



LEST WE FORGET

2020 Engine Rally and Mack Truck Muster – what a year to remember!!!

Unfortunately we had to cancel our event due to coronavirus.

Thank-you to the members who had worked on, and planned, for our rally and truck muster.

Twelve months of work down the drain and some of our finances to go with it, but it could have been worse.

I hope we all stay safe as we start looking towards our 2021 Rally and Truck Muster

Happy Birthday to our April and May born members.

We hope you all have a beautiful birthday and many happy returns.



April		May	
Phil Adams	2	Mia Thomson	2
Victoria Laffan	3	Andrew Mackay	7
Eddie Buxton	8	Michael Thomson	10
Laura Thomson	11	Hugh Freeman	9
Ned Fletcher	16	Joyce Cheong	18
Trevor Thompson	30	Blake Thomson	19
		Adam Thomson	25

War Time Travel Less Than Luxurious

Travelling from Melbourne to Darwin is easy these days. Just hop on a plane and a few hours later you're there. But during World War 2 the journey took more than a week.

Sgt David Davis made the trip from Spencer Street railway station to the Northern Territory in the mid-summer heat of December 1942, along with 200 other RAAF men and 200 AIF. The journey was not without incidents, both humorous and serious. Having passed through Ballarat and Horsham they had breakfast in the south Australian show grounds, for the third meal in a row, it was stew. The following are some excerpts from his diary.

- *Hot shower was good. Wonder if it is the last for some time. Issued with beer coupons at 6d each. We could not find any girls.*

After breakfast the next morning the journey continued.

- *A crate of Orlando was stolen from one of the hotels. A kit inspection was held before we left to find out who had it. A search revealed three glasses. Your guess is as good as mine where it is. Like looking for a needle in a hay stack. Twelve bottles among 200 Air Force and 200 AIF.*

At Maree the train stopped again.

- *Not a blade of grass to be seen. Yet the inevitable pub It has been raining and the ground is red and sloppy and flat as a pancake.*

Later that day they reached Coward Springs.

- *Opposite this spring is a pub. It is not popular with the boys as it has run dry though God knows how anything can stay damp in this cauldron. Outside the train the ground is positively spawning with empty cans, rusty and abandoned though when we move on bright new ones will be added to their number. We sight our first skeleton. Strange as it seems on the side of the line there are strips of greenest grass you ever saw. Indications of a storm that broke over this area a week ago. The drovers avail themselves of these strips for nourishment for sheep. As far as the eye can see is gravel, sand, saltbush, mulga and utter desolation.*

The following day they came upon a goods train.

- *A goods train has been visited by some of the chaps and pears are being eaten. G. among others were given rifles and detailed to guard the goods train. Each was armed with a tin-opener and the salmon stocks mysteriously disappeared through the night.*

When they finally reached the military camp just outside Alice Springs a week after leaving Spencer Street, the showers were barely working.

- *We wash as best we can. Our seats were booked in one of the two theatres here. It does seem funny to pay 9d entertainment tax. Don Ameche in 'Down Argentine Way'.*

They left Alice Springs by truck, part of a large convoy which had a top speed of 20mph.

- *Hot as hot as hell with flies that bit and drew blood and water unpalatable.*

Sgt Davis spent the next 15 months at Birdum with 105 Radar Station. The threat of Japanese air attacks was continuous.

On 12th January 1943 Davis wrote in his diary;

- *A beautiful moon directly above. Every feature of landscape stands out sharply. A good morning for bombing. I go on duty at 12pm i.e. 23.59. I cannot sleep before this hour This morning I know we will be visited by the Nips. The bets are on. Suddenly from Fighter Section comes advice to cover a certain point (with a radar). I do the plotting. It's on. Extra ops garnered out of their beds take over. Out by the 'doover' (radar scanner) I watch meters, yarn to CO while above all that can be seen is a beautiful moon, an iridescent sea and fairy-like trees in silhouette against the brightness. The searchlights have picked up the raider. We hear our night fighters droning overhead as they gain altitude. Near to moon is white condensation from aircraft props. It now becomes film and disappears. The searchlights hold the Japs in their beams. The hostile aircraft is surrounded by red flashes and a time elapses before we hear the crack of ack-ack. They drop no bombs and sheer off to sea. We all go back to routine boredom.*

Two months later there was a major raid.

