

A Long Day

A Farm Machinery Buying Trip to Yass

Wally Smith

Foreword: Lorraine and Wal Smith are the only two persons from the group which originally set up the Blacktown Bicentennial Museum in 1988 who are still involved with the *Museum.*

Whilst most of the exhibits have a tale to tell, Wal and Lorraine also have tales to tell of how some of those exhibits were acquired. The following is one of those tales.

Editor

One very foggy Saturday morning Lorraine and I drove to Richmond to pick up our friend, Garrett, who was President of our Historical Society. We were to travel to Yass in Southern NSW to attend a Farm Auction (our intention was to buy farm equipment for our proposed Museum).

We arrived in Yass at about 10:30 a.m. and it was a cold, miserable day with a light misty rain. We poked around and looked at the articles on offer in the house, then checked out the front yard. The items were not numbered as normal and there didn't appear to be a representative of the Auctioneer available to get a bidder's number for when the Auction began.

Things moved along at a great clip and finally we were in the backyard where the goodies were that we were interested in. Garrett and I were bidding for all sorts of things, but we were only two amongst fifty or sixty others. We know we made a bid and were successful in securing a veritable treasure trove of a "rubbish tip", all varied pieces of equipment and odds and ends for a very minimal price of \$2.

We bought a pony cart, a scarifier, we "thought" we bought a large block and tackle that was in a tree! We proceeded to the machinery sheds and bought some stuff there. The rain was pelting down in earnest and by this time it was quite dark and trucks were getting bogged etc.

Lorraine and I were supposed to be back in Sydney for a trip on the *Nepean Belle* Paddle Boat and she had packed a suitcase with clean undies etc. along with her fur coat and silver high heels, my d11111er suit and spare socks and shoes for me.

It was now 5:00 p.m. and too late to drive back to Sydney for the 7:00 p.m. cruise. We decided to stay in town at a motel for the night and load up the truck in the morning. As we had already used our truck to pull cars out of the bog in the paddocks we felt we would beat the mud by going back the next day to load up the gear we had bought.

Unfortunately for Garrett he only had the clothes he stood up in, so when we got to the motel Lorraine showed him how to rig up a line near the air conditioner to dry his gear off and gave him a pair of my socks to wear.

We were back at the farm bright and early the next morning and Garrett pointed out the things we had bought and we proceeded to load the Dyna truck with them. Lorraine busied herself going over our "Treasure Tip", putting piles aside to be loaded on to the truck. A man told her if she wished she could go over the stuff in the galvanised bathtub as he didn't want anything else from it.

Lorraine thought it was Christmas all over again and got stuck in to pulling stuff out of the tub and putting it with the bits from the "Treasure Tip". Garrett and I were busy pulling down the block and tackle, trying to work out how to get the block out of the ground, when we were accosted by an angry man demanding to know what we were doing. Garrett told him he was trying to pull down the block and tackle he had bought. "Like **** hell you are. I bought the **** thing my **** self" Garrett and I looked at each other and decided that as the guy was bigger than us we'd better give in gracefully.

At the same time Lorraine was confronted by an irate lady demanding to know what she was doing. Lorraine replied that the man had told her she could have an* she wanted.. The Lady? then yelled at her that she was a sculptress, she had spent a lot of money buying all that material and intended to use it for a work she was doing for an art gallery in Canberra. Lorraine graciously apologised, relinquished her "goodies" and walked away.

Garrett and I decided to load up the buggies and carts we had bought. By this time the sun was out, it was a lovely morning and we were chatting about how soon we were going to be able to hit the road. The truck was nearly fully loaded when we were approached by another woman who asked if we had seen her pony *cart*. "No," said Garrett and I together. We hadn't seen a pony cart other than the one we had bought. She looked up, spotted a cart on our truck and started yelling, "That's my cart. I paid so many dollars for that!" I looked at Garrett and we both climbed up on the truck to off-load the pony cart. We never did find ours!

We finally hit the road just before midday to head home. We had the truck loaded to the hilt with wagon wheels, spare parts etc. We had to constantly watch the tyres because of the weight we were carrying. We stopped at Goulburn, had a pizza for lunch, and continued on our way. Things seemed to be going well. We cruised through the Truck Weighing Station at Marulan and were climbing the hill to head towards Bargo when the truck started to pull to one side.

