

## A bit of a fix



**Q** I have a car and caravan outfit that is more than 12m long and intend holidaying in Spain sometime this year. I am advised that Spanish regulations for vehicle combinations over this length require the attachment of one long or two small aluminium boards to the back of my caravan? How do I attach these to the back of my caravan?

**A** Apart from the obvious general requirements that they must be securely attached and not cause damage to the caravan, here are a few suggestions that may be helpful:

■ **Permanent attachment** – you could use a building adhesive; make absolutely sure that the boards are held securely in exactly the right place while the glue sets. Self-tapping screws or pop rivets could be used, but both of these would mean piercing the skin of the caravan, with consequent risk of water ingress problems if the holes are not effectively sealed.

■ **Semi-permanent attachment** – a sealant/adhesive (as commonly used in caravan construction) would provide a secure fixing. In principle the boards could then (with some considerable care) be removed using a knife or preferably a wire cutter. A solvent could be used to remove the residual adhesive. A narrow bead of adhesive around the periphery of the board would significantly ease subsequent removal.

■ **Temporary attachment** – if there are any suitable attachment points, strapping the boards on using nylon cable ties would be a pretty secure and relatively tamper-resistant option. Double-sided adhesive foam strips or adhesive Velcro should work, with any glue residue probably being removable with care. Velcro is less tamper-resistant, of course.



# Spring into action

**Q** As winter draws to an end I am eager to prepare my caravan for the new season. I wonder if the Club could give me some advice?

**A** Road salt can have a detrimental effect on the chassis, brakes, steadies and electrical or gas piping of a caravan. As a result, vehicles of all ages towed in conditions where road salt has been used should be washed down.

Any holes made in the chassis will create an entry underneath the galvanising process. Unfortunately, CRIS security numbering for caravans manufactured from 1992 onwards, where the 17-character VIN number is stamped into the chassis draw bar member after being assembled, can disrupt the protection. It is important to inspect this part of the chassis and use a rust inhibitor if necessary.

Any winding mechanisms (eg those associated with jockey wheels and corner steadies) should be cleaned off and lightly oiled or greased – do not use excessive grease as it can attract dirt and grit.

Brake adjustment should be carried out annually, following the recommendations set down in the

chassis manufacturer's handbook. Remember, a regular service by a competent engineer will prolong the life of a caravan, keep it safe and enhance its value. Go to [approvedworkshops.co.uk](http://approvedworkshops.co.uk) for a list of Approved Workshops in your area.

The tread on caravan tyres will seldom wear out but long periods standing idle will cause sidewall deterioration and the Club recommends that, even if it still looks good, five years is a tyre's recommended safe working life – seven the absolute maximum.

Check around all seams for signs of sealant failure and, if possible, use a damp detector inside the caravan to double-check for problems.

Wash the caravan frequently, particularly if it has been kept under a carport, where rain cannot wash off any corrosive elements from the air; use special caravan cleaner or car shampoo – not domestic cleaning products which are too harsh.

Before bringing the water system back into use, it should be cleaned using one of the proprietary makes of steriliser on the market – those used

for wine/beer making are acceptable. Follow the instructions carefully, but remember that certain chemicals can react adversely with metal. For more comprehensive information about cleansing of water containers, pipes and related equipment, as well as other maintenance matters, download a copy of the Information Department's leaflet *Take care of your caravan* from [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk). Click on 'Practical advice', followed by 'Download them now!' in the box headed 'Technical leaflets'. Alternatively, send a SAE addressed to the Information Department at the Club's head office with your request for a copy.

### TREAD CAREFULLY?

**Q** Are tread patterns important on caravan tyres?

**A** Although tread pattern affects wet-weather grip, noise and high-speed handling, none of these is particularly relevant to a caravan. In the case of car tyres, however, you should take the advice of the vehicle manufacturer, your dealer or specialist tyre fitter.

**Jenny Norton, the Club's Information Officer, answers your questions**

Please address your questions to:

**JENNY NORTON**  
Information Department, The Caravan Club,  
East Grinstead House, East Grinstead, West  
Sussex RH19 1UA

**...and quote your membership number**