

## **RUNNING SHEET / Birdsville Bust 05.09.08**

- 11.00 – Guests arrive – seating for 20 VIP's
- 11.05 - Ian Doyle speaks – TK Bust Appeal – Tom's life story
- 11.15 – David Brook OAM speaks –The Back of Beyond – about Tom, Valma and Birdsville
- 11.25 - Robert Butler speaks – about Tom & Henry Butler stories
- 11.30 – Tom, David & Robert unveil the TK bust
- 11.35 – Helen Hamp – thanks from the Kruse family
- 11.40 – Morning tea in the Community Centre
- 12.15 – Event concludes

### **INTRODUCTION:**

**Mr. E.G. (Tom) Kruse MBE**, daughter Helen **Jeffrey**, and sons-in-law **Max Pfitzner & Colin Hamp**

**Mr. Robert Butler**, son of **William Henry Butler** and members of the Butler family – daughter **Joylene Booth** and the next generation Postman – **young Henry Butler & Mrs. Butler**

**Mr. David Brook OAM** – former Mayor of the Diamantina Shire Council and cast member of *The Back of Beyond* & **Mrs. Nell Brook**

**Mayor Cr Robbie Dare** – Mayor of the Diamantina Shire Council

**Mr. Scott Mason** – CEO of the Diamantina Shire Council

**Mr. Brian Mooney** – Diamantina Shire Council Tourism & Development Manager

**Mr. David Crawford** Trustee CMV Foundation

**Ms Patricia Moseley** – Sculptor and partner **Mr. John Hinge**

**Mr. Brendan Eblen** - RFDS Board Member & major supporter of the Appeal.

**Mr. Kym Fort and Mrs Jo Fort** – Birdsville Hotel

**Mr. John Parnell**

Invited guests, supporters of The Back of Beyond Appeal, members of the Badger Restoration Group, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to today's celebration on the life of two of this country's National Treasures – **Tom & Valma Kruse**. My name is **Ian Doyle**

The bust Tom, David and Robert are about to officially unveil has been sculptured by Robe based sculptor **Ms Patrica Moseley** who is with us today – and the Appeal has been supported by the CMV Foundation, the RFDS, Pilatus

Australia, Corrugated Air Productions, the Diamantina Shire Council, **the Parnell, Bell, Eblen, Rasheed, Burge, Doyle, Brockfield, Brook, Fort, Bawden, Oldfield, Weidenbach and Crawford families** ... and public donation.

Thank you to all those who have supported the Bust Appeal.

### **E.G. (Tom) Kruse MBE & Valma Kruse**

Esmond Gerald (Tom) Kruse was born on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1914. He is the tenth of Ida and 'Harry' (Henry) Kruse's twelve children. His father was a blacksmith at Waterloo north of Adelaide.

Tom left school in 1927 and did various labouring jobs including working in his father's blacksmith shop - where he lost part of his ring finger as a result of an accident with an anvil. He then moved to Yunta in the pastoral northeast to work in a garage owned by his older brother Snow.

Tom's truck driving career started in 1932 working for Yunta storekeeper and postmaster John Penna. Tom was eighteen years old. In 1934, pioneering outback transport operator and mail contractor Harry Ding moved his operation from Olary to Yunta. He bought out Snow's garage and John Penna's business and offered Tom a job.

The expanding Ding enterprise won the tough and potentially lucrative Birdsville Track mail contract.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 1936, in searing 45-degree heat, Tom drove his first Marree to Birdsville mail run. Mail, fuel, supplies and the occasional passenger had to get through and Tom did battle with sand hills, dust storms, flies and swollen rivers and creeks along the Birdsville Track every fortnight. Round trips between Marree and Birdsville normally took seven days but when the Cooper flooded across the track, it could take as long as six weeks.

In 1939 Tom helped to transport supplies for Dr. Cecil Madigan to Old Andado Station on the western edge of the Simpson, Dr Madigan with his party became the second Europeans to cross the Simpson Desert by camel – lead by Marree based Afghan cameleer Jack Bejar.

After his marriage in 1942 to his Yunta sweetheart of some time, Miss Valma Fuller, the newly weds settled to Marree and became more or less branch managers for Harry Ding's Marree and Lyndhurst operation.

This year, Tom & Valma celebrated their 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary – and they said it would never last!

In late 1947, Tom bought the Marree based part of the Ding operation.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 1948, twelve years to the day he drove his first Marree to Birdsville mail run, Tom took over the Birdsville mail contract for 396 pounds a year. Tom held it for 15 years and sold it in 1963.

In early 1951, Tom stopped doing regular trips along the track and engaged other drivers – **Monty Scobie** was one. Tom had started an earthmoving and tank sinking business in the pastoral north. Through late 1951 and 1952, Director with the Shell Film Unit John Heyer shot *The Back of Beyond*.

Tom, his off-sider **William Henry Butler** and the Leyland Badger were recalled to play themselves - delivering mail and supplies along the Birdsville Track. The film was released in 1954 to great acclaim and was screened for the first time in Outback Australia at Marree 54 years ago - on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1954.

Tom told the bloke he was working for at the time that while he wasn't sure how long the filming would take – it couldn't be more than a week or so. Tom didn't get back to the job for 3 months - to a pretty cool reception from the pastoralist.

As we all now know, *The Back of Beyond* became an international award winning Australian classic. It changed the lives of all those who were part of it.

