

Welcome to the October/November issue of our newsletter, The Good Oil.



Happy Birthday to our October and November born members.
We hope you all have a beautiful birthday and many happy returns.

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The Axeman, a Genuine Bush Character

We all know, and love, Doug Rosenow, our sleeper cutter, and there is no doubt that he is a genuine bush character and a piece of living bush history.

Thanks to Norris for sharing this article with us, that he found in the 'small farms' magazine.

Doug Rosenow was a woodcutter, as was his father, as his father before him. But life has changed, caught up with the old world and all its traditions, its lore and its part of the fabric of our national story and the outspoken bushman is sadly watching it all slip away.

Doug's face is a living, breathing piece of bush art. Weathered, tough as teak, eyes permanently creased from a life of squinting into the glaring Australian sunlight, every line etched deep into his face the record of a hard, knockabout life as a woodcutter. His gnarled hands are strong and calloused. As you would expect from a man who has been swinging an axe almost since he was old enough to hold one – and it's a skill passed down through generations of Doug family. His father and his grandfather were sleeper cutters before him but sadly Doug was the last man to work the Barmah forest. In 2009 it was declared a National Park and the legend of the tough, nuggetty man taking his axe and heading bush to carve out his own future, on his own terms, came to an end in this corner of the country. The life of a sleeper cutter was not for the fainthearted; when you swing a broad axe from dawn to dusk it is bloody hard yakka, physically hard especially, but Doug would have had his life no other way.

"They don't make men like sleeper cutters anymore", he laughed. "I think they broke the mould when they made me because no-one wanted to take on hard work anymore. Sleeper cutting has always been a well-paying job but you have to be self motivated and willing to work to make a go of it." Doug has spent his life working in the bush and he knows Barmah Forest as well as he knows the lines on his hands. "Back in the early days I used to work at the SKF bearing factory full time and then I would head out to cut sleepers after work and, depending on my shift, over the weekends too. When I worked with dad we would be in the bush by sunrise and work nonstop until 2.30pm. We had to be finished by then so he could get to the pub for a few beers before it shut at 6.30pm." During the boom time of the 1930s a sleeper cutter was paid two shillings and six pence a sleeper. It used to cost a shilling to get them carted to Picola and they used to have to pay five pence in tax. A top cutter like Doug's dad would carve out around 16 sleepers a day with the broad axe. "My father started sleeper cutting when he was 13 after his father died in a horse and cart accident. I learnt from him and I still use his axe today, along with my father-in-law's." The forest commission would brand the trees to be felled and back in the boom, around 300 sleeper cutters would cut an average of 10 sleepers a day with the broad axe. "More than 15,000 sleepers a week would come out of the forest, destined for life on a railway line somewhere in Australia. Isn't that amazing? When we finished up cutting in the bush in 2009, we were taking out 8,000 per year and they reckoned we were raping the bush." Doug spent his working week cutting sleepers, travelling home for the weekend and returning on the Sunday arvo to be ready to do it all again at the crack of dawn. "My wife Lorraine reared the kids, as she used to tell me not to hurry home," he smiled. Lorraine, inured to his humour after years of being on the receiving end, had just four words for him: "You will keep Doug." You get the distinct feeling she may have muttered this under her breath many times over the years. Doug has many yarns to tell of his time in the bush, many unsuitable for publication.

