

THE BULLOCKIES' BELL



Journal: THE AUSTRALIAN BULLOCK DRIVERS LEAGUE INC

June 2015

AUSTRALIAN BULLOCK



DRIVERS LEAGUE

PATRON: Colin "Sandy" Richards

Vol. 33 No. 2 June 2015

COVER: Pitch and Caspar lead the team in Gleneden.

Chief Teamster: Ritchie Wells

1249 Trowutta Rd
Smithton
TAS 7330

Offsider: Ruth McKinnon

PO Box 84

Tomerong

NSW 2540

Ph: 02 44434037

mckinnon@bigpond.net.au

Published at: 111 Slab Ck Rd,

Gleneden via Gayndah,

QLD 4625.

Ph: 0429137224

rohanthebullocky@hotmail.com

for the

AUSTRALIAN BULLOCK DRIVERS' LEAGUE Inc.

Chief Teamster's Report

Hello All

It was great to catch up with everyone at Gleneden talking bullocks and sharing experiences. It's a really nice part of Queensland. Special thanks to Rohan and Fiona for their efforts and for being such welcoming hosts, and providing a really interesting week. A couple of highlights were going out to the Wades' and Whittaker's properties.

By the time we arrived home from the get-together, winter had set in early in Tassie with snow down to low levels. However, steady rain and mild weather through autumn has produced plenty of feed to set up for a good winter.

I've brought in two new pairs of young bullocks which gives me five pairs to work with. They are developing well and showing promise, but a lot of work ahead.

I've had Donna Evens down with her pair of Holsteins and a couple of old bullocky mates have come to help me build gear and show me how their dads drove and worked their teams. The days are short and the ground is very wet, but the bullocks are being worked. Life is very busy with lots of projects on the go. I am working with Forestry Tasmania trying to get a dedicated logging coupe in which to work my bullocks to maintain the logging heritage in Tasmania. The local Agri Tas Training College is having discussions with me regards a joint tourism venture. I am well under way with content for a website for my Edith Creek Bullock Team. I am planning to hold a bullock training day with some old bullockies to assist new comers and others that are showing an interest in this old art, to try and keep our tradition going and get more teams established in the state.

The team is heading to Stanley in coming weeks to give the new pairs their first outing. We are taking the opportunity of combining this with the visit of League members Doug and Gaye Sawyer of WA. We hope to put them in my new wagon and do some practice work for the Stanley Agricultural Show, some demonstrations for local schools, and residents of the old peoples' home.



The Edith Creek Bullock Team stretching the chains

Chief Teamster's Report Continued

We have started planning for next years' get-together, Wednesday 2nd to Thursday 10th March. This seems to be the most suited date. The first part of the get-together will be held in the Circular Head area with a look at the northwest coast timber, agriculture and fishing industries. There will be bush and coastal bullock days with Alex Eatts' young team and Donna Even's pair of Holsteins also in attendance. A period dress day at the Highfield Historic property is also planned, so gather your old dress clothes and bring them down with you.

The second part will be in Oatlands at Brian Fish's property where Brian will display his bullocks. He has a comprehensive museum that has a number of new items. He hopes to feature sessions on wheelwright work and whip making.

The following day Brian will be displaying his bullocks at Steam Fest, Sheffield and anyone who comes to Tassie before the get together Brian will also be at the Sassafras Machinery weekend Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th February.

Anyone wishing to come to Tassie earlier or stay on longer are most welcome to stay with Brian or me. We both have plenty of room and are more than happy to talk bullocks and catch up with League members.

I have attached a list of some of the accommodation options in Stanley and Smithton with anticipated 'from' prices. Stanley is a tourist destination and Feb / March is peak season, so prices are at their highest. The Stanley Visitor Information Centre is very helpful. Ph: 03 645813309. It is possible to free camp with vans or swags at the Stanley Recreation ground where the event is being staged.

I hope this report finds everyone really well, and that many of you can make our get together in Tassie next year.