How BP Nearly Never Existed

BP is the world's fifth-largest oil company, turning over \$303.7B in 2018 and producing 4.1 million barrels of oil per day.

One of the petrochemical industry's 'supermajors', BP was once perilously close to never existing at all.

The story has its beginnings in the small Central Queensland town of Mount Morgan, just South of Rockhampton – specifically with one William Knox D'Arcy.

D'Arcy was born on 11 October 1849 in Newtown Abbot, England, moving to Rockhampton with his family in 1866, and qualifying as a solicitor in 1872.

D'Arcy did well speculating in land and gold stocks, buying significant portions of land around the Rockhampton area. This included a portion of approximately 23 acres in the Parish of Gracemere (the modern-day town of Gracemere) in 1870 ...

... over 145 acres in the Parish of Murchison (the modern Rockhampton suburbs of Norman Gardens and Kawana) in 1880 ...

... and 1873 acres in the Parish of Fitzroy (near The Caves) in 1883.

D'Arcy began his involvement with mining in 1882 when three brothers – Fred, Edwin and Thomas Morgan – pegged out claims at Ironstone Mountain (later renamed Mount Morgan).

Unable to raise sufficient funds to exploit the claim, they approached bank manager T.S. Hall, and on suggestion also approached William Pattison and D'Arcy – the three men forming a syndicate which would eventually become the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Co. in 1886 (after the Morgan brothers sold their interests in 1883).

D'Arcy's venture into mining made him a millionaire, his social ambitions leading him to return to England permanently in 1887, purchasing Middlesex mansion Stanmore Hall, as well as a townhouse in London.

The opportunity to apply his acumen – and wealth – to a new business venture came in 1900 when former British minister to Teheran Sir Henry Drummond Wolff approached D'Arcy with a proposal to invest in oil exploration in Persia (modern-day Iran).

In 1901 D'Arcy obtained the D'Arcy Concession – a sixty-year contract giving him exclusive rights to explore, obtain, and sell oil over a territory of around 1,242,000 square kilometres (around three-quarters of Persia). And exploration began.

Two years and £150,000 later, no oil had been found. D'Arcy was forced to mortgage his Mount Morgan stock to continue exploration.

Word spread that D'Arcy's concession was for sale. He received an offer for his rights on 20 May 1908 from the British-owned Burmah Oil Company, in return for 170,000 shares in the company and a payment to cover previous expenses. D'Arcy accepted the offer.

With no hope in sight, the company sent a telegram to engineer George B. Reynolds, ordering him to “cease work, dismiss the staff, dismantle anything worth the cost of transporting to the coast for re-shipment, and come home.” Fortunately, Reynolds delayed. Just six days later, on 26 May 1908, he struck oil, unearthing the world’s largest oilfield.

Burmah Oil later formed the subsidiary Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), of which D’Arcy was a board member of until his death on 1 May 1917. The company, after changing its name to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1935, went on to be renamed British Petroleum in 1954.

So, next time you fill your car up at a BP service station, spare a thought for William Knox D’Arcy, the former Rockhampton local whose entrepreneurial success at Mt Morgan would help establish today’s global oil industry.

Rally reports

Lost Trades Fair – Bendigo – 7th & 8th March

If you enjoy people watching, then this is the place to be because you will have about 10,000 people to watch each day, about 20,000 all up.

If you don’t enjoy crowds, then find something else to do on this weekend.

