

Tough Life of 1936 Leyland Badger

They called it the Never Never Country - the back of beyond. It echoes now to a man and his truck - a carrier called Kruse – The Back of Beyond

Make:	Leyland Badger (Traytop)
Year:	1936
Engine:	4 cylinder diesel (4.5inch diameter cylinder) Engine No: 3764
Horsepower:	32.4
Drive:	6 x 4, 4 speed crash gearbox, 2-speed auxiliary 'joey' gear box
Original weight:	91 cwt.
Load:	5 ton (usually 10 ton)
Chassis:	Modified by Tom with Thornycroft rear axles
Original Registration #:	147-788
Acquisition:	Purchased from Harry Ding by Tom Kruse 28 October 1949

- 1936** The Leyland Badger was built in England and bought new by outback mail and freight contractor **Harry Ding** at Yunta S.A. Sold by **Sidney Crawford** CMV Adelaide
- 1939** **Harry Ding** adapted the Badger to suit Birdsville track conditions. Rear axles were salvaged from a crashed Thornycroft in **Carrieton**, S.A.
- 1942** **Tom Kruse** 'took on' the Birdsville Track mail run in the Badger
- 1948** Tom discarded the Leyland chassis and replaced it with another of his own design, using rolled steel joists (RSJs). He made it by hand at the **Lelliot Brothers** workshop in Port Adelaide. The chassis, now restored, still remains today
- 1953** **The Back of Beyond**, a 66 minute documentary produced by **John Heyer** and the Shell Film Unit was filmed starring **Tom Kruse** and the Badger. The movie was seen around Australia and the world and won many international awards
- 1957** After 21 hard years as a mail truck and then as part of Tom's dam sinking business, a major breakdown on **Pandie Pandie Station** south of **Birdsville** forced Tom to abandon the Badger in the desert
- 1983** Rediscovered in the desert by **Peter Ware** from Copley
- 1986** The Jubilee Mail Run Re-enactment Group, lead by **Dave Burge** recovered Tom's **Leyland Cub** from the desert. The badly deteriorated Badger was too difficult to move with the equipment they had on hand
- 1993** The Badger was recovered by the Copley Crew lead by **Peter Ware** and transported to Copley S.A. The Copley Crew was **Peter Ware, David Mills, John Pengilly, Elizabeth Dodd** and **Philip Smith**
- 1996** Badger transported to Northfield in Adelaide. The Badger Restoration Group, led by **Neil Weidenbach**, begins the difficult restoration task. Tom was reconditioned the engine in his home workshop at Narinna Avenue, Cumberland Park
- 1999** **Monday 2 August** - Badger's first official road test with **Tom Kruse** at the wheel.
Saturday 2 October - Badger departs Birdsville for *The Mail Trucks Last Run*.
Sunday 10 October - Badger arrives National Motor Museum, Birdwood SA and is received into the Museum by the Governor of South Australia, **Sir Eric Neal**
- 2000** October - Badger makes first capital city public appearance outside South Australia at National 4x4 Show Melbourne
- 2002** Tom and Badger attend **The Legends of the Outback** at Arkaroola
- 2003** Tom and Badger named SA Icons by the National Trust
- 2004** In Marree for the 50th anniversary of the release of **The Back of Beyond**
- 2008** Bequeathed to the **National Motor Museum** by Tom and Valma Kruse
- 2013** Badger is a feature vehicle in National Motor Museum's **Sunburnt Country - Icons of Australian Motoring** exhibition