Ritchie

Mobile: 0458 711 526

Email: ritchiebullockywells@gmail.com

Accommodation Options

Town	Place	Telephone	Website	From
Stanley	Anthony's at Highfield	03 64581245		\$135
Stanley	Hanlon House B&B	03 64581149	www.hanlonhouse.com.au	\$175
Stanley	Stanley Seaview Inn	03 64581300	www.stanleyseaviewinn.com.au	\$115
Stanley	Stanley Hotel	1800 222 397	www.stanleytasmania.com.au	\$50
Stanley	Stanley Caravan Park	03 64581266	www.stanleycabinpark.com.au	\$90
Smithton	Tall Timbers	03 64529000	www.talltimbershotel.com.au	\$170
Smithton	Bridge Hotel	03 64521389	www.goodstone.com.au/the_bridge	\$90

The 2015 Gleneden Get-Together

It seems like a long time since the Gleneden Get-Together, I hope I can remember all the details so I can describe it for those who were not here. It was a great pleasure to host all the nice people of the League who made it up here for the week and very nice also just to be able to get to a Get-Together.

People started arriving on Friday 17th of June, with the week officially getting underway on Saturday. Saturday morning was a continual morning tea, with everybody turning up and greeting each other in many cases for the first time since last year.

Saturday afternoon was our regular working bullock team display, afternoon tea and farm tour. The bullockies mixed with the paying visitors and filled out the crowd nicely. League members were pleased to meet Stewart Whitaker who brought along pictures of his teams and a wealth of stories and information about bullocks.

Sunday Morning we toured the extensive collection at the Gayndah Museum, had morning tea at McConnell's Lookout, a panoramic view of the Burnett River north of Gayndah. Sunday afternoon we yoked up the Gleneden team and made a mess of trying to get an ironbark log out of the bush. We ended bringing another one home instead.

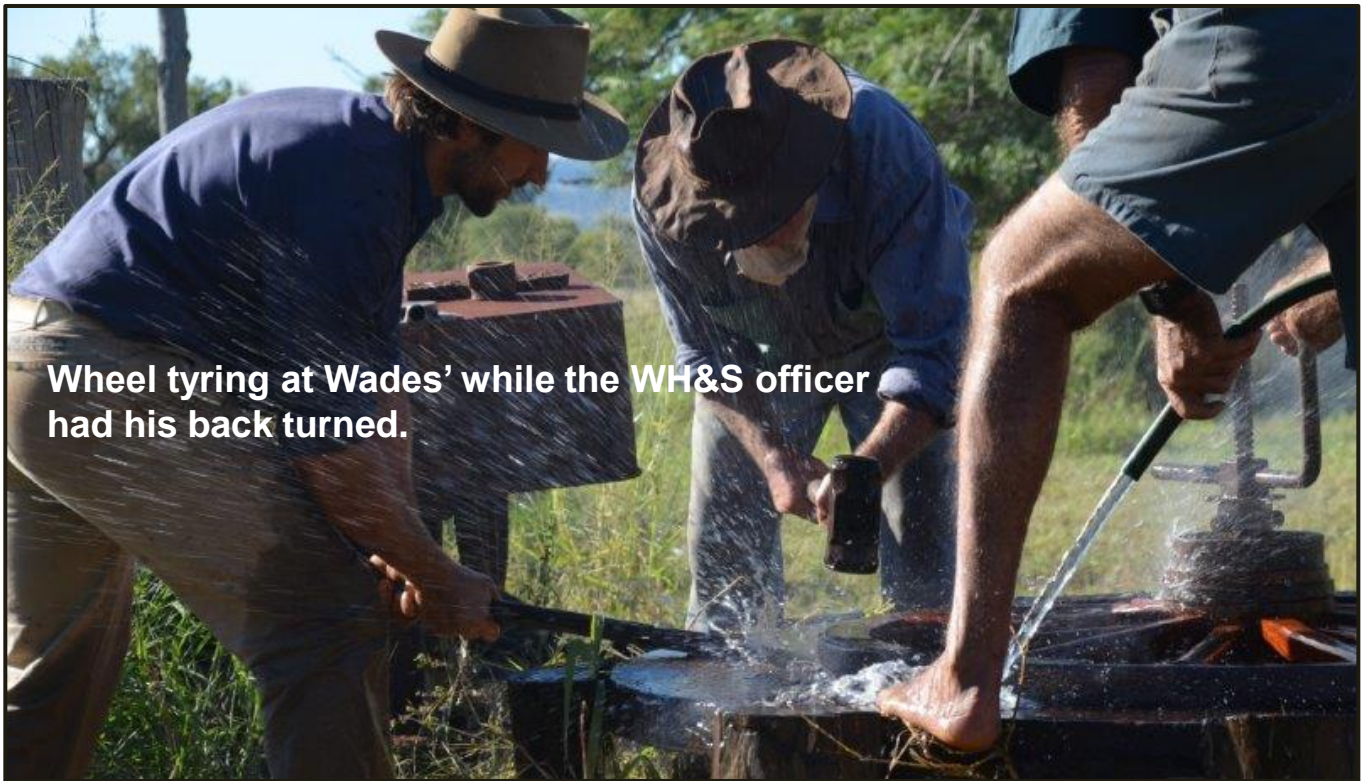
Monday was Biggenden cattle sale morning, then a visit to Robbie Radel's Illawarra and Brown Swiss stud on the edge of Biggenden. Lunch was at the Leprechaun Club, an unlicensed restaurant and bar at Coulston Lakes. We rounded out a big day with a tour of Slack's Hardwoods' sawmill and logyard, a family owned business that was started when Barry and Mye-anne gave their 3 year old son Sam a bowsaw. He used to clamp little logs in the vice and saw them into boards. Now he runs a business that employs twenty odd people.