John Heyer was elevated within the Shell Film Unit - the Heyer family moved to London, Henry and Ethel Butler with their young family moved here to Birdsville and Tom Kruse and the Back of Beyond Leyland Badger – well ... they were immortalized ..and in the 1955 New Year's Honours list, Tom was awarded an MBE for 'Services to the Outback'

His best recognised mail truck was a Leyland Badger was build in the UK in 1936. It was sold by Sidney Crawford (now the CMV Group) to Harry Ding .. and Tom then purchased it from Harry in 1949. It finally broke down and was abandoned in 1957 on Pandie Pandie Station not far from us here at Birdsville.

Sidney's Grandson David are with us today. The Crawford family's support of not only this project, but all of those associated with Tom, Valma and the Badger over the past 25 years has been wonderful.

Sidney probably made a few quid on the sale of the Badger – his son Jim and the Crawford boys subsequently have been very generous and great supporters – thank you. *The Back of Beyond Collection* we launched in Marree on July 24<sup>th</sup> 2004 is dedicated to the memory of Jim Crawford. And thanks also to all those associated with today's unveiling.

The Badger was rescued from the desert in 1986 during the *Jubilee Mail Run* re-enactment, organized by Dave Burge . The Badger was fully restored at Northfield in Adelaide by Tom and a group of enthusiasts lead by Neil Weidenbach and Aynsley Rowe between 1996 and 1999.

*The Mail Truck's Last Run* re-enactment in October 1999 from Birdsville to the National Motor Museum at Birdwood had Tom and the Badger deliver more than 7000 letters from all over the world ... and resulted in the documentary *Last Mail from Birdsville – the Story of Tom Kruse*.

In 2000 Tom was inducted into the National Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. In 2003 he was officially recognised as an Outback Legend by Australian Geographic and both he and the Badger were nominated South Australian icons by the National Trust.

The Badger is now permanently housed at the National Motor Museum ...and at the unveiling of the Birdwood bust at the Museum by His Excellency, the Governor General Michael Jeffrey on March 30<sup>th</sup>, Tom and Valma announced they had bequeathed the Badger to the people of South Australia. It will be on permanent display in the National Motor Museum ..a wonderful gesture by the Kruse family.

Tom turned 94 eight days ago on August 28th and Valma celebrated her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

We are truly delighted that Tom is well enough to be here today. Unfortunately Valma couldn't make the trip. While Tom is 'ceasing up' and having a spot of bother with the occasional sun spot or two – they are both understandably slowing down - however they are enjoying their retirement in Adelaide with their family and a growing number of grand children and great grand children.

### ***So why is EG Tom Kruse important?***

Even to this day he can't understand why so many people are interested in a bloke as he says 'was simply doing his job'.

Tom is important because as well as being the quintessential Aussie bloke who worked hard and survived where many would have failed, he's a thoroughly engaging individual, a true gentleman in the old fashioned sense ...and he is still with us.

In Tom's case, age has certainly wearied him, but we as a nation recognise the elements of larrikinism, fair play, determination, grit and adventure in his life, which most of us deep down, believe is the essence of being Australian.

***The Back of Beyond*** was ground breaking and a wonderful piece of cinema. For the first time, Australians - and the rest of the world, saw the real outback – and they were shocked.

The film exploded the Chips Rafferty images of hilly landscapes, expansive sheep flocks, conifers and babbling brooks, which had been the popular image of ‘doing it tough’ back of beyond.

*The Back of Beyond* is about real people, living their daily lives in some of the harshest country in the world.

It’s a story of men and women – be they white, black or afghan – and their survival and daily battle with the elements.

I think it is one of the most important films ever made in Australia.

They are reluctant to named as such – but please join me in congratulating two National Treasures today – Tom and Valma Kruse.

**John Heyer**  
**Director *The Back of Beyond***

John Heyer's career spanned 60 years of writing, producing and directing films and television series. Tasmanian-born, the pioneering documentary filmmaker rose to international prominence with *The Back of Beyond*, which won the coveted Grand Prix prize at the Venice Film Festival.

In the post-war years Heyer directed a number of powerful documentaries that charted the construction of modern Australia. He also worked tirelessly to develop a distinctive national film culture and played a leading part in establishing the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals.

In 1970 John Heyer was honoured with an OBE for his services to film. In 1986 he was inducted into the European Academy of Arts, Sciences and Humanities, and in 1997 he received an Order of Australia medal. He died in London in 2001.

Heyer's credits include the Oscar-nominated *Native Earth* (1946), *Watch Over Japan* (1946), *Journey of a Nation* (1947), *Men and Mobs* (1947), *Born in the Sun* (1948), *The Valley Is Ours* (1948), *The Forerunner* (1956), *Playing With Water* (1957), *The Reef* (1978) and *Explorer Safari* (1982).

## **1936 Leyland Badger**

(featured in *The Back of Beyond*)

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 Mr Sidney Crawford – 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 Thornycroft carrying a load of wool crashed at Carrieton in SA.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> to July 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Leyland Badger were named South Australian Icons by The National Trust.

On Saturday July 24<sup>th</sup> 2004, the Badger was low-loaded to Marree 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.

The Last Mail From Birdsville DVD, part of *The Back of Beyond Collection* is in memory of Sidney's son and David's father Mr. Jim Crawford AO.

*(CMV Foundation Trustee David Crawford will be at Birdsville on September 5<sup>th</sup> for the unveiling of the Tom Kruse bust)*

The CMV Foundation very generously supported the RFDS in producing both the DVD and assisting with the Marree event in July 2004.

The Leyland Badger's permanent home in the National Motor Museum at Birdwood.

**More Information:**

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