

Boomerang Bulletin

BOOMERANG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

Founded 1969

JUNE 2001

NO.110

THREE MEN & A BOOMERANG TITLE!






DID YOU KNOW ?

- It is 20 years since the first International Challenge with the USA in 1981.
- The front cover shows this year's Australian Champion, David Schummy, the BAA's first Champion, Peter Lewry, and the person who has won the title the most, Rob Croll.
- Roger Perry won the West Australian title just a head of Ian Sproul, who is getting married in July.
- On July 4th Ken Arthur, our oldest competitive thrower, turns 80. He has been throwing boomerangs for 70 years.
- Bob Burwell has been throwing boomerangs for just over 50 years too.
- Les and Arthur Janetzki were vaudeville performers in the 1920s and 1930s. They were grocers by trade and moved to Albury in 1949 to be nearer duck shooting. In the mornings Les would ride his bike around the district to collect orders, and in the afternoon Arthur would deliver them on his bicycle. Les was a champion gymnast and won a competition at St. Kilda once. In his 80s he could still hold himself out parallel to the ground on a pole outside their house in Tarakan Avenue.
- Spike Smith, whose mother was a sister of Les and Arthur, taught 'the boys' to drive and helped them buy their house as well as their Jones Street shop in Albury. Spike inherited the Janetzki collection. He has distributed some of this amongst relatives. Spike's wife is Anne, who collects clowns (no, not Spike!).
- Bruce Carter has a new big black friendly dog. If you stay with Bruce you are bound to sleep with it sometime. So far it is not top-of-the-class at the obedience school!!
- At the Annual Meeting we elected a new President, Morris Maxwell, who was a founding member of the BAA in 1969. He served many years as Secretary. This is his first stint as President. His brother, Dennis, is a past President.
- Dean Hopton ran a competition at Nyanda High School grounds in Salisbury, Queensland. It was a small field of three throwers. Good to see their keenness.
- Arthur Janetzki's cat was called Samantha. They had another cat called Weenie.



- The Janetzki's owned four cars in their time: A Model Ford; Prefect; Vauxhall 6; and a Hillman. The Hillman was bought by our longest serving sponsor, Mike Egan, for his daughter, Margaret. Mike runs the funeral company Lester & Son.
- In 2002 the Nationals are in Perth, and the World Cup is in Keil, Germany.





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BOOMERANG BULLETIN



Queensland's Nyanda High Meeting, Salisbury

Results

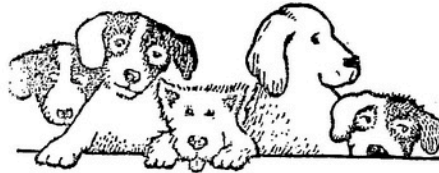
Competitor	Accuracy	Fast Ct.Rd.1	Fast Ct.Rd.2	Aussie Rd.1	Aussie Rd.2
Russell Hansen	14	64.62	67.19	12	56
Vernon Smith	6	2 cts	1 ct	19	10
Dean Hopton	12	1 ct	44	49	36

Conditions: Wind gusty. Temperature 15-26 degrees.
Thanks to Greg and Nyanda High for the field.
10th June 2001





KEEP SMILING



COMING EVENTS 2001+.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

14th October 2001 (postponed from March due to floods) ... Central Coast Championships at St. Edward's College, East Gosford, at 10 a.m. Contact: Br. Brian Thomas (02) 9744 9346. *Arthur Janetzki Perpetual Trophy.*

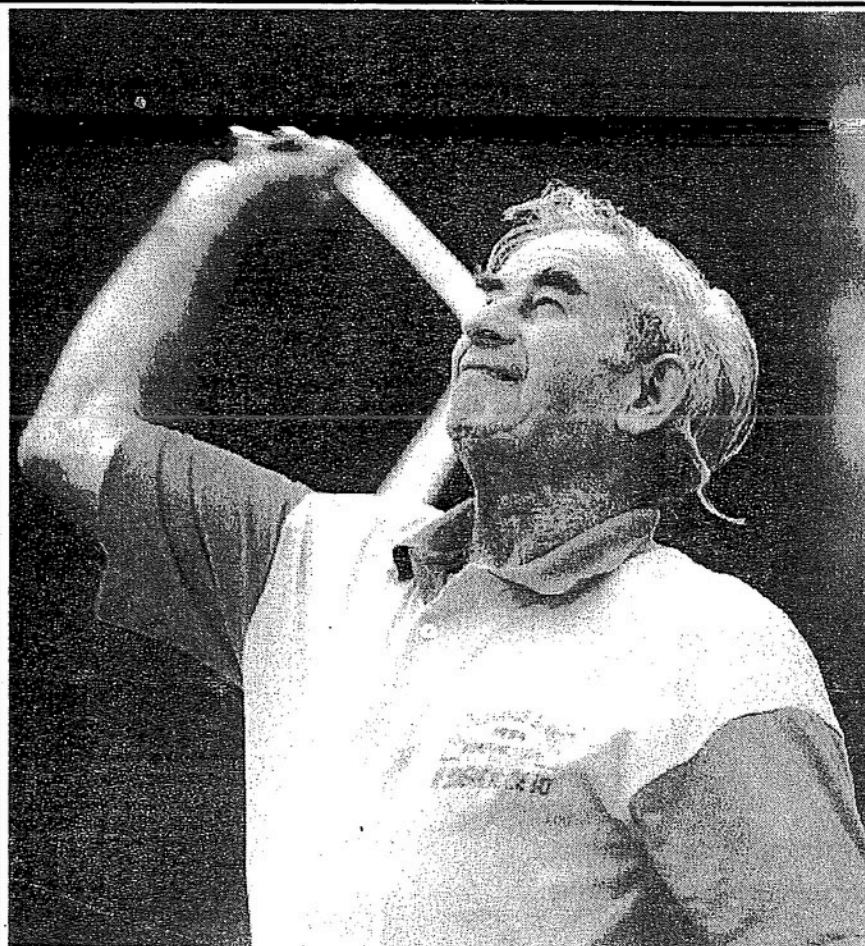
23rd September 2001 ... NSW State Titles at Blacktown Showgrounds. 10 a.m. start. Contact: Peter Lewry (02) 9622 2927. Sponsored by Peter & Leonie Adams of Yackandandah, Vic. *Dave Martin Perpetual Trophy.*