"Geez, I think we've got a flat!" Garrett jumped out and confirmed that a tyre on the passenger's side at the back was as flat as a tack. "This won't take long," I said as I went to the tool box. Oh yeah? No wheel brace in the tool box. Hell! Garrett tried to reassure me that we could get one "no troubles". "Lorraine and I will go for a walk up the hill to a property and borrow one." They set off leaving me to try to flag down a truck if I could -NO TRUCKS!!

On reaching the farm Garrett and Lorraine walked around the work sheds looking for signs of Life but not even a dog was to be found. They trudged back to the truck. Garrett decided to hitch a ride back to the RTA Weighing Station to call the NRMA. After what seemed like an age he arrived back in the NRMA Ute. Out of the ute ambled the mechanic who looked at the flat and said, "Got a flat tyre mate!" (No, it's just flat on the bottom!)

"Yes," I replied, "and we don't appear to have our wheel brace, can you lend us one?"

'Nah, mate, I don't have one big enough." (Looking all the time at the tyre, expecting it to inflate, I think!)

"Can you borrow one from town?" asked Garrett.

"Nah," said the NRMA Guy, "the people in town don't like me. They wouldn't lend me nuthin'."

"Well, can you tow us back to Marulan?"

"Can't do that mate. I don't have a truck big enough." He proceeded to tell me that I should drive the loaded truck back to town.

I said, "What? You've got to be joking. I can't drive this truck with this load with a flat tyre!"

NRMA Guy, "Sure you can, she'll be right!"

"You're kidding!" I said.

"Nah, mate, it'll be O.K."

I said, "If I drive I'll blow the other tyres."

He replied, "She'll be O.K."

So I said, "It's your responsibility if anything goes wrong."

Into the truck we hop and start to turn around to head back to Marulan. The U-Turn safely completed we went not 100 yards when the second tyre blew. NRMA Guy (Happy Joe Happy?) suggested we leave the truck on the side of the road for the night (it was quickly getting dark at this stage, about 4:30-5:00 p.m.). I was again incredulous. I said, "No, if I do that it probably wouldn't be in one piece in the morning." Garrett said, with all his school-masterly authority, "I suggest that you take us to the Weigh Station my man." Into the NRMA Ute the three of us hopped and we were duly dropped at the Weighing Station.

The officers at the Weighing Station were sympathetic and tried to find us a wheel brace amongst their friends. One even rang a dealer in Goulburn to see if we could get one from there, no luck! The next problem was what to do about Garrett who had realised he had the keys to the school and would need to be in Sydney for school Monday morning. The Officer in Charge of the Weigh Station said it would be no problem. He called across to the OIC of the Sydney Side Weigh Station and asked him to stop the next bus going to Sydney. This was duly done and we walked under the highway through a tunnel corridor to the other side to see Garrett onto the bus.

Back to the other side to try to solve our dilemma. As luck would have it a policeman went up the Sydney Road, booked someone and came back. The OIC stopped the policeman and told him our problem. He shook his head and said, "If you leave that truck here it is, it's a sure bet it won't be there in the morning." He told us the NRMA Guy was not liked in the town as he and his wife and kids were suspected suppliers of dope, were deemed to be dishonest and that the wife had assaulted the magistrate that last week and was on charge.

The policeman drove Lorraine and I back to Marulan and organised for the Heavy Haulage Truck Company in town to retrieve our truck and bring it back to safety. He also went to the local hotel, which had closed for the night (now 10:30 p.m.), and arranged for them to put us up for the night.

What a night! The bed rolled us into the centre and cocooned us tightly together, the lino was freezing in the morning and the bathroom a long way down the hall! In the morning we presented ourselves at the Heavy Haulage Company and waited for the tyres to be fixed. We arrived back home at 2:30 p.m. on Monday without any further incident.

Garrett's ride to Sydney was just as exciting. He had to sit on the step as the bus was full of footy players who had gone to Canberra from Sydney for the day to play. The bus driver told Garrett that when he went through the Weigh Bridge and was told to pull over he was a bit worried. He thought the boys had drunk too much after the game but couldn't see how that would make a difference. He was relieved when he was only asked to take on an extra passenger. Garrett was dropped off at Parramatta Station and had to catch a train to Riverstone and then another one to Richmond.

Editor's Note: After reading this, I trust readers will appreciate the extraordinary efforts these people put in to stock the Museum. Fortunately not all items on display created quite this much difficulty.