

G'day Peter,

It's been some time since I last emailed you, I hope you're well and holding on through these difficult times.

Since we last chatted I have been spending time modifying my Dunbier trailer (bought new in 2005) making it a better proposition for long distance (freeway) application. I have fitted a load-levelling kit with my local welding bloke fitting the cross member for me.

The difference in towing characteristics for the car and trailer is enormous. The car has lost the urge to "float around" when driven on uneven roads, feels like it now brakes more on all four wheels. Easy to do, very inexpensive, (gotta love ebay!) well worth the investment.

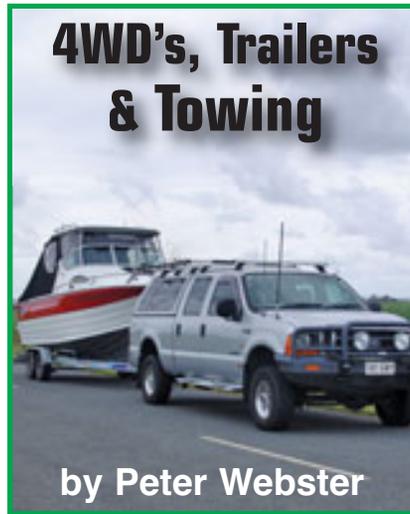
The next project has been to address the brake setup on the trailer. The trailer itself is a 2005 Dunbier tandem trailer, set up on 13inch rims with a 1999kg ATM. The dealership packaged the trailer up with cable actuated brakes to one axle. I've since removed the cable arrangement, and set the unit up with 4 wheel hydraulic over-ride brakes. The difference in normal day to day driving is significantly better. In an emergency braking scenario, the difference is less noticeable. I guess both these systems work okay up to a point.

So after ordering a copy of *Trailers, Towing & Rooftopping* from you, I read with great interest your article on manufacturers/dealership advisory weight issues concerning BMT and real life towing weight. My advisory weight was given as 1760kgs. Curiosity got the better of me today, and I parked the BMT on a public weighbridge. The overall weight was exactly 2,000kgs. This included a full tank of fuel, anchor and safety gear, but not much else.

By the time we throw all the usual gear in the boat for our regular trip down to the holiday house, we'll be well and truly over the 2,000kgs shut off point that then requires a breakaway system to be incorporated into the braking system

The people at Dunbier are keen to sell me the Hydrastar braking system. I was wondering if you have any history with this setup and what your thoughts are.

With the trailer now set up with fully



About Brakes & Tyres Perishing

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plumbed 4 wheel hydraulic brakes, I guess it's a matter of working out what will be best to power them.

On another note, I have noticed in recent times, a vibration that runs through the trailer when I first tow the trailer after it's been sitting around for a few weeks. It usually goes away after 3 or 4 km. Is this likely to be the tyres? And if so, is this a sign that my tyres should be replaced? They outwardly appear to be roadworthy.

Many thanks again for your contribution to the boating industry,
Regards,
Ross Ploughman

Ross, I'd stay with the Hydrastar system mainly because the Dunbier people are familiar with it - and that's half the battle. The Hydrastar system has earned a good rep over the last few years, and the readers with it, all speak well of it.

We first used it some years ago when we towed a big Signature 702 Sportsbridge to Hinchinbrook – and

the brakes were superb over the whole 3,750 km journey.

The vibration you feel off the trailer when you take off after the trailer has been sitting around, is almost certainly the tyres.

Depending on several factors (tyre age, load, ambient temperatures, storage location, etc) it is often a reminder to check the air pressure in those tyres whilst still cold - and before you take off down the freeway - as well as having them carefully checked for signs of perishing.

We recently junked what appeared to be a perfectly good set of Dunlop Adventurers as they had perished to the extent they were quite dangerous, and I tell you what, I've been looking at trailer tyres for decades, and hadn't noticed the deterioration in the tyres.

Typically, we were focussed on tread wear (which was almost non-existent) and looking for tell tales like blisters in the tyre walls - obvious stuff, lay people like ourselves can pick up.

Trailer tyres are one of the most ignored features of our boats and boating. Until recently, even "new" trailers were commonly sold with second hand tyres, retreads were common, and u-beaut tyres imported from China were the norm. Nobody cared, until they let go, and then it was just bad luck, eh?

Even how the rig is parked impacts on the tyres, and we never gave it a second's thought - but the trailer tyres on the sunny side of the lean-to, carport or garden where it was parked, expanded and contracted every day at a different rate to those over on the shady side next to the wall

Tyres do have "memory" and if the rig just sits there for weeks, the tyres are a bit down, the rubber is starting to go "off" - the tyres will actually flatten on the bottom, and it can take several kilometres to warm them up and 'roll' the shape back into them.

Obviously, this needs to be done carefully . . . and yes, I would take another look at the tyre pressures, and the integrity of the tyres insofar as their ability to retain the pressure and the possibility of them perishing.

Hope this will provide a better perspective on those tyres !

F&B