25th November 2001 ... Blue Mts Championships at 'Winbourne', Mulgoa Rd, Mulgoa, at 10 a.m. Contact: Br. Brian Thomas (02) 9744 9346. *Peggy Thomas Memorial Trophy.*

**** 2002 Australian National Championships will beheld at Great Southern River, Gosnells, Perth, Western Australia, in 21st & 22nd April.**
Organiser: Roger Perry 08 9398 1681 or 040 968 7131. Interstate throwers' accommodation will be covered by billeting.

July/August 2002 World Boomerang Cup to be held in Kiel, Germany.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

● Ken Arthur warms up for the Maximum Time Aloft event at the contest.

Ed What do you know about the origin of these different shapes that are now so popular?

Jacky Well the aboriginals didn't have the majority of shapes now used. They certainly had hooks, but most aboriginal boomerangs were in traditional (conventional) form. When you come to a hunting killer type boomerang, the shape depended on what part of Australia you were in. In the early days, Central Australian boomerangs were all in exactly the same shape within a centimetre or two, and each tribe would have maybe one or two boomerang makers who'd make boomerangs for everybody - set to a standard. A bit further north - north east of Alice Springs - the Warramunga people designed that number 7 shaped killer boomerang. That extended to the far west of Queensland and to Tennant's Creek. But nowadays they are made by the Wangkayi people of West Australia. They were not originally boomerang people - they were spear men. I've been able to pick where Australian aboriginal boomerangs come from by their shape. This is very evident for arguments sake when you get to the Kimberleys in NW Australia. Here they were a traditional shaped boomerang but with very sharp ends on them.

Ed Were these returning boomerangs?

Jacky Yes, quite good returning boomerangs. Strangely enough, those people had the returning boomerang then you won't find one for miles. You cross W.A. right through the N.T. till you come to SW Queensland before you'll find another returning boomerang. How the isolation occurred, with 1500 or 2000 miles in between areas with returning boomerangs, is unknown. It seems to indicate to me when the natives first hit Australia they undoubtedly stuck to the coast for a good while. Those that moved down the east coast brought the boomerang with them and those that moved down the west coast brought the boomerang with them.

Ed Perhaps one clue is that the returning boomerang wasn't of much use far inland. What did the aboriginals use the returning boomerang for?

Jacky Well, according to local old fellas here, who are long since dead, they did use a returning boomerang for hunting birds. They'd stretch a net across a creek and all women, kids and dogs would stir the birds up off the water and the natives 50 yards back from the net would hurl those returning boomers up over the birds. The ducks and swans would get the impression there were hawks or something up there and the birds would go straight for the water and hit the net. Then they'd get clobbered. I've never seen it done. It's easy to understand that a returning boomerang, if it's big and heavy enough, will knock birds down. I once threw a boomerang into a flock of galahs and killed four with one throw. They fly into the boomerang trying to dodge it. A curving thing is hard to get out of the way of.

Ed What is the hunting stick used for?

Jacky Oh, a variety of things. It's not impossible to kill a kangaroo with a big heavy hunting boomerang. I've seen natives gathering up various creatures with boomerangs. In Oodnadatta years ago they'd get rabbits on the run. They'd never miss a running rabbit at 25 to 30 yards - they threw 5, 10, 15 feet in front of them and knock them rotten. Small marsupials also.

But what I saw them use them on with great effect were the big sand goannas, which live in holes down under the ground, and they can run. You'd be flat to keep up with them over 20 to 30 yards, they are pretty fast little sprinters. When they poked their head up above the ground the natives would bloody nearly knock their heads off. I smashed one to pieces one day but he still got the better of me. I saw him on the road, coming from Ayers Rock. I jammed the breaks on, pulled out a killer boomerang, and let fly, knocked him rotten but he beat me into the scrub.

I think they had a variety of uses, they were probably used for fighting more than in hunting. And yet strangely enough the Yadrathurra people over near Flinders Ranges, weren't spear men, they got all their game with the boomerang, they were professional boomerang throwers. But they are all gone now, except for a few half cast relatives.

Ed How is a hunting stick thrown?

Jacky Parallel to the ground, not upright as with the returning boomerang. 30 years ago, a fella told me that at Alice Springs probably 30 to 40 years prior to that, say about 70 years ago, a policeman with a couple of trackers was hunting an aboriginal who was wanted for murder. The tracker said, "we're very close to him now" and a boomerang came up off the ground, one of those with a hook on the end, and it ricocheted off the ground and hit the knee pad of his saddle. The tracker said the native had bounced the boomerang off the ground.

Ed What do you know of competitions with boomerangs in the early days?

Jacky Eighty or ninety years ago, when they bought the Kanaka's over to north Queensland to harvest the sugar cane at 1/- a week wages, they were indentured for one, two or three years and so on. A popular Sunday sport up there was boomerang throwing. Now an old fella who lived in Shepparton told me in about 1936 or 1937 that in all the competitions the great sport was bouncing a returning boomerang off the ground. None of our fellas do that.

Ed Except accidentally.