On Tuesday we went adventuring into the South Burnett taking an interesting back road to the village of Hivesville for lunch at the surprisingly imposing brick pub there, then on in to Wondai to visit the Timber Industry Building, and (more importantly to some) the two second hand shops. The Wondai Timber Industry Building houses a nice collection on old logging photos, a set of local timber samples, a collection of logging tools and a wonderful diorama of a bullockies' camp featuring the timber jinker restored by local bullocky Norm Stinson. The builder of the diorama, Karl Keung very kindly drove to town to explain to us the process of building the display and told us about his previous life as a model builder at the Swiss Museum in Zurich.

We took the bullocks back into the bush on Wednesday morning to make a better job of retrieving the log we tried on Sunday afternoon. This time we were able to spend the day with Barry Whitaker another of our local bullockies of the well known bullock driving family from Maryborough. We held our usual annual meetings in the afternoon observing strictest formality of course. I was very pleased to see Tasmania and New Zealand lined up as the next two get-together destinations. The afternoon was a highlight of the week with a visit to the farm of Col and Bill Wade, local farmers, horsemen and craftsmen. Between them they breed, train and work Percheron horses, are collar, saddle and harness makers, plaiters and whipmakers, wheel and wagon wrights, blacksmiths and founders. If they need something they make it. They also have an impressive and interesting rambling collection of farm junk (treasures) which is handy for a neighbouring bullocky fixing wagons and other gear. While we were there Col and Bill tyred some german wagon wheels they had built and showed us generously around their farm, horses, collection and crafts. It was a very interesting afternoon. Wades' farm was also the venue for our bullock whip competition which was won by newly elected Chief Teamster Ritchie Wells.





Wheel tying at Wades' while the WH&S officer had his back turned.



The real action.

Thursday started with a citrus industry morning including a visit to Nick and Deb Ulcoq's Riverbend orchard, the Mundubbera Packing Shed and then Bugs for Bugs biological control facility. Then up to Eidsvold to Barry and Carole Whitaker's property "Rolling Hills" where we were treated to a wonderful afternoon. First of all we were greeted by a very nicely presented afternoon tea alongside a carefully selected display of memorabilia and equipment from Barry's bullock driving days. While we ate and admired, Barry gave us an entertaining talk on variety of topics related to bullock driving and farming.

