

TRAILER SECURITY

By Glen Everett

In most cases trailers are stolen not for the contents but for the £200 the thieves get for them in the local 'free-ads' papers. So this article looks at ways to protect your trailer.



The Mule digs into the ground and acts as an anchor

The popular Bradley double lock with its built-in lock or long shackle padlock through a hole is easily bypassed by a thief who can simply tow away the trailer on a hook or towball that has had its rear-end ground off. This can be prevented by a lockable enclosed box around the coupling, see <www.sasproducts.co.uk>. Alternatively try a lockable device which inserts and grips into the coupling. If you have a lockable coupling, try simply cutting the ball off an old hitch and inserting that.

Some of the more modern, larger trailers have a removable wiring lead. You could make up a replacement with all the leads connected together which, when inserted by the thief, will blow the fuses on the car as soon as the indicators, lights or brakes are used. Just remember to swap this back again before you go off! Those of you with a fixed wiring lead can knock up a hidden switch connecting the earth wire (white) to the stoplight wire (red).

If you are skilled in welding, you can weld your postcode into the chassis, especially if you don't already have a chassis number on the trailer. An extra measure would be to paint your postcode on to the roof — a move that can also help the pilot spot when the retrieve has sneaked off for a swift half. A piece of stout chain

► certificates available for inspection.

Please act quickly to beat the booking deadline — you must book and pay by 30th April. Neil Gabriel, email: <Neil.Gabriel@topaz.co.uk>

WASPS AND WITCHES

If your home is geared up with digital TV or NTL, don't miss this programme on 23 April at 9pm on the Discovery Wings channel. *Wasps and Witches* tells the story of the forgotten female pilots of the second world war.

They played many roles: the British Air Transport Auxiliary and the American WASPs (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) were responsible for the delivery of vital warplanes to the front line and flew air ambulances.

The Russian female pilots, nicknamed the Night Witches by the German airforce, went one step further, into battle alongside their male colleagues.

The Night Witches flew

many brave missions. One of the most successful was Lily Litvak, also known as the White Rose of Stalingrad. Lily was a beauty who proved her dog-fighting skills over and over again. She shot down 12 Nazi aircraft, but her notoriety was her downfall and on her last mission, in July 1942, eight Messerschmidts concentrated their attack on her plane. She was shot down and her body was never found.

The programme features interviews with some of these amazing women and their former commanders. The men talk freely about their horror at the thought of training women to fight in the skies and the admiration they later developed for their courageous female fighters.

Sadly, not all men felt this — one of the more shocking facts revealed is that at least two WASPs were killed because their fuel had been contaminated with sugar.

This documentary combines interviews with archive

footage to show that these women are the forgotten girl-power icons of the century.

Big Beds Flyout

A mass flyout is being planned in Bedfordshire from the giant Cardington hangars towards the end of the summer. The idea is that as many balloons as possible come along on the first flyable weekend slot between 31 August and 29 September and take part in a mass launch.

The event is being organised by Robert Cross who says it's a grass roots flyout, by balloonists for balloonists. There will be no commercial or sponsorship hype and there won't even be hoards of people as there will be no publicity outside ballooning circles.

Cardington, as well as being part of our airship heritage, offers plenty of space and not too many SAs. All pre-registered pilots will be emailed a day or two in advance once a suitable flying opportunity is

identified. For those not on email, a telephone information service will operate. Interested pilots should contact Robert Cross on <robxballoon@hotmail.com>.

DEEP SOUTH

Kentish balloonists are organising a full programme of events for the coming months. A Fun Day on Sunday, 21 April involving hovercraft or quad bikes and a barbecue will culminate in a flyout from Headcorn aerodrome, weather permitting.

On 3 June pilots and crew will join in the Golden Jubilee celebrations with a nightglow along the Pilgrim's Way. On 12 June, PuTs and newcomers will meet up for a groundschool evening with flyout if possible, and on August Bank Holiday a balloon meet is planned as part of Headcorn's 75th Anniversary celebrations. For any information regarding Windbags, contact Janet Williams on 01622 880584.

(minimum half-inch thick links) around an immovable pillar or piece of steel buried in the ground is also a good idea.

If you have room for a car battery in the trailer, try fitting a standard car alarm with a shock sensor. But be sure to securely fit the battery into a sturdy box, as you will need to take it out and charge it every couple of months, or wire it to the grey caravan socket if you have one and then you can charge it on the move.

A unique security device is the mule, permanently fitted to the trailer chassis. This clever device works like a ground anchor — spring loaded with a force of 150kg, it digs in and lifts one side of the trailer into the air if driven away. It takes just 30 seconds to deploy. Contact <ed.ellis@ams-holdings.com> or 01257 423666.

The Tiredeflator is one of the most ingenious gadgets I have seen. It has a special replacement valve cap that screws on with an Allen key. The unit then fits over this cap and is locked in place with a built-in lock. Fitting takes 15 seconds. It takes two seconds to remove or refit.

How does it work? Well, it has a weight which releases the air from the valve core when the wheel rotates. Any attempt to remove the deflator by force will damage the valve and again deflate the tyre.

It deflates an average trailer tyre in about half a mile, although it took 2 miles or more for a Land Rover tyre, the exact rate being dependent on size and pressure. You just have to remember to remove it yourself before driving off. If you carry a spare, it is recommended that you use locking wheel nuts to prevent the thieves using that instead. Twin axle trailers need to use two Tiredeflators fitted on the *same* side, although for the price (£25) it would not harm to use as many as possible. Contact <www.tiredeflator.com> or Compass group on 01481 239077.

Wheel clamps are probably the best visual deterrent. Bulldog make some of the best industry-rated models and their DC range is specially designed for trailer-sized wheels. A small degree of self assembly is needed the first time you use it to get the snug fit to your trailer but, once that is completed, it is then probably one of the fastest and easiest wheel clamps I have used. It costs around £85 but for only £10 more you can get their Norwich Union-approved Titan range, which is fiddly to fit but built like the proverbial out-house and seems to resist everything including boltcroppers. See the website at <www.bulldogsecure.com> or telephone 01952 728171.

If you have a product you would like featured, contact Under test at the editor's address (complete balloons or foreign holidays most welcome! -Ed)



The hitchbox encloses the coupling head and bolts and can be used also while the vehicle is attached.



The Tiredeflator is easy to fit and, being yellow, it is highly visible deterrent



The expandable hitchlock is seen here sitting on the Bradley triple lock, which has an in-built coupling head lock and shear bolts to prevent the coupling head being unbolted



The DC, left, easy fit clamp and the Titan, right, fiddly but highly secure