Jacky Yes, except accidentally. And it happened with a boomerang Bill Onus got me to throw at the Wangarratta Show probably 20 years ago. Billy turned up at the show selling boomerangs, and we had to put on a demonstration during the Grand Parade. Billy threw his beautiful boomerang which he'd had for years. He was bla, bla, bla about how good it was. I said, "Come on Bill throw the bloody thing," and he couldn't get it back within 20 feet. I said, "Give it to an old white fella and I'll show you how you should throw a boomerang." It hit the ground about 50 yards in front of where I threw, it bounced into the air, went over the crowd round the corner post of the grand stand and right back into my hand. And Billy Onus said, "My God you can be lucky - could have decapitated somebody." The point is that it seemed to get extra spin, go further out, I reckon about 80 yards. You see that 7 shape boomerang if you just follow that angle round, when that boomerang hits the ground it gets a little short kick, the boomerang will kick up in the air. That could be

thrown for arguments sake into a flock of galahs or cockatoos, on the ground, you might clobber one on the way down, and then it hits the ground, goes up with the rising birds as they take wing the boomerang follows them up in the air. Maybe get one that way. But I've never had any experience of bush natives throwing number 7's in that way.

Ed What sort of boomerang did you throw for Bill Onus?

Jacky I'd say standard shape, but made out of engineering fibre. Bill made wooden boomerangs of course. When they cut all the old elms down at St. Kilda road, Bill was out with a chain saw cutting off all the elbows. Made thousands of boomerangs out of elm trees - beautiful wood. But the bulk of his boomerangs were made from engineering fibre. They were subject to warpage when they got wet, but my God they used to fly beautifully, only 1/8 inch thick but very heavy. They were pretty dangerous to catch.

Bill once asked me to throw one for a fella at the Wangarratta Show as Bill couldn't leave his stand. Bill said if you can catch it I'll give it to you. And that boomerang went out 70 yards, up about 100 feet, came down like a helicopter, and I caught it first go and Bill said "That's the cheapest boomerang you'll ever bloody get". But it was a magnificent flying boomerang. And he sold this fella a boomerang for 30/-.

Ed I suppose if those early boomerangs were dangerous and hard to catch that might be another reason why the sport didn't catch on.

Jacky Could be. But, as I said, in 1934 there were ply wood boomerangs on the market but they didn't take on because it was blackfella business. In those years nobody would be seen talking to one hardly.

Ed Is Queensland the only place where competitions were held by aboriginals?

Jacky The only place I know but in modern years of course we had boomerang throwing competitions in Victoria and N.S.W. The start of the B.A.A. was when the aboriginals conducted boomerang throwing competitions. In fact I've got the nicest trophy ever been given - a set of crockery from which I got the design for my boomerangs - made by Guy Boyd.

Ed What a superb prize. He made that for Bill Onus to give as a prize?

Jacky I won it at the Yarra Weir Sports meeting, an annual event. Bill Onus came up, with quite a few others. They were the top throwers in Victoria in those years. Dennis Maxwell was involved; this was maybe in 1957 or 1958.

Ed What sort of competitions were they?

Jacky I'd say there was only one competition, which is similar to our general competition. One main thing was distance, accuracy on return and catching. There were no specific points given. The boomerang was thrown out and it was a consensus of public opinion by hand clapping and so on, as to who was the best. And we had some of the top throwers. We had old Laurie Moffatt who was the oldest of six full blooded Victorian aboriginals. Laurie

was an old timer boomerang specialist; he lived all his life making and selling boomerangs. He was from Lake Tyers aboriginal mission. Also there was Freddie Harrison, Cliffy Hayes, Bill Onus himself, Eric Onus and two or three other Onuses, young fellas. There were a couple of brothers from Melbourne, short fellows. I've never seen them anywhere near a boomerang field since but they were magnificent throwers. They always used a glove to catch. They had some excellent throwers at this Yarra Weir Sports meeting organized by the Soldier Settlement crowd since the end of the war. It's had more top ranking athletes, boxing runners and everything. I think last year could have been its last meeting.

Originally they invited Bill Onus so he decided to get some people together to have a competition. I was the only local boomerang man about, I won the bloody thing. There was another good thrower, I can't remember his name, but he was a very early TV compere, I think he went to the U.S.A.

Ed Well then Bill Onus really set up the B.A.A?

Jacky Yes that's right. The first meeting was held at Northcote I think. It was won by Dennis Maxwell.

At a Canberra meeting once, I went in the Major event like we have now and I never threw better in my life and I went flat on my back, foot slipped or something. Knocked myself out. I was out cold for a minute, then I got up and went on throwing.

But I got to be too busy making the damn things. I've never had a pet boomerang, not one I could call my own. I've always just grabbed a stock boomerang. Now I might make myself a few and take up boomerang throwing as a sport.

Ed Why do you think the Yanks beat us in the Boomerang Cup?

Jacky I can tell you I was never under any bloody delusions. I'd seen the Americans throw in America, and I know we've got some damn good throwers but I couldn't see us throwing any better than what I'd seen over there. What the Yanks did to my way of thinking was to take the game seriously. We never had the team co-operation, we never worked as a team. In Melbourne, after the first test, the Americans discussed for two hours what they did wrong. They told one another where they made the boo boos. You have to reckon they've got the top boomerang throwers in the U.S.A. out of 200 million people and we've got the top throwers out of 15 million.

Ed Do you think we know the best throwers in Australia?