The afternoon was filled with an inspection of Whitaker's very good brahman and charolais cattle, a demonstration of some of Barry's bush skills and viewing a movie of Barry's bullocks working in the 1980s. We were all very sorry to leave but the day was not over yet. In the evening we were treated to an enormous and delicious meal. The people of the local Tongan community had spent the whole day preparing an umu (a Tongan hangi), producing a volume of food that would have fed a Tongan village. The lovely Tongan people also gave us an insight into their home culture with some singing and dancing in traditional dress.



Barry Whitaker's bullock driving memorabilia.

Friday was the last day of the get-together. In the morning we had a third foray into the bush with the bullocks to pull out a small but tricky log from a tight gully using a cable and block to redirect the pull, while in the afternoon we caught two pairs of two year old steers, much to their surprise, and put yokes on them for the first time. The steers were three brahman/jerseys and a guernsey. We have yoked them twice since but probably won't worry about them until they get a bit bigger.

As usual with our get-togethers the main event was really the talking and story telling that happens over hundreds of cups of tea and spending time with the wonderful interesting people who are drawn to working bullocks. The week passed quickly for us as we were busy but it was still very nice to have everyone here and we enjoyed sharing our home and district with you all. We are really looking forward to being in Tasmania next year. It is a short turnaround so it will come quickly.

Around the Ridges

New South Wales

Tales from Tomerong

Ruth and I had a great time at the Get-Together. Our week at Gleneden and around the local area was most enjoyable. Rohan and Fiona had planned the week well with each day having very different and interesting things to see and do and some fascinating characters to meet. Plenty of time working the bullocks in the bush (my favourite), heaps of food, talk, good weather, very interesting destinations and new members, showing that bullock driving will continue to flourish. My thanks to Rohan and Fiona for all their hard work and congratulations to Rohan on his young team - they're shaping up well.

After the Get-Together Ruth and I travelled back to Philip's where she left me and travelled back to Tomerong alone. I stayed on at Philip's and then went with him to the Gatton Heavy Horse weekend. We took eight bullocks which I displayed while Philip was carrying out his duties as ringmaster. The bullocks performed well especially when Philip put them through a tight obstacle course in the dressage arena. Quite a few of the spectators were surprised to see the control Philip had on all eight bullocks.

Leading up to Gatton Philip had me on the job splitting firewood. We also went to the bush and snigged a log out of a very awkward spot with no problem. He sure has his bullocks working as a team very well, with some very handy new young ones.

On our way up to the Get-Together we had dropped off our red Kelpie pup to his new home at Philip's. I'm looking forward to visiting Philip and seeing 'Toby' bringing the bullocks into the yard.

Since the last Bell I've done very little with my bullocks. The only outing was a trip to the Hunter Valley in May. Josh and I took 12 bullocks and my big wagon to Scone for the Scone Horse Festival street parade. It was the biggest street parade we've ever been in, with over 150 floats participating. Josh was interviewed by WIN Television and it was on the WIN news that night. We were sponsored by two small schools, Ellerston and Belltrees Primary Schools, to carry their pupils on the wagon. We were awarded 2nd prize with the organisers feeling compelled to give the Light Horse entry 1st prize, this being their centenary year. Our accommodation for the weekend was at a magnificent property, "Belltrees". The property has a long history in the Hunter Valley. It once had a flock of 180,000 sheep with a 43 stand shearing shed and another shed able to shelter 3,000 sheep. As well as extensive horse stables there were also stables specially built for the two teams of twenty bullocks that worked on the property; something I'd never heard of before. The homestead is a massive 54 room mansion. We stayed in one of the original buildings built in the 1840s. The owners of "Belltrees" gave me one of the original bullock yokes from over 100 years ago. It is a beautifully made yoke in perfect condition.

