

DUMP THE TRAILER

 by Glen Everett

Ballooning is a participation sport; it requires crew and passengers, not just to enjoy the experience but to help pack the bloomin' thing away. Anyway in the desire for self-sufficient ballooning and more adrenalin, a cloud-hopper was purchased in this household. No-one mentioned the inherent drawback of just throwing the thing in the boot and setting off in to the sunrise. The fan. Small ones seem expensive, if not unobtainable, second hand. Petrol-driven leaf blowers were tried but only managed to half fill the envelope. So the trusty 5hp was carried smelling of petrol in the boot - the dog didn't complain too much, he was promoted to the cleaner side of the dog guard.

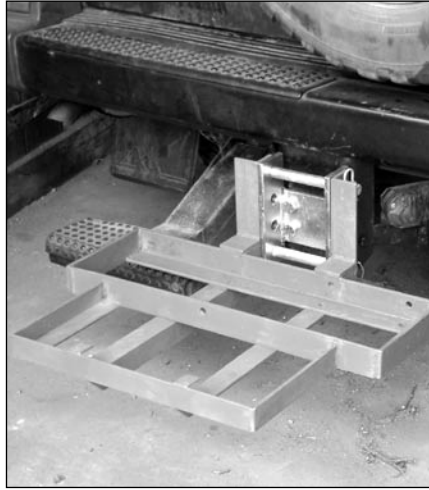
Something had to be done. A plan was hatched or, rather, an advert was spotted in a Landrover magazine. It was a platform on the rear of a 90 carrying a hay bale and it sparked off some ideas.

See www.hitchlugger.co.uk and www.droponcarriers.co.uk for what is commercially available.

They both seemed too big for what I wanted (and more expensive than I could afford) - and I wanted something that would not take up too much space in the garage.

The criteria were : Cheap. Small. Suitable to do the job. Easily removable.

An adjustable tow hitch seemed to be the best idea; remove the hitch and fit the tray, simple as removing a pin.....10 seconds.



Dixon Bate are the industry standard name, but Witter also make a bolt-on version that fits existing tow-bars with four holes and theirs are a lot cheaper. Also www.towbarwarehouse.co.uk (01738 627272) do them for only £67 inc. delivery next day. The pins and two inch hole spacing is the same for either and they are interchangeable.

A bit of welding with some two inch angle and the results are shown in the photo. It has been tested to 200kg, well above the nose weight limit on a Landrover of 75kg. It has also been used to transport a Cameron Voyager folding basket. The legal implications have been investigated. Between a one and two metre overhang, you must ensure the end is clearly visible, between two and 31/2m , a marker board must be fitted and illuminated at night



(overhanging load triangle red with white stripes as seen on steel RSJ delivery lorries) More than that, and an attendant must be carried and police must be notified two days prior, so if you are stopped with your 16pax TT basket on the rear don't tell me you weren't warned!

A lightboard and number plate is needed if either are obscured, but a fan is narrow enough to easily fit between the lights.

Galvanising the tray would really finish the job off. Beyond that it doesn't require any further explanation. More specific drawings are available via the editor if required. Ask her about the folding moped, too. 