

MC Ian Doyle's intro words
Launch of *The Back of Beyond* Collection DVDs

Marree, Saturday July 24th 2004.

Intro 1936 Leyland Badger

It's a 1936 Leyland Badger. A 4-cylinder diesel. The engine number 3764, it has 32.4 horsepower, a 6 x 4, 4-speed crash gearbox with a 2-speed auxiliary 'joey' gearbox. The original weight was 91 cwt and registered to carry 5 tons – it usually carried 10. The original registration number was 147-788

The Leyland Badger was built in England and bought new in Adelaide by Harry Ding from Crawford's – now the CMV Group - for outback mail and freight haulage in 1936.

In 1939 it was adapted by Harry Ding to suit Birdsville track conditions with Thornycroft rear axles and a transmission salvaged after a Thorneycroft carrying a load of wool crashed at Carrieton in SA.

The person who originally bought the Thornycroft was Mr. Crawford. His family is represented here today by the Anne & Rhys Hawker.

Tom Kruse and the Badger 'took on' the Birdsville Track in 1942. Six years later 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.

Tom bought the Badger from Harry Ding in the following year.

In 1953 Tom the Badger became the subject of John Heyer's important docudrama *The Back of Beyond* produced by the Shell Film Unit. *The Back of Beyond* was released in 1954.

After 22 hard years, a major breakdown forced Tom to abandon the Badger at Gilpininna Dam on Pandie Pandie Station near Birdsville in Queensland.

The Jubilee Mail Run Re-enactment Group in 1986 went to the site and recovered a Leyland Cub and prepared the Badger for recovery.

In March 1996 the Badger was transported to Adelaide for restoration to the former Northfield aerodrome where Ross and Keith Smith completed their historic flight from England in April 1920.

The first official 'road test' of the completely restored Badger was on Monday August 2nd with Tom behind the wheel.

After being low-loaded to Birdsville, on Saturday 2nd October the Badger departed Birdsville for *The Mail Trucks Last Run*. On Sunday 10th October the Badger arrived at the National Motor Museum in Birdwood and was received into the Museum by the Governor of South Australia, Sir Eric Neal.

In 2000, Tom, Valma and the Badger went interstate to attend the National 4x4 Show in Melbourne.

From July 4th to July 7th in 2002, Tom, Valma and the Badger participated in The Legends of Outback Transport at Arkaroola in the Flinders Ranges.

In 2003, Tom and the Badger are named South Australian Icons by The National Trust.

And this weekend the Badger was low-loaded here by the CMV Group as part of the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the first screening of *The Back of Beyond* in the Marree Town Hall.

I'm delighted to inform you that the Last Mail From Birdsville DVD as part of *The Back of Beyond Collection* is in Memory of Jim Crawford AO.

The CMV Foundation has very generously supported the RFDS in producing both the DVD and this assisting with the event here this weekend and this year is CMV's 70th birthday.

CMV Foundation Trustees Michael, David and Paul Crawford and their families are here today – please join me in publicly recognizing the CMV Foundation.

Please now welcome CMV Trustee – Jim's son and one of the grandsons of Sidney Crawford - who sold the Leyland Badger brand new to Harry Ding in 1936 – Ladies and Gentlemen Mr. David Crawford

Ian Doyle
Executive Producer
The Back of Beyond Collection