I finally met Mick Carey who was also in the street parade with his horses. He has since acquired two more steers to add to his pair of Illawarras. Apart from the weekend at Scone the bullocks have done nothing for months except eat and sleep. I've been too busy at work and the days are too short to yoke them up. I'm going to have to find time to do something with them soon, as we're going to Ganmain Show in a few weeks time and they'll be very lively. Then our next big event is our annual trip to Barellan for the "Good Old Days" weekend, 3rd & 4th October.

I was talking to Tim Peel recently. He still has my two old leaders, Broad and Rigger, and at Christmas his son, Mark, out from England, took a copy of Broad's hoof-print to make a cue. Both Mark and Tim were amazed at the size of the cue. If any of you remember Broad - he is a big-boned bullock with very big hooves!

Something I've noticed the last few months is how our Chief teamster is going. Ritchie has been sending me some videos of his team in Tassie and they are going very very well. I reckon we'll be seeing another very good team at next year's Get-Together (which I'm already looking forward to!)

That's all for this Bell.

Ron McKinnon

Queensland

All of the Queensland news comes from southerners back up for more after the get-together.

Geoff Cochrane's Adventures

Hello Rohan,

Here are 2 photos of the paved bullock road I was telling you about when I rang 2 weeks ago. Photos don't do justice to our pioneers, you have to be there to get the feel of it. As I said I think you would find it a very interesting day out to go and look at this track. It is in the "Isla Gorge Nat Park" and is called the "flagstaff road".

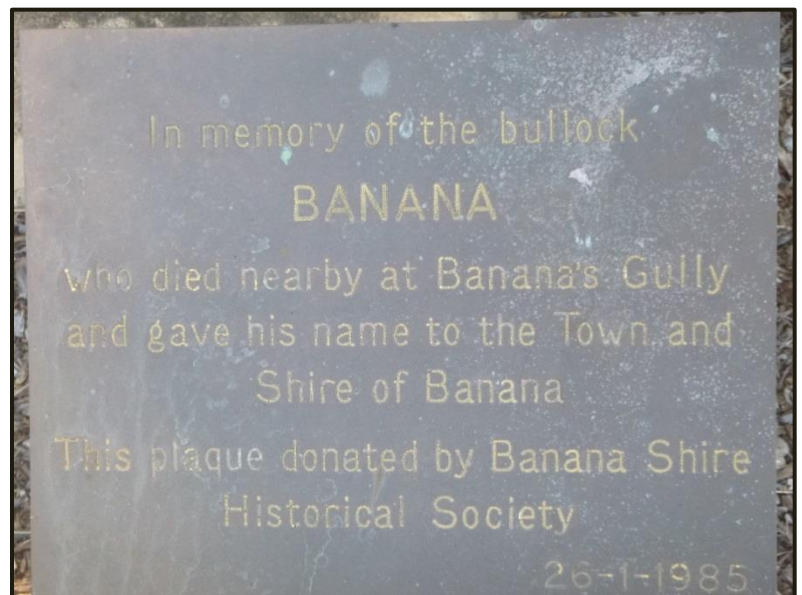


There is at least one town In Australia that will not forget its Bullocky heritage and that is the Central highlands town of Banana in the shire of Banana QLD. Many moons ago a yellow working bullock named " Banana" died on the bank of a gully. This spot became known as Banana's Gully and then the town and shire followed. I recently helped muster cattle for a few days in the Banana area and saw the statue and plaque erected in the town and the signs as you enter the town. I left home in Nowra on May 16 and told my family and friends I would be" f no fixed address for an indefinite period". It is now July 13 and I will try to be home on the 20th to keep an appointment I recently made with a heart specialist in Nowra. I spent 3 weeks mustering on Carlo, on the NT border in the Simpson desert. The rest of my time has been on 5 different properties in the Central Highlands between Rolleston, Biloela and Eidsvold. If I had more time I could write more detail about the night I woke up at 2.30 am to find my bed all on fire, The 3 blokes that have been killed in choppers while I have been up here. The day we went out with 1 chopper ,4 horses and 21 dogs. How I ended up in Roma hospital after leaving home with a paralysis tick. While chasing a pig off road (2 wheel tracks) on Marion Downs I got bogged on top of a grinding stone on 2 and a half million acres. The best bit of meat I ever ate off a young bull camel still on the mother.

