Towing our 1968 Husky on an A-frame

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First the Disclaimer: The following describes the system I have used to tow our Husky on an A-frame. None of the mechanical or legal aspects have been checked by experts and no warranty or responsibility for the system is suggested or accepted by myself. I have no connection with Towtal.

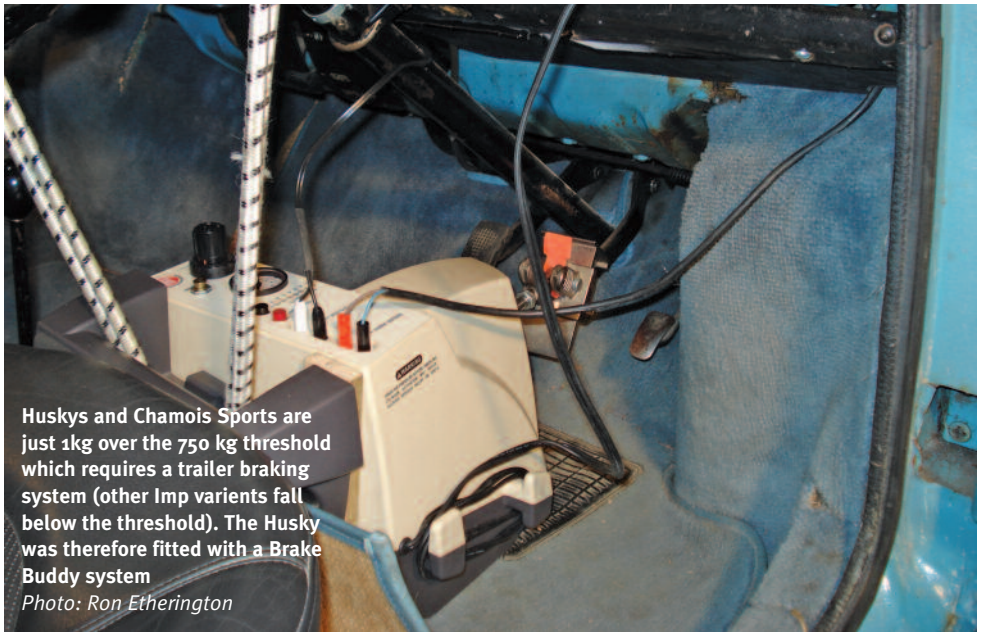
Our Husky was in one family ownership until 2000 and was used for social and commercial purposes delivering Sunday newspapers around Peterborough.

We have taken vintage cars to the Chatsworth Country Fair for many years and the newspaper delivery work of the Husky allows us to enter it in the Commercial Vehicle class, which in turn allows us to camp on site in our motorhome and also enter our 1934 Sunbeam Dawn in the Car display. To avoid multiple trips to get all vehicles to Chatsworth I wanted to tow the Husky behind the motorhome while my wife Marion drives the Sunbeam.

We tow a Ford Ka behind our motorhome on an A frame but when I borrowed a system to bolt onto the Husky it was a disaster from the first turn out of our driveway when the steering did not centre and ran over to the opposite full lock and then oscillated from lock to lock. Talking to other A-frame users at an Imp National they reported minor issues which required them to slow down until the steering stabilised after a sharp turn but I was not happy to risk a problem on the road so I started to look for ways to damp the steering (the Ka has power steering so when towing it is well damped) and although there are shock absorber style dampers fitted to various to vehicles I could not find anything that would fit between the suspension arms and the steering rack or control arms. To increase the self-centring of system I attached stretch straps (bungy straps) to each steering wheel spoke and took these to a mounting bar fitted between the seat runners. This loads up the steering as the wheels follow the motorhome and applies a strong self-centring as the lock comes off. This has proved successful at the tightest lock I can apply from the motorhome and stable at motorway speeds.

Self-centring bungee cords
Photo: Ron Etherington

The Husky is listed with a kerb weight of 761 kg and UK law requires any trailer (and a towed Husky is technically a 'trailer') over 750 kg to have a braking system (Note: The Chamois Sport is listed at 751 kg while all other variants are listed as below 750 kg in my Rootes *Workshop Manual*), but how much weight have we all added with different seats, servos, stereos, etc and – dare I say it – body filler?