Luckily we arrived at about 1pm, after having our lunch prior to getting to the Bendigo show grounds, because the lines at the food and coffee stalls were enormous, and there were a lot of people leaving at this time as well. Unfortunately the food stalls are the first things that you have to go through to be able to get to the lost trade stalls. So it was pretty much hip and shoulder and a lot of patience to be able to get through the first bit. Once past the food area it opened up to the lovely grassed area where the lost trade stalls were. They were really well laid out with plenty of room but unfortunately there were so many people trying to look at the stalls that you either had to stand on tip toe, push in or just take a peek through a bit of a gap, or just move on to the next stall. As the afternoon progressed it became a lot easier to see everything as a great many of the spectators had left, thank goodness. There was some really interesting old machinery doing a lot of the trades. Things like old sewing machines with knobs underneath to turn for embroidery, peddle wood saws for doing fret work, an ingenious ‘thing’ for doing wood lathe work. This bloke was making wooden puppets and he had a home made lathe made from a couple of tree branches with an elastic cord across the top and it was worked by a wood treadle underneath. Hard to explain but great to watch. They also had the old hand operated printing presses working, the Bendigo Vintage Machinery Group had their chaff cutter going and the wheel wright from Ballarat was there making carriage wheels. Some of the trades included stone walling, pottery, wool spinning, pin striping on machinery, blacksmithing (not as good as our blacksmiths), metalsmiths, coopers, fletchers, leather working, jewellery making, outdoor bush craft skills like basket weaving, candle making, guitar making, cricket bat making, and rope making. It was good to see the rope making because this was done by our friend and long time rally attendee, Fenton Phillips and his family. There was heaps more there to see, too much to mention. Who knew that a ‘fletcher’ is an arrow maker? It was a good afternoon, finishing at about 4 – 4.30pm.

Tat Fest – Sunday 1st March

Pete, Greg, Bruce, Rob and Mike dusted off their engines and stuff and attended this event to do a bit of advertising for our rally and muster. The hosts looked after us pretty well by giving us a shady site, on even ground, with dirt to make banging in the posts easy, but unfortunately we were away from the other exhibits. Our club sign could be seen by the people moving about on the eastern side but only those interested came over for a look. We were able to hand out some flyers for our rally and we had a few people interested in the engines. Although it was pretty quiet we all had a great time together.

Kyabram Vintage Engine Rally and Mack Truck Muster

During the week beginning Monday 9th March, word about the coronavirus and our rally was starting to worry me. Pete, Johnny and I exchanged many text messages about what was happening. On the morning of Friday 13th (a very apt date) I was still hopeful that we would be able to go ahead with the rally and muster, as the Grand Prix was on this weekend and I thought that there would be no way the government would cancel this event, but they did, on that morning. I had heard on the grapevine that the PM was going to make a decision about things concerning coronavirus on the Monday following the grand prix, and I was still hopeful that we would be able to scrape our rally in. Come 4pm on Friday the 13th (that date again) the government decided for us, about what was going to happen to our rally and muster. No public gatherings of over 500 people. Damn, as our last Mack muster had 852 paying spectators on the Saturday, along with all of the truck exhibitors of approximately 200 more, which adds up to over 1,000 people. At this stage Pete and I called the rally off and we called for a committee meeting the following morning to discuss this further.

At this meeting, our Mack boys were still hopeful that they could continue with the muster but once all of the pros and cons were discussed they too decided to cancel the muster. It seems that we were the front runner for cancellations. Unfortunately we copped some flack over social media about our decision but it didn’t take long for all other rallies to follow in our decision. All people who had entered their entry form for the rally, with their phone number on the form, were notified, along with our displayers, caterers, etc. etc. etc.

Luckily we were able to cancel our food orders without any hassles, but unfortunately the Girgarre CFA had already bought 43 dozen eggs for our rally. They were hoping to be able to sell off their eggs to the Girgarre population. (I felt bad) I now need to recoup some of our expenses by selling what had been bought for the rally.

Luckily all of the lamingtons, fruit cake and dim sims have been sold already, the water will still be in date for next year's rally, but unfortunately the soft drink will be out of date by then. Some of the soft drink has been sold but I still have some left to sell. If you are interested, it can be bought for what I paid for it, which was on sale price.