Just to mention a few happenings.

Sincerely

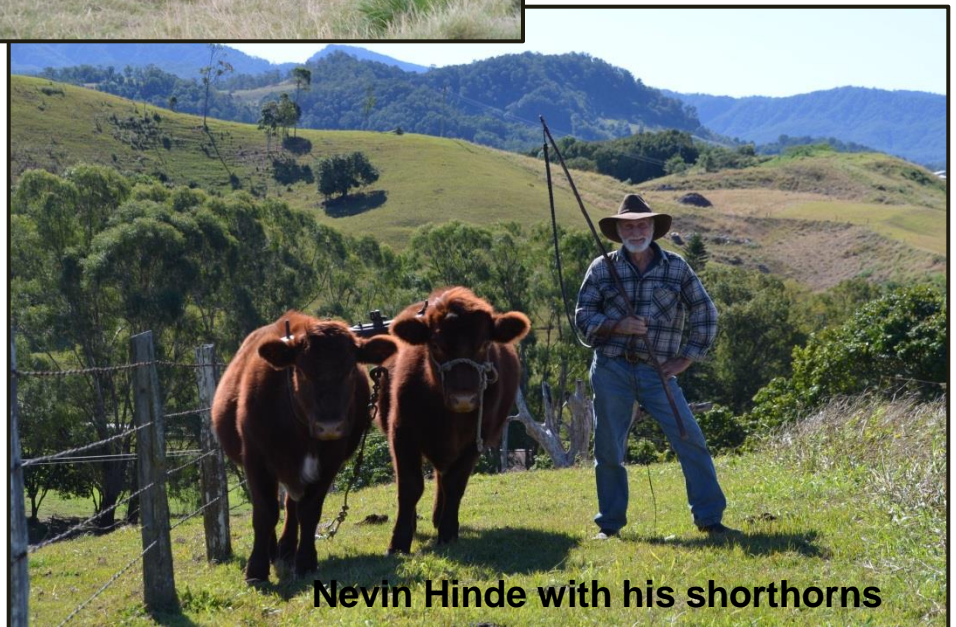
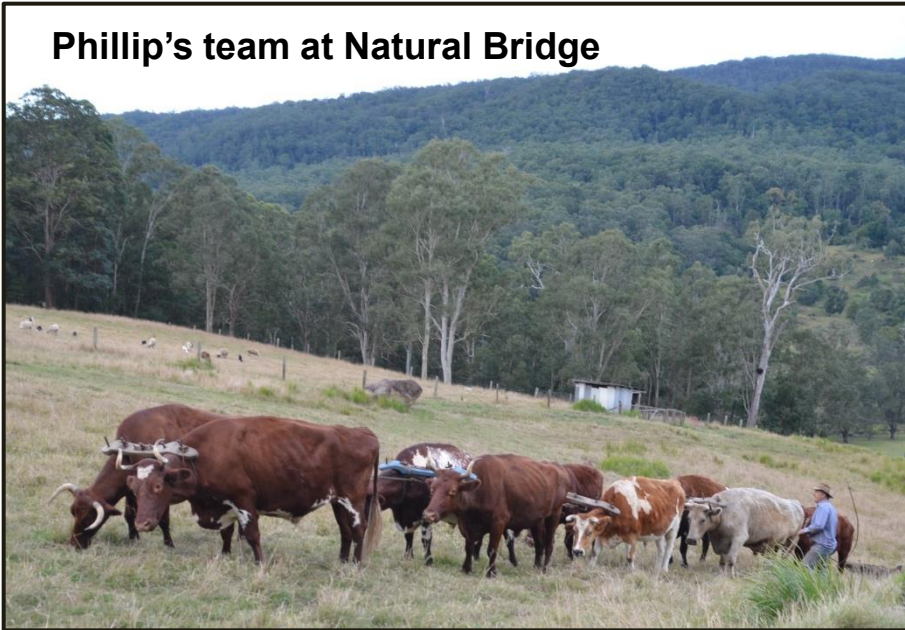
Ge-off Cochrane.