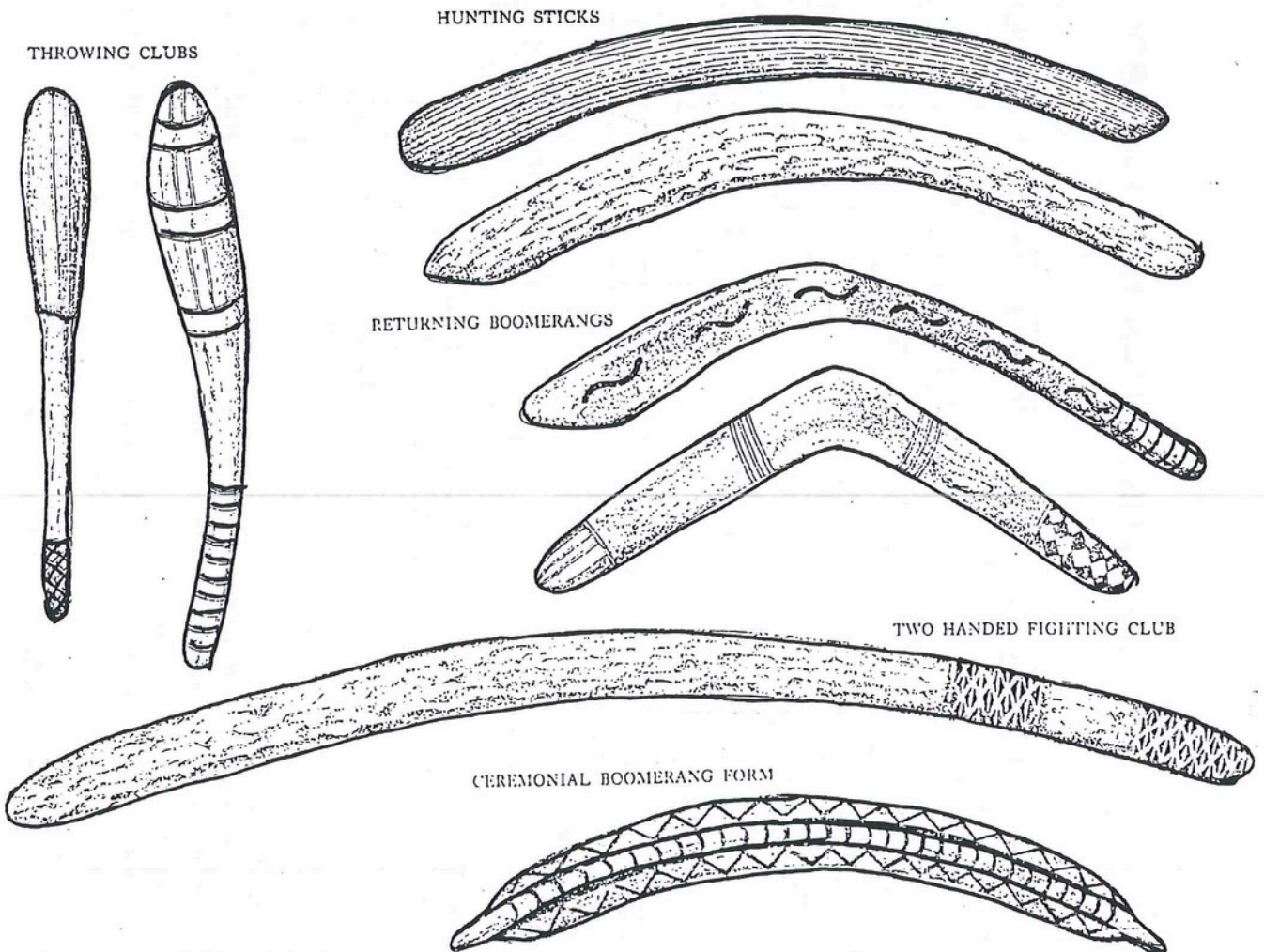
Jacky I'm not too sure of that. I remember throwing the boomerang at a big carnival at Yamba. A fella approached me and said, "Where are you from with all the boomerangs," I told him who I was. He said, "Would you mind if I had a throw?" He was a healthy bloke, close to 60 years old. He sent that boomerang out for 60 yards, and back into his hands with his first throw, with a strange boomerang. He had 6 throws, every one the same. There might be more like him around.

Of course we had excellent throwers, like Joe Timbery, who has passed on now. Joe could make a boomerang do anything. You'd have one of the windiest days and he would have a boomerang sit above his head like a bloody helicopter.

Ed You hear these sorts of stories all the time.

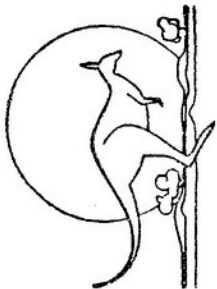
Jacky Of course. Joe Timbery threw for the Queen out here 30 years ago, and he caught a boomerang with his feet.
I've seen old Laurie Moffatt at Lakes Entrance, at Christmas time, with millions of people there. The aboriginals were throwing right in the heart of the town, near the pier. The boomerang that one aboriginal threw came back and landed in a pram with a tiny baby in it. The fella with the pram nearly clobbered me and I said, "I didn't throw it, I don't know anything about them. I'm just an onlooker like you," and he apologized. Then he tackled the aboriginal, so I said to them, "Come on, we'll go round down the beach to a spot where it is open." The crowd followed us down and Laurie Moffatt threw a 24 inch boomerang, heavy ply wood. He threw it out over the sea and it went out 30 or 40 yards and it came back and as soon as I saw it coming back I could see it starting to rise and I could see it ending up in the crowd. Laurie Moffatt, over 65 years old, took one leap and plucked the boomerang out of the sky, with his right hand. It was the first time I'd seen a one handed catch with a 24 inch heavy boomerang. The crowd cheered but they didn't know how close they were to getting clobbered.

Ed Jack, thanks for telling us all those yarns. I hope I can talk to you again before too long.



The Boomerang: evolution and development

Boomerang illustrations courtesy of HERB A. SMITH, England.



