bought a few three inch wood blocks. You never know when you will need them. But these were not sufficient. So off I go to scrounge around, and luckily in the storeroom area, where the residents stow their sailing gear, were four bricks. Neatly stored in a way that these special bits of kit deserve to be.

Jack up the trailer, take off the loose nuts, and off comes the wheel. By now the job had taken half an hour. Spare tyre had plenty of air, so on it goes? Oops!! I seem to have a problem. I am unable to align the holes.

My senior's mind quickly summed up the situation. The trailer had no brakes, so the hub was free to turn. Every time I offered the wheel to align the studs with the holes, the hub turned as well. My mind ticks over; this is a problem I shall always have, best that I find a solution now.

But there was no easy solution.

I tried the old boat-shaft trick. Put a stilton on the shaft to stop the propeller turning the shaft and the gearbox. This would not work as the wheel went well over the hub. So there was only one solution. Put additional support under the trailer and get someone else to put the wheel on while I climbed under and held the hub.

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So after a lot of persuasion, I get my daughter to put on a throw-away pair of overalls, and climb under the trailer to hold the hub. I set up a spot light to see the studs

clearly and when I offer the wheel up all became obvious under bright lights.

The spare wheel had different wheel centres, and would never fit.

Now this was no big deal, only time was lost, and as part of the deal with my daughter, I ended up looking after my grandson the rest of the day. Nothing is free in this world. However if it was a piece of kit on a boat and was needed in a hurry, you would want it to work. A bilge pump with no handle, flares out of their use by date, EPIRB with a flat battery, no spare globes for the navigation lights, etc.

Only boaters understand this. It is what mucking about on your boat is all about. Non boaters think we are just getting stuck into the rum and coke, but you and I know that it is useless explaining to these people what we're doing, when their risk analysis extends no further than to subscribing to their Motor Association Road Service membership.

Yes, boating is another world.

F&B

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