From Donna Evans

I must have caught the bullock-bug even more since the get-together! On our recent trip to Outback Queensland, my husband and I made sure to stop in at Natural Bridge to see Philip Thomson and his bullocks. Philip and Lisa made us feel very welcome after I pretty much invited ourselves to stay! Philip was just home that week with his bullocks from the movie set, so it was good timing on our part. He yoked up the team and we moved some big logs on the first day. On day two we had a tour of Philip's wonderful property: rainforest, banana plantation, his herd of young stock and a little off roading. After that, he had arranged for Graham and Rhonda Mills to pick us up for a trip to see Nevin Hinde and his pair of shorthorns. Throughout our time in Queensland, I kept seeing old yokes, wagons and artwork devoted to bullocks and bullock drivers – I kept thinking Tasmania can't have as much of a history but then again I thought ... maybe all the gear is with Brian and Richie?!

Phillip's team at Natural Bridge



Nevin Hinde with his shorthorns

Tasmania

NEWS FROM OATLANDS

From November has been rather busy for Brian and the team. Brighton Show early November was their first outing. Apart from the usual demonstrations and talks the show society decided to do something different, having 2 of the bullocks led into the cattle ring and judged. This put the young judge on his toes as he hadn't judged older steers before but he did a good job explaining why he had put 16 year old Major as champion and 12 year old Smoker as reserve. One of the young cattle handlers from the Jordon River Learning Centre helped with the leading and was quite keen to learn about the yoking of the team.

Also in November we had a very enjoyable day at Jack Lyall's property with representatives of the Wooden Boat Festival. A tree was cut down with axe and cross-cut, the bullocks dragged this out of the bush and it was loaded on the log wagon ready to go to the Hobart wharf in February for the Wooden Boat Festival, the timber to be squared up with as adze for a ship's mast. This was filmed and would be continued to be filmed on the wharf. Dale Lester and Brian wielded the axes and many joined in on the cross-cut. Jack and Sue provided the venue and a lovely lunch.

Then with Brian being injured 3 weeks before the Wooden Boat Festival things got a bit hectic but with the help of several very good friends things went as planned, Jack, Dale, Don, Mick and Robert were all very supportive. Friday saw the log delivered and on Saturday the wagon was hitched up and delivered supplies to a ship which took these provisions to Port Arthur. An estimated crowd of 250000 people attended over 3 days Quite a boost for Hobart's economy.

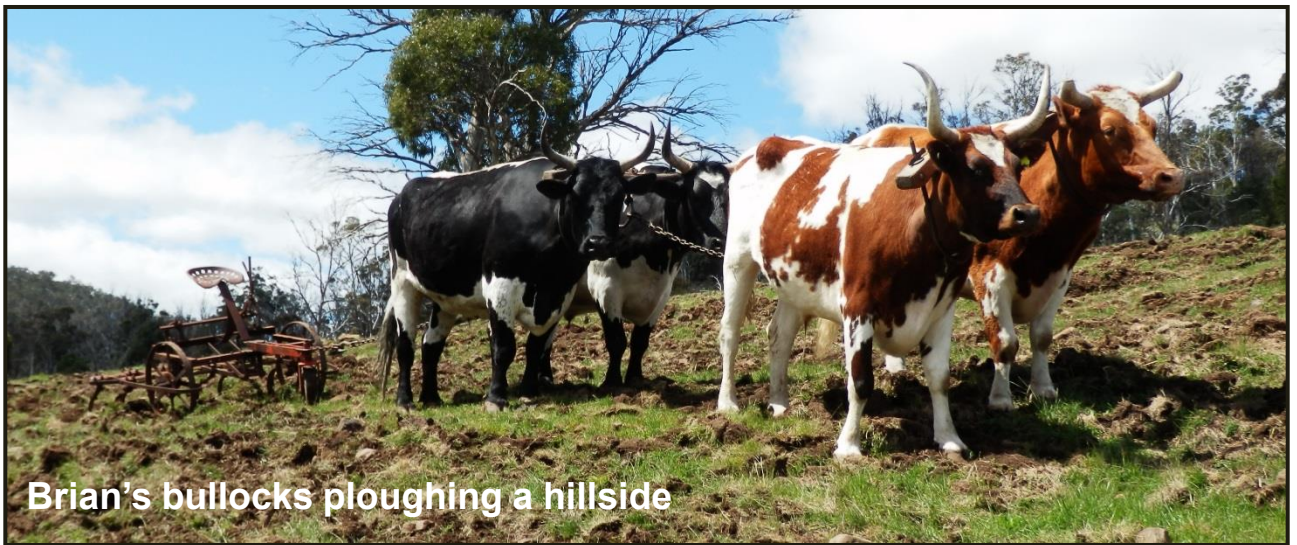
A few days before Christmas the bullocks took part in the Oatlands Christmas Parade for the first time and seemed to enjoy the Christmas excitement. February/March weekend was the National Historical Machinery Rally at Carrick. Another huge event for Tassie with Big crowds each day. The bullocks were again popular and with Brian still not able to yoke-up, Ross Young and Jack Lyall were called on as off-siders. Brian was honoured to be awarded the trophy for Committee Choice which he holds for 2 years until the next National Rally in Hamilton, Victoria 2017.