2001 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOOMERANG CHAMPIONSHIPS

held at Xavier College, Fallon St., North Albury, on 5th & 6th May 2001

Results

Competitor	Hand	Aussie Round	Accuracy	Fast Catch	Endurance	MTA 100	TC/Doubling	Sn.Over-all	Vet. Over-all
Russell Hansen	R	68/e18th	39/3rd	53.19/14th	10/e13th	26.10/5th	6/e12th	66.5/9th	
Larry Galbraith	R	107/8th	16/e20th	4ct/e19th	dnc	0/e20th	dnc	108.5/21st	
Kevin Moran	R	60/21st	27/e9th	58.77/18th	0/e19th	12.89/17th	0/e16th	104/20th	24/4th
Nick Gottschalk	R	76/e14th	18/18th	3ct/22nd	dnc	13.55/16th	0/e16th	99/19th	25/5th
Br.R. Shoebridge	R	104/9th	26/e11th	51.49/13th	2/e17th	14.50/15th	dnc	84.5/14th	16/3rd
Brian Kemp	R	76/e14th	16/e20th	35.20/8th	21/5th	15.60/13th	23/7th	68/e10th	13/2nd
Br. Brian Thomas	R	96/12th	30/e7th	38.61/9th	2/e17th	16.67/11th	0/e16th	75.5/12th	12/1st
Craig Carter	R	68/e18th	20/17th	43.55/10th	32/1st	24.50/6th	41/2nd	54.5/8th	
Trent Carter	R	98/11th	31/6th	26.75/3rd	20/e6th	28.15/4th	35/3rd	47.5/6th	
Jessie Galbraith	R	49/23rd	25/13th	55.94/17th	dnc	0/e20th	0/e16th	113/22nd	
Rob Croll	R	127/3rd	27/e9th	30.85/5th	23/4th	45.70/1st	34/4th	26.4/2nd	
Gunter Wandtke	R	117/7th	33/5th	29.30/4th	16/10th	21.56/9th	21/8th	43/4th	
Shirley Lewry	R	61/20th	5/22nd	2ct/23rd	1/18th	12.30/18th	0/e16th	119.5/23rd	
Morris Maxwell	R	118/e5th	17/19th	53.43/15th	0/e19th	15.00/14th	4/e14th	97.5/18th	
Dave Richardson	R	59/22nd	36/4th	54.06/16th	20/e6th	10.60/19th	6/e12th	95/17th	
Peter Lewry	L	91/13th	24/e14th	43.92/11th	20/e6th	0/e20th	18/e10th	91/15th	
Steve Dick	R	73/16th	30/e7th	33.65/7th	14/12th	23.47/7th	0/e16th	68/e10th	
David Schummy	R	122/4th	44/1st	26.39/2nd	26/e2nd	30.93/3rd	32/5th	17.5/1st*	
Paul Croft AJ	R	70/17th	24/e14th	51.39/12th	9/15th	0/e20th	4/e14th	94.5/16th	
Richard Kim	R	101/10th	4/23rd	4ct/e19th	15/11th	22.19/8th	19/9th	81/13th	
Adam Carroll	L	150/1st	23/16th	4ct/e19th	20/e6th	31.19/2nd	30/6th	51.5/7th	
Bruce Carter	L	146/2nd	40/2nd	25.26/1st	10/e13th	15.62/12th	42/1st	31.5/3rd	
Fedde Engwerda	R	118/e5th	26/e11th	32.89/6th	26/e2nd	20.49/10th	18/e10th	46/5th	

Many thanks to our sponsors Mike Egan (Lester & Son), and Dawn and Doug Rixon of T-Shirt World.

Nearest the Pin: David Schummy 950 mm

Junior Champion: Trent Carter.

Senior Over-all Champion for Les & Arthur Janetzki Trophy: David Schummy.

Junior Consecutive Catch: Craig Carter.

Veteran Champion: Br. Brian Thomas.

Ladies Consecutive Catch: Shirley Lewry.

Ladies' Champion: Shirley Lewry.



Sorry Brian.

Monday, May 7, 2001

Many happy returns

A MELBOURNE family has dominated the Australian National Boomerang Championships in Albury at the weekend.

The Carter family took out first, second and third in the trick catching with father Bruce winning, son Trent second, and brother Craig third.

Trent also broke the record for junior fast-catching with five throws and catches in 26.83 seconds.

Craig also set the junior record for endurance throwing.

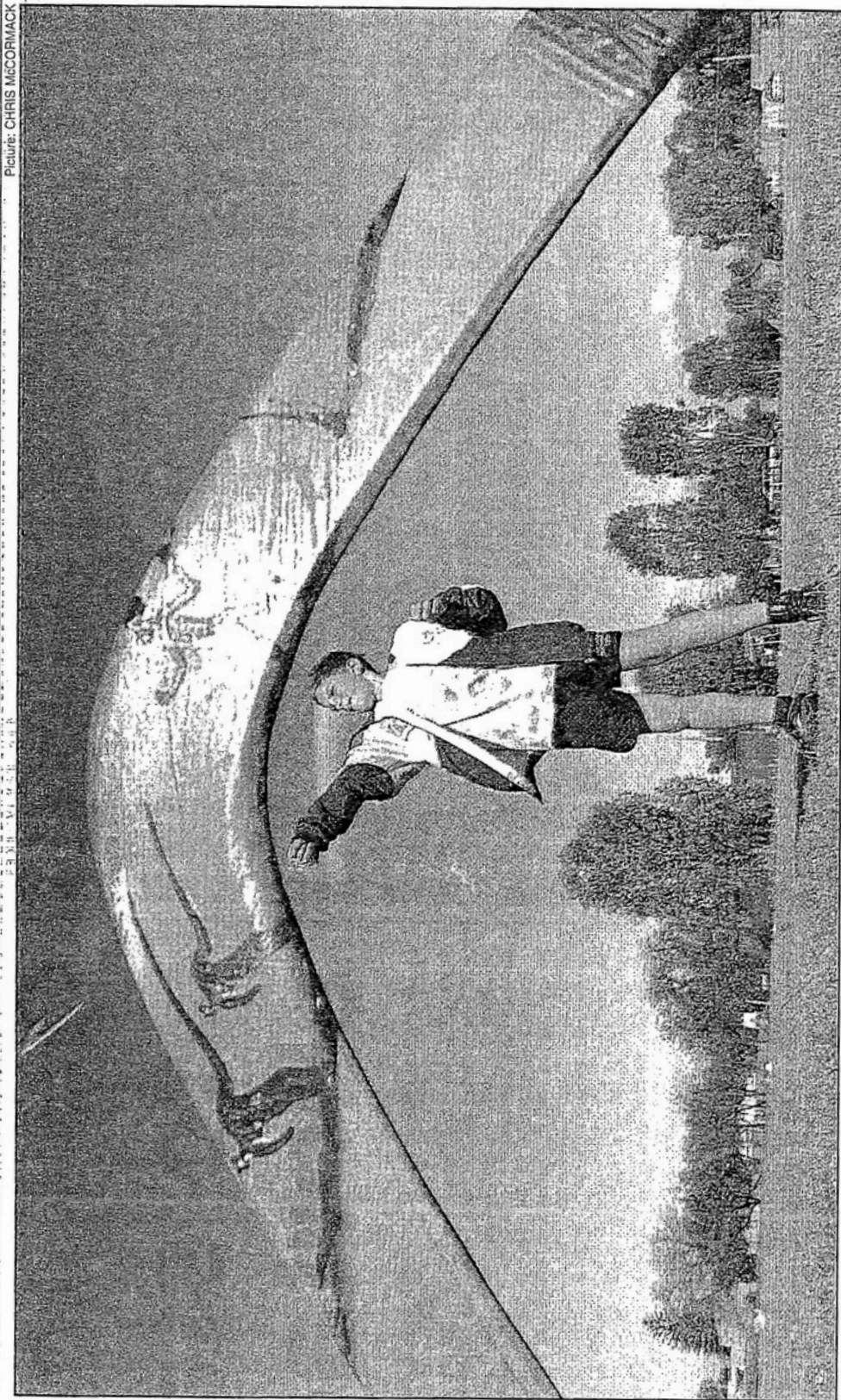
He took 32 catches in five minutes.