He remembered the time one hot summer day when he was cutting sleepers in a shirt and just a pair of jocks. "The gates were meant to be locked but somebody left them open and these strangers came through" Doug said. "They hastily turned around when they saw me and lodged a complaint saying there was some weird man cutting down trees in his undies. I thought it was hilarious," he said, still getting a laugh out of the memory. Doug said in all his years he worked in the bush he never had an injury – bar the day his ankle got jammed between two logs. "Luckily I had the chainsaw in my hand and was able to cut my way out or I would still be stuck there today. I think that was the last time I had a couple of days off work because my ankle blew up." Technology has never played much of a role in Doug's life and he has chosen to largely ignore the arrival of mobile phones. "I did have a satellite phone once which cost me \$2,500. I used it about six times before it broke down and it was going to cost me \$700 to fix, so that was the end of that." To this day Lorraine shakes her head at Doug's inability to use a mobile phone. "A couple of years ago he was cutting wood and he did a fan belt on the way home. He had to walk 15 km in the dark to get help – he had the phone with him but as usual it was flat," she mocked. "He is a very slow learner." The old bushie is also extremely critical of today's forest management. "It is a bloody disgrace. Trees are diseased, mistletoe is everywhere and in the old days we would have taken them out as part of our management, now its just spreading out of control. Flooding the forest in summer just kills the trees and some of the blackberries are big enough to hide a semitrailer in. The fire risk is just astronomical and you wouldn't want to camp out in the bush in summer anymore." Doug said he was always taught to love and respect the bush. "I can remember walking through the bush with dad when I was little, and I went to stand on a sucker and he snapped 'don't do that, that could be your livelihood one day;' and boy was he right. He would have kicked me in the bum if I destroyed a tree. He would turn over in his grave about the way Barmah is managed now it is a National Park. "

Sunken Fergy Tractors

A fascinating discovery has been made north of Bizerta, Tunisia in the Mediterranean Sea where professional diver and photographer, Selim Baccar, was investigating a mysterious wreck, was surprised to find its cargo still full of Massey Ferguson tractors. The wreck is so broken up that, as yet, it has been impossible to identify the ship's name or anything about it. Curious about the discovery, Selim contacted Massey Ferguson with his amazing pictures to try and find out more. The tractors are still intact after spending all these years in 65 metres of water. Jim Newbold, Massey Ferguson Marketing & Planning Manager has continued the investigations, contacting a number of ex Massey Ferguson employees to see if they could shed some light on the mystery. From the photos it can be seen that the tractors are MF 135 models fitted with an axle which dates them as post 1971. It's estimated that the ship went down somewhere between 1972 and 1974. To date, the name of the ship, its destination or the cause of its sinking, the name of the customer or if the tractors were ever replaced remains unknown. Jim is keen to find out more, so if you can assist, he would be pleased to learn more, no matter how trivial. If you have anything to add, please contact (email) Jim at jimnewbold@uk.agcocorp.com with the little message "MF Sunken treasure."

Condolences

Our condolences go out to Jenny and Greg Ross and their family, on the passing of Jenny's mum, Dulcie. Dulcie was a kind and gentle lady who some of us had the pleasure to meet at our club functions. Dulcie will be sadly missed on my many visits out to the Ross home. Rest in Peace lovely lady.

New Members

Our new members keep on coming. How good is that!!!! Recently we have had two more junior members join our ranks. It is so good to have these juniors wanting to be a part of our fantastic club. I strongly encourage every club member to talk to these kids, show an interest in what they have, give them a guiding hand or even some words of wisdom, as these kids are our future.

Jed Freeman is the youngest son of Andrew and brother to Hugh. Jack, his grandfather, would be so proud to know that his family continue with his passion. Jed is really interested in old jacks and he is trying to get his collection growing. He is also really keen on 'playing' with the old tractors and engines.

Bethany Archibald is the youngest daughter of Neville and Carolyn, and granddaughter to Bruce and Barb. Bethany has been a regular to our rallies from day one. It has been a pleasure to see this beautiful young girl go from nappies to ably helping out in the kitchen at our rally.

Welcome to the club Bethany and Jed.

Our club has many multiple generations in the one family, with some families even having four generations as members. I think that this is something that we should all be proud of and continue to work towards.

Rally Reports

Corowa Clearing Sale

On Saturday 8th September a few club members attended a clearing sale at Corowa. The sale commenced at 10.30 and the three auctioneers quickly got through the small lot of items that were put up for sale. I think the auctioneers must have come directly from the circus as they were very clever at pulling bids out of fresh air. I don't know, legally, how many bids an auctioneer can put in, but I think they must have saved theirs up from previous auctions because they were well and truly bidding on, and getting left with, items. They even had one bloke bidding against himself, until someone told them the error of their ways. They would have been better off concentrating on their task at hand instead of trying to outdo each other with their attempt of humour. The smaller items were finished being sold at about 11.30 so we had to cool our heels until the engines were to be sold at noon. It was pretty obvious that the majority of the people there had come to see the engines sold. Luckily they had a BBQ going for us to grab a snag and wait patiently until noon. At 12 noon the stationary engines and a few antique items were sold.