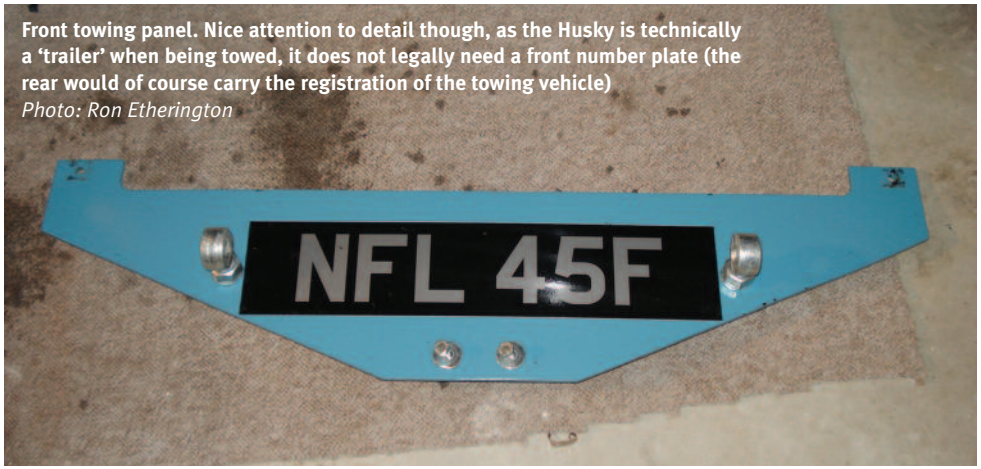
Huskys and Chamois Sports are just 1kg over the 750 kg threshold which requires a trailer braking system (other Imp varients fall below the threshold). The Husky was therefore fitted with a Brake Buddy system
Photo: Ron Etherington

The traditional trailer braking system has an overrun coupling at the tow ball which pulls a cable attached to the back of the brake pedal, but for our Ka we have a pneumatic system known as a Brake Buddy because we could not get the traditional cable around the AC system. The Brake Buddy sits on the floor with the pneumatic arm clamped to the brake pedal and the system is pressurised via an internal pump powered from the battery of the Husky.

An accelerometer in the system reacts when the motorhome brakes (going forwards or backwards) and applies a proportional force to the brake pedal of the Husky (the sensitivity and force of the braking can be adjusted on the Brake Buddy). A transmitter sends a signal to the motorhome to confirm when the brakes are applied and if the tow system fails an emergency brake application is provided via a break-away cable and switch (on the front of the Husky) connected to the Brake Buddy.

The A frame I borrowed attached to the Husky via the 5/16" bumper bolts but the

Inner bumper mount
Photo: Ron Etherington



Front towing panel. Nice attention to detail though, as the Husky is technically a 'trailer' when being towed, it does not legally need a front number plate (the rear would of course carry the registration of the towing vehicle)
Photo: Ron Etherington

mounting system on our Ka uses much heavier fixings (the Ka weighs approx 960 kg) so I decided to make a towing plate from 6 mm steel which fits to the bumper bolts and the front wishbone centre mount . The bumper mounting bolts are now fitted from inside the car with thread-

Modified front wishbone mounting ready to accept...
Photo: Ron Etherington

...front towing panel
Photo: Ron Etherington

lock compound and 'top hat' spacers which spread the load beyond the welded nut and then the towing plate is fitted (with the bumper) using two nuts on each bolt. The lower wishbone bolts are fitted with the threads facing forwards and the nut replaced with custom-made con-

necting pieces (which have the 3/8" female thread in each end) fitted using threadlock compound. The lower fitting is completed with 3/8" bolts, each with two nuts and lock washers so that the plate is restrained from forwards or backwards movement. I intend to use spacer tubes in place of the double nuts, but have not made these yet.

Two eye bolts are mounted to the towing plate (via welded nuts on the rear) matching the width of our Ka A-frame which fits via a solid bar with a spring pin and padlock as retention.

A standard 7-pin trailer connector is used for the lighting and indicators connected to the wiring at the front of the Husky, while the brake light connection is run through the gearchange tunnel to the brake light switch on the hydraulics at the rear.

A magnetic number plate is fitted to the tow plate so that the Husky can be driven with the plate fitted, and when towed a clip-on rear number plate with towing triangles is used.

The turning circle of the Imp is much tighter than our motorhome resulting in only small movements of the Husky steering being required to follow accurately and there has not been any tendency for the wheels to oscillate as experienced without the stretch straps centring the steering.

I have a drawing of the towing plate available if anybody wants a copy (just e-mail me on ronaldeth@btinternet.com) but cannot guarantee perfect alignment to the mounting points of your car though it was good enough for our Husky.

The A-frame and Brake Buddy are about ten years old but Towtal in Stoke-on-Trent still supply and fit similar towing systems.

Husky all ready to be hitched up to the towing vehicle
Photo: Ron Etherington