Craig defeated all the senior competitors.

The championships, at Xavier High School, attracted 23 competitors.

Organiser Mr Brian Thomas said the event was held in Albury two out of every three years.

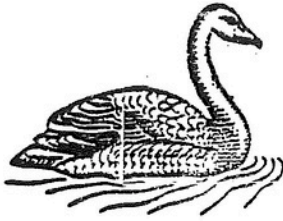
— MATTHEW CULLEN



Pictures: CHRIS MCCORMACK

© Trent Carter, 11, set the record for the junior under 17 fastcatch of 26.83 seconds for five throws and catches in Albury at the weekend.





WEST AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

2001 West Australian Championships
held at Southern River, Perth, on May 5th 2001

Results

Competitor	Trick Catch	Fast Catch	Aussie Round	MTA	Endurance	Accuracy	Over-all
Roger Perry	20 / 3rd	29.38 / 2nd	102 / 2nd	38.21 / 2nd	40 / 1st	45 / 1st	55 / 1st
Ian Sproul	46 / 1st	28.51 / 1st	108 / 1st	30.80 / 3rd	31 / 4th	35 / 3rd	54 / 2nd
Troy McLean	15 / 4th	2c / 8th	74 / 7th	41.36 / 1st	33 / 3rd	15 / 7th	35 / 4th
Lance Thomas	3 / 9th	41.47 / 3rd	79 / 4th	13.52 / 9th	29 / 5th	11 / 9th	25 / 7th
Grant Perry	12 / 6th	49.09 / 4th	73 / 8th	23.05 / 7th	36 / 2nd	18 / 6th	31 / 5th
Ryan Perry	13 / 5th	3c / 6th	86 / 3rd	26.82 / 5th	26 / 6th	36 / 2nd	36.5 / 3rd
Aston Ladzinski	3 / 9th	4c / 5th	33 / 10th	29.80 / 4th	9 / 8th	8 / 11th	17 / 9th
Glen Lee	5 / 7th	3c / 6th	62 / 9th	22.85 / 8th	16 / 7th	24 / 4th	22.5 / 10th
Steve Pankhurst	23 / 2nd	dnc	75 / 6th	24.25 / 6th	dnc	21 / 5th	27.5 / 4th
Leonie Metzakis	dnc	dnc	20 / 12th	dnc	dnc	11 / 9th	4.5 / 12th
Angie Leicester	dnc	dnc	28 / 11th	dnc	dnc	14 / 8th	7 / 11th
John Macdiarmid	dnc	dnc	75 / 6th	dnc	dnc	8 / 11th	9 / 10th

The state competitions were held at Southern River on Saturday the 5th of May. Conditions varied from 5 to 8km winds in the morning and the usual stronger 10 to 15km winds in the afternoon. Luckily as we finished the last event and were on our way home the rain came and stayed for the following 3 days.

For the 5th year in a row only 1 point separated 1st to 2nd place overall winner Roger Perry from Ian Sproull. Highlights of the day were some amazing MTA flights from Ryan Perry who had 2 plus 1 minute flights only to land just outside the circles and first competition thrower Aston who also landed just outside the circles with a 50+ second flight.

Steve Pankhurst who was in the Australian team in Germany 1992 and who has just returned from England made the comps after an 8 year break.

All in all a great competition to get us all started for the World Cup next year, after a 1 year break from Melbourne competitions will now be held monthly leading up to the Cup.

West Australia welcomes those of you on the other side of Australia to the Australian Championships. We will try to billet as many throwers as possible so as to keep the costs low.

More detailed information will be available later, if you are interested in attending you can let us know and we will at this early stage start looking into the accommodation. Please contact Roger Perry on: 08 93991129 or fax 08 93991763 address 18 Cross Rd Bedforddale 6112.

Email info@rangsboomerangs.com

We all look forward to seeing you in Perth next April.



Bill Moore Feature by Brian Kemp

Bill Moore has spent almost 50 years collecting, studying and making boomerangs. Now, at the age of 84, he lives on a farm at Wool Wool near Colac, Victoria.

Bill served in the Australian 2nd/23rd Regiment (Albany's Own) during the World War II and was given his first two boomerangs in Albany just before embarking for the North African Campaign. These boomerangs came from Lake Tyers and were given to him by Conney Edwards. He describes one as being a boomerang and one as a 'glider' because of the way it was trimmed and its long hovering flight. He managed to get another boomerang in Perth whilst en route and he threw this wherever he could until it was broken at Beersheba.

Bill fought at El Alamein and was taken prisoner and worked in the mines in Germany until he was repatriated.

On his travels around Australia, usually on his motorcycle, Bill has collected, and borrowed boomerangs wherever he could and has had castings taken from them in iron, brass and aluminium. The oldest boomerang he has a cast from was made in 1895 and he also has a casting of a very early La Perouse boomerang. Bill uses these as models for his natural wood boomerangs.

The Moore family originally came from Panmiure in the Warnambool district and moved to Wattle Hill near Moonlight Head where they ran the one and only Hotel. The surrounding Otway Ranges abound in native timbers and over the years Bill has collected tree roots over a wide area. Now his many relatives collect likely pieces for him from all over Australia. One piece of red gum was retrieved from under the water in the Murray River and could be hundreds of years old.

He uses his lower leg and foot as a rough guide to the angle he needs and if the root approximates

this angle it has potential to make a good boomerang. he has used many timbers including red gum, blue gum, messmate, black wattle, tea tree, yellow box, apple willow etc, but prefers blackwood. His niece jokingly says that if a passing dog stood still long enough "Uncle Bill would have its hind leg off for a boomerang". To soften the wood for working he leaves the rough elbows in various cattle troughs around the property. When he is ready the elbows are cut into slices for shaping. At one time he used a power band saw but he has gone back to his much loved handsaws, his favourite being a large meat saw that has no set on the teeth.

Various models have differing balance points marked on the back near the elbow. This is determined by balancing the rough formed shape on the blade of his pocket knife. He uses a wide range of rasps to shape the aerofoil on the wings and he carves the dihedral or bend into the lifting arm so that it is permanent rather than bend it in later. Most of the finishing is done with his trusty pocket knife as he scrapes away the surface. The boomerang is cradled along the left arm as he scrapes and smooths the wood. At this stage it is a case of test throw and refine the shape and his numerous dogs prove very helpful at retrieving wayward boomerangs.

Bill rarely treats the wood with paints or varnishes, preferring to leave the wood in its raw state. Occasionally he uses eucalyptus oil to prevent cracking or kerosene to discourage borers. Usually a finishing rub with sandpaper is sufficient for him.

Each boomerang has the initial "M" marked on the front at the elbow and an arrow at the tip of the trailing arm. Most have the details on the back as to when it was made, the wood used and the original design from which it was styled ... not directly copied. If Bill wants any decoration he uses an old long drill bit which he heats and uses to burn the design into the wood.

His workshop is an old wooden caravan cum trailer that sits out in the paddock tilted at a precarious angle and surrounded by rejected roots and other debris. He squats on a cushion on the floor and uses a vice bolted onto a huge block of wood to hold the work. Outside the door is an antique wooden jawed vice that allows him to work outside in the sun and look out over the vast expanse of Lake Corangamite.

If you ask to see some finished examples Bill is likely to drag out three or four huge sacks bulging with boomerangs and tip them out at your feet. He can tell you the history and inspiration for each one and the different grips and style of throw required. Among them you are likely to come across originals made by Bill Onus, Frank Donellan, Jack Byham, Chook Mullet, Granpa Mullet, Harold Hayes, Jackie McRivers etc ... the greats in Australian boomerang making.