The big horizontal engines sold as follows:-

Felix - \$ 1,650, Austral - \$ 9,500, Austral - \$ 7,800, Hornsby - \$ 9,500, Alex Cowan \$ 9,500

Other engines were:-

Lister N 7HP - \$ 1,700, McCormack air cooled - \$ 250, Kelly & Lewis 4HP - \$ 425

The rougher engines were -

Rosebery Drag saw - \$ 150, Sundial B drag saw - \$ 175, Petter air cooled drag saw - \$ 100, Rosebery shearing plant - \$ 125

It looks like one of our junior members is about to start up his own lawn mowing business as he was the proud top bidder of a rotary lawn mower, which looked to be in a pretty good condition. I hear that it has been running over a few lawns lately.

Well done Mat.

Speewa Rally

The Speewa rally took place on the weekend of 25th and 26th August. Three of our club members, Lindsay E, Lloyd and Marie B attended this rally. The Gisborne club was also there rubbing shoulders with our members. Lindsay had a lovely display of badges, auger bits and other stuff. In total there were 70 engines on display, 20 tractors, 20 trucks, 10 cars, 39 motor bikes, 2 steam engines and other bits and pieces such as collections of 50 chainsaws, tins, salt and pepper shakers, tools, and knitting stuff.

It was a pleasant weekend with plenty of interesting stalls to fossick through. There seemed to be something there for everyone. The hospitality from the Speewa club was very good and they provided a lovely roast meal for the exhibitors, on the Saturday evening. Our members had lots of interest from the general public and the weather man was kind by providing a sunny day, but we can do without the wind next time please.

Shepparton Swap Meet

On Sunday 9th September the Shepparton show grounds came alive with over 600 stalls for the enthusiasts to try and find themselves a bargain. The cost of entry was \$5 per head with children under 14 free. It was great to see so many gates that we could enter through. Every available gate on the grounds was manned for the public to enter and exit. This event is hosted by the GV Motor Vehicle Drivers Club and they had vehicles constantly driving along the rows for the buyers to put heavy purchases on to be taken to the gate for them to pick up. Even if you run short of cash, there is an ATM not far away, over the road at the supermarket complex, as I found out. They had catering on site which supplied a BBQ. If you can name one of our club members, I think they were there as either a stall holder or running around chasing a bargain. As with all swap meets, some stall holders were there to make money and others were there to sell their stuff. One stall holder was even seen giving away some of his stuff and trying to give away some of his wife's stuff. Thanks for the offer Frank, but I don't really want an egg poacher. We did hear a voice come over the loud speaker throughout the morning and it was a voice that we know well. Good job Bob. Unfortunately the weather must have put a lot of people off coming as one of the organisers said that crowd numbers were down. It was a pretty cold morning but when the sun peeked through the clouds for a fleeting second, it gave a quick reprieve. There wasn't a lot of time for idle chit chat with fellow members as some of the stall holders begun packing up before noon. Not too many people were seen leaving empty handed so I am guessing that a bargain or that special piece was able to be bought.

Emerald Bank Fathers Day Heritage Festival

Sunday 2nd September was the annual Heritage Festival out at Emerald Bank in Shepparton. This event attracts heaps of people as either spectators or exhibitors. They run a farmers market out the front of the buildings and the heritage part was at the back of the buildings. They have no entry fee but a couple of blokes stop the vehicles and ask for a gold coin donation and that went towards the GV Community fund. There were a lot of classic and vintage vehicles, including trucks. I think the most photographed vehicle was Andrew's feral ute. Everyone loves to see it. Bill G took along an engine and pumps and shared the compound with the Wunghnu club and a Lockington member. The Wunghnu club looked after Bill by providing him with free tea and coffee whenever he wanted it. Thanks Gary. Charlie Z was the train driver on the little train ride and he was kept busy all day with happy kids getting a ride around the tracks. They also had a jumping castle, horse wagon rides and a petting zoo for the kids to enjoy, all costing \$5 entry. There was live music, well out of ear shot for the engine compound, and our friends, the

Sparks family, had their little model steam engines and their carnival organ going. Tim D had his magnificent Mack on a Mack on display, Frank T had an impressive spark plug collection and several club members were seen wandering through the crowd. My apologies I didn't see you there. The organisers hosting the event really looked after the exhibitors by providing a free snag and drink and free entry into the Motor Museum, which was open to the public at a discounted rate. The wind was a bit bitey on the day, actually it was damn cold, and the sun was in, out, in, out, all day.