Coke	30's	\$18.00 a slab = 60¢ a can
Lemonade	24's	\$10.50 a slab = 44¢ a can
Orange	24's	\$10.50 a slab
Solo	30's	\$18.00 a slab
Solo	24's	\$10.50 a slab

Please ring Barb on 0439 448444 if you would like to help us recoup some of our costs

Wheat Grading 1943 - 1998

By Rex Wellington, Drumanure (Numurkah area)

In 1943 I purchased a Wheat Grader (a Schumacher) from a local identity. It was a mobile plant on steel wheels drawn by two horses and it would clean about 20 to 25 bags per hour. The first year I graded for about eighteen farmers and cleaned about 1,000 bags of grain.

In 1944 I turned 18 and was old enough to get a drivers licence, so I bought a Chev truck and had the grader mounted on rubber tyres which made my machine a lot more mobile and travelling from farm to farm a lot quicker. I employed a man and put a canopy over the back of the truck and that was where we slept.

My business grew the next few years and in 1948 I decided to buy a bigger machine from Hannaford's in Adelaide, it was a Model M and would clean about 60 bags of grain per hour. I sold the old Schumacher back to the old owners brother, who had a farm in Queensland and cleaned his own grain. From 1948 on, the wheat growing changed, farmers bought tractors and bigger machinery and by the 50's there were not many horse teams left.

In 1960 I bought another Model M machine from Hannaford's and sold my old one to a grader contractor in Birchip.

Around these times I would employ two men in NSW and one in Victoria. The Victorians were better farmers, as they would help you. We travelled a lot, in such districts as Euroa, Nagambie, Murchison, Rushworth, Colbinabbin, Tallygaroopna, Wunghnu, Nathalia, Strathmerton, Tocumwal, Deniliquin, Finley, Jerilderie and Berrigan. There was not much wheat grown in the Goulburn Valley as it was mainly all dairying. We would grade for about 300 to 350 farmers each year, and would grade about 60 thousand bags each year, with December to June being a pretty busy time.

In 1979 farmers were going bulk so I sold my Model M to a farmer at Wycheproof and bought a Model AYE Indented cylinder machine that had a capacity of cleaning 90 bags per hour. It was great, I threw away the bag needles and twine and bought an electric bag closer and employed one man.

Later on I worked the machine by myself, as grain was augured in one end and augured out the other with no bag handling at all. In my 50 years of wheat grading I have had a lot of funny experiences – in 1950- 1960 – 1970, we would sleep under the stars or in the sheds or barns; later on I lived it up – I stay at a motel or hotel. One particular night in the 50's that I remember quite well, I had a Jim working with me and he could not stand mosquitoes. About midnight I heard someone talking, "Bloody mossies, I'll fix the bastards" – I never answered him but wondered what he was going to do, out of the corner of my eye, I watched him get out of bed (no clothes on) and away he went. About an hour later he returned with half a dozen cow pads and getting the better of me I said "Go back to bed you silly ??????" he replied, "can't put up with these little buggers", so he lit a fire and put the cow pads on it. I had to shift as I could not put up with the smell and by this time it was 3am. I woke up at about 5.30am to find Jim's bed near mine. I looked at him; he smiled and said "by hell that stuff stinks."

Another time we were working up at Finley, sleeping under the stars again and we would always have our own water bags nearby (the old hessian ones). I would hang mine up a tree, Jim had his at the head of his bed and at about midnight I heard Chomp! Chomp! Chomp! I got my torch and there was a pig – it wanted a drink too. I yelled at it but it was too late, the water bag was riddled with holes. When I yelled out, Jim woke up; the last I saw was a pig tearing flat out across the yard, and a man with no clothes on, chasing it (I wonder what would have happened if he caught it).

Some grading prices over the years;

1944	It cost tuppence hapenny to grade and pickle a bag
1964	It cost 80 cents to grade and pickle a bag
1998	It cost three dollars and sixty cents to grade and pickle a bag

For Sale

If anyone is interested in what is left of a Petter water cooled engine. It is good for parts and free if you want it.

There is also some air cooled stuff, mostly single cylinder, and they aren't dynamite dear.

If you are interested, please contact Pete on 0403 846412