March long weekend was another 3 days this time at Steamfest at Sheffield and again big crowds attended. This time Don Brown was the off-sider and learnt quickly how to put a yoke on. The next 2 outings are March 28th at Hamilton Show [Tas] and Brighton School Fest in May.

By the time this goes to print we will have met old friends at Gayndah and will be getting the winter woolies out.

Brian and Lyn





Brian's bullocks ploughing a hillside

[With apologies to Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson and all Bush Poets of note]

Bullockies Gathering 2014

Well the Bullockies came to Tomerong in twenty and fourteen
 They came from North, South, East and West by car and van and plane
 They were the most diverse of mates that there was ever seen
 The heavens opened day by day the grass it grew and greened
 Both Ron and Ruth prepared and planned till all was well esteemed
 Each day there was a plan in place a sight to see and learn
 We rode on "Big Foot" for a shower we dried out in the warm
 "Wogamia" Farm was peace on earth the river flats in view
 With bullocks waiting to be off photographers on que
 So up the hill and round the bend before we had our lunch
 What stories there were told that day be didn't want for much
 The range of bovine breeds we saw to Nowra for the sale
 And then to see technology twas on the grandest scale
 The cows they came the cows they went without a driver near
 The milk produced was never seen the cost I'd say was dear
 Then South to Drury's farm we went the "Pigeon House" [mountain] was clear
 To see another team at work [I think we need a beer!]
 So come along and have a yarn sit down and take the load
 We really need to rest a while before we hit the road
 A cuppa would be nice just now so put the billy on
 And if we wait a little while someone will make a scone
 Now all we need is fish and chips and then a shopping spree
 Perhaps a never ending ride to find a giant tree
 And now the wood yard just a log or 2 or 3 or more
 Good heavens that's too big it won't come through the door !
 The Bullockies were all lined up resplendent to be seen
 Geoff, Richie, Ron and Phil were there Josh, Rohan Doug and Brian [F]
 Brian [W], Ross, John, Dave and Lou and Nevin too
 God bless them all and those long gone and those not mentioned here
 I'd like to think they have a team which stretches far and near
 And so our thoughts go back a while our memories grow dim
 But let us just remember the friendships we hold dear
 Our memories are building up our eyes recall the team
 At "Timber Hills", near Tomerong, Shoalhaven by the sea.



Geoff and Josh at the Royal Easter Show



Goodbye from Gleneden next stop Stanley

The Australian Bullock Drivers' League thanks our many contributors to this issue. Some of the news is obviously late, time has been short lately. Not long until the next issue is due, so send in your stories and pictures.