There were heaps of people about, mainly at the market park, and I don't think there was as much interest in the engines as what we have had previous years when situated out in the front area. The Shepparton aerodrome, which is over the road and a bit closer to Shepp, had Antique aircraft fly-ins. There was a bus shuttle going from the heritage place to the airport. The heritage day started at about 9am and finished at about 3pm.

Deniliquin Rally

On the weekend of 15th & 16th September a few of our regular ralliers headed up the Cobb Highway to enjoy each other's companionship while at the same time showing off a selection of their treasures. Bruce, Bill and Marj had their trailers loaded with engines and pumps and settled themselves outside in the compounds. Eldred and Joyce were settled in the shed with their shearing display and button display respectively, and Ross and Margot drove in style to show off their vehicle in the classic car section. The engine compound consisted of about 40 engines, with our members having 4 of these with various pumps attached to them. Also on show over the weekend were about 25 tractors, 10 truck and 1 motor bike. They had a big lot of cars on display, but these were mainly on the Sunday. There were two sheds with items of interest in them, one of which had about seven of the Deniliquin club member's displays, and they were joined by Eldred and Joyce. The wood turners were also working away in one of the sheds and there were also a couple of displays of memorabilia. A swap meet was conducted on the Friday afternoon and Saturday with a few stalls set up around the grounds. It is always a good weekend at Deniliquin with the local members showing us good hospitality. The interest from the general public was good but it wasn't a big crowd. Come 2pm they soon disappear. Mother nature let us know that she was about by giving us plenty of wind on the Saturday, which caused plenty of dust. Sunday morning started off with a good frost but thankfully this was followed by a nice day. Our members enjoyed their time at Deniliquin and would be more than happy to be a part of their rally in the future.

Who Is Doing What in the Shed

Young Mat is restoring his hay baler

Ross is making a cooking pot

Bill has just freed up the shearing arm on his Cooper

John is too busy push bike riding to be in the shed

Ray has his new paint job on the White, well under way

Pete has put up an old time wire fence and is busy repairing the wire that has the indent of his dog's head in it

Frank is doing anything he can to get out of helping with the housework

Jane is learning how to do a truckies knot

Marie is having truck driving lessons

Glen and Daniel are making plans for their putt putt shed

Just for Fun

An old country bloke was returning home to the farm after a long hot day in town, cruising along about 120kph in his Mercedes, when he spotted red and blue lights behind him. Not feeling like a ticket, he put his foot down pushing 130kph to lose those lights behind him. However to no avail, so he slowed down and stopped. Up came an old police Sergeant, "Do you know you were speeding?" "Yes," answered the farmer. Sergeant, "Well it's late and I have had a dusty, hot day and I have a lot of bookwork to do when I get back to the station. You give me a good excuse for your speeding and I'll let you off." The old farmer thought for a while and said, "Last week one of your mob ran off with the missus and when I saw you back there, I said to myself, he's trying to bring her back."

Past Events in October

1616 – Dutch navigator Dirk Hartog lands on the island off Western Australia that now bears his name

1867 – Australia's first royal visit – by Prince Alfred, son of Queen Victoria

1908 – Henry Ford's Model T, went on sale for the first time

1912 – Australian government introduces a maternity allowance

1913 – Royal Australia navy – the newly created 'fleet unit' sails into Sydney Harbour

1944 – Formation of Liberal party of Australia

1949 – Construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme begins

1957 – The Space Age began as the Russians launched the first satellite into orbit

1972 – Equal pay for women

1973 – Sydney Opera House was formally opened by Queen Elizabeth II

1982 – Commonwealth Games held in Brisbane