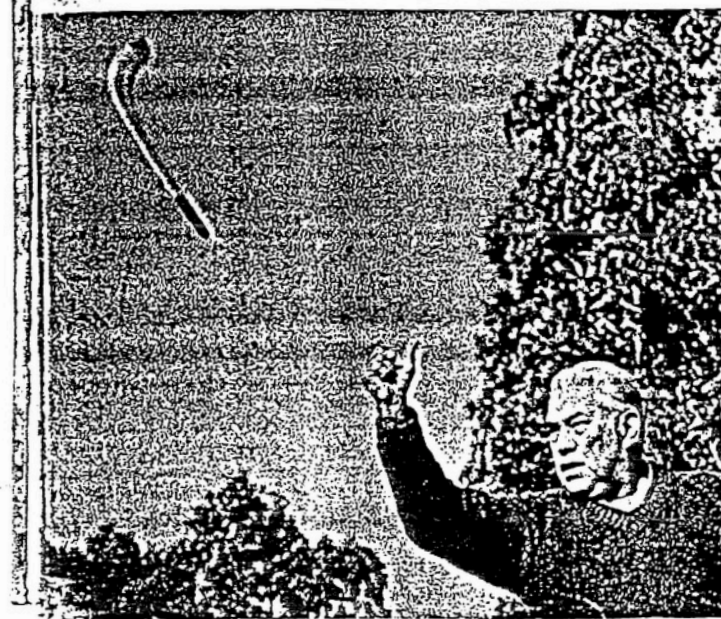
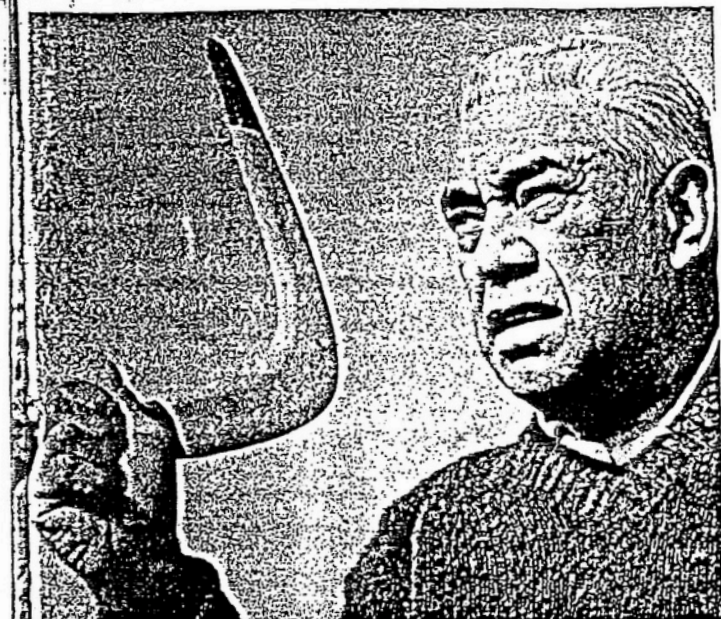
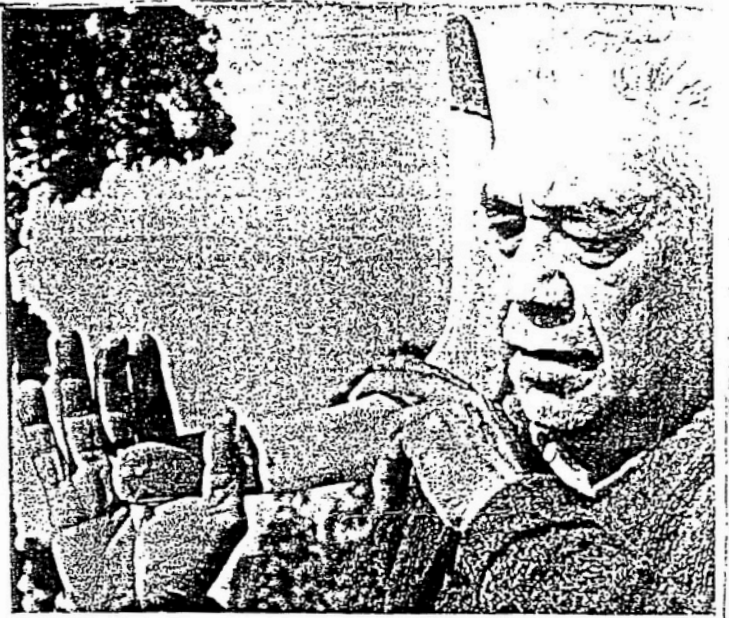
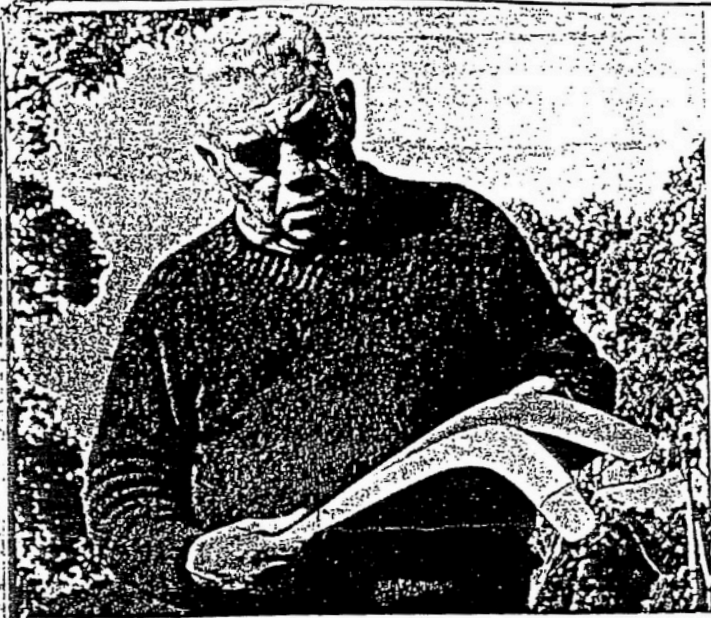
Some of the more recently made boomerangs have never been thrown because Bill says he is getting a bit old for throwing although he just can't stop making them. Bill is also an avid collector of new items and anything he considers newsworthy he clips from newspapers and magazines and pastes into scrapbooks. Photographs or articles to do with boomerangs are featured throughout these numerous scrapbooks and photo albums and because of this Bill has been able to make contact with boomerang enthusiasts all over the world.

It saddens Bill that none of his family have inherited his compulsively urge to make boomerangs but they all keep looking for suitable wood for him and they enjoy throwing the results of Bill's craftsmanship.

As for Bill, he is never happier than when he is talking about his beloved boomerangs.

Good on you Bill and thanks Brian for the great article Ed.





BILL ONUS SHOWS HIS STYLE



BLACKTOWN 2001

Aussie Round Fun Day

held at Blacktown Showgrounds on 17th June 2001



Sponsors: Blacktown Council and Roger Perry of Rangs Boomerangs

Results

Competitors	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Best Two	Place
Kevin Moran	28	24	38	25	28 + 38 = 66	12th
Tim Lendrum	13	40	26	36	40 + 36 = 76	10th
Koji from Japan	31	0	29	6	31 + 29 = 60	13th
Terry Patterson	29	10	30	65	30 + 65 = 95	6th
Megan Patterson	5	0	23	29	23 + 29 = 52	14th
Shirley Lewry	18	16	30	20	30 + 20 = 50	15th
Br. Brian Thomas	56	57	60	65	60 + 65 = 125	1st
Richard Kim Kyung Seok	24	27	36	57	36 + 57 = 93	7th
Jim Lendrum	44	18	14	54	44 + 54 = 98	e4th
Tony Butz	44	24	51	54	51 + 54 = 105	2nd
Peter Lewry	38	34	40	39	40 + 39 = 79	9th
Paul Croft AJ	46	30	52	23	46 + 52 = 98	e4th
Wayne Patterson	43	30	45	16	43 + 45 = 88	8th
Margaret Patterson	8	30	44	28	30 + 44 = 74	11th
Mark Patterson	19	26	9	4	19 + 26 = 45	16th
Gunter Wandtke	46	56	28	43	46 + 56 = 102	3rd

Winner of KEN ARTHUR PERPETUAL TROPHY: Br. