

THE 2018 NHMA NATIONAL

TRACTOR TREK

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ARTICLE BY
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Update 2

When you talk about passionate people who love their sport or hobby or favourite pastime and would do just about anything to achieve it, these guys that I am about to talk about surely must be up there with the best of them.

Why else would you take a vintage tractor with no suspension around dusty and sometimes very bumpy backroads, through farmer's paddocks (sometimes freshly ploughed), in rain, hail or shine just for the sake of going for a drive with long-time friends and acquaintances? Sure, we pull up somewhere for morning tea, drive for another couple of hours and have a nice lunch, and then return to base camp, only to do it all again the very next day. It takes a special kind of person, some call them 'iron butts', to do all that driving with no suspension, while sitting on a hard metal seat for days.

So with this in mind, I have constructed an honour roll of four of the most dedicated 'iron butts', not in any particular order, who are the only ones to have taken part in all six of the NHMA National Tractor Treks held so far: Macksville, NSW, in 2006; Hamilton, Vic, in 2008; Taralga, NSW, in 2010; Biloela, Qld, in 2012; Dungog, NSW, in 2014; and Narrandera, NSW, in 2016; and from what I hear, they will all be lining up again in Young, NSW, in 2018. Two tractors have also done all six treks.

The Honour Roll:

Wayne Stuart has done all six treks on the same tractor, a black IH Farmall Super A. He was the first person to sign up for the 2018 Trek (a couple of months ago, actually before the brochures were even sent out). He said he just had to be the first. Wayne is always happy to share his funny tractor trek stories from previous treks but if you want to hear them, you will have to attend the 2018 trek. One story Wayne told me, was that at the first trek, he was all set up in a corner of the grounds, tent, bed, etc, when Mike Connor walked over and introduced himself. He told him he should join the rest of them at their camp over yonder, to which Wayne said, "Thanks but he was ok", and Mike replied, "Don't be bloody stupid and get your **ass** over there". Wayne did as he was told, which amazingly, was the start of their great friendship.

This brings us to Mike Conner and his tractor, a David Brown Cropmaster, which has done all of the treks as well. Unfortunately, Mike passed away a few years ago, but his tractor drives on with his son, Tim, and grandson, Cameron, behind the wheel. Mike was always accompanied on his treks by his lovely wife, Maureen.

Lyell Constance has done all six treks but on a couple of different tractors. A Fergie TEA20 for the first two treks, a Massey Ferguson 135 for the third trek, then back to the Fergie for the fourth trek and finally, a Massey 135 for treks five and six.

Lyell recalls how he was following a Lanz Bulldog up and over the hills around Barrington Tops on the fifth trek, when nearing the top, it started blowing smoke rings, which he thought was strange. The Bulldog's muffler suddenly caught fire on the descent, which he said was a bit scary, as he then had to put out all the spot fires before they started a really big bushfire.

Rod Jones – like Lyell, Rod has done all six treks also on a few different tractors. He did the first two treks on a Fergie TEA20, a Ford Dexta for the third trek, a grey and gold Fergie FE35 on its maiden voyage for the fourth trek, then back to the Ford Dexta for the fifth and sixth trek. I think the Dexta wins out because of the comfortable seat.

Rod tells the story of how he and Lyell were on their way to the very first trek at Macksville, NSW, when they came across a broken down Mike Conner on the side of the road. From that first chance meeting, they have all become very good friends, including Wayne Stuart.

Some of the places the treks have taken them to include 'The Pub With No Beer', Barrington Tops, Wombeyan Caves, and The Grampians. They have camped in community halls, seen an untold number of private collections that usually don't open to the public, and they even had a piano player tinkling the ivories while they were served morning tea. The list goes on and on.

Sometimes you have to make your own memories and what better place to do it than cruising around the countryside with the wind in your hair (if you have any left) and smelling the flowers at 20km per hour.

Get on board before the trek gets booked out, as there is a limit of 100 powered campsites and 150 total entries.

Contact: Dave Curtis on 0418 688 786 or
email him at: holkim@iprimus.com.au

Entry Forms available to download from The
NHMA website: www.nhma.com.au
Direct Deposit Details- BSB: 802 367 Acc No: 100005855

For accommodation in Young visit: www.visityoung.com.au
Showground camping is limited to 100
powered sites, so get in quick.

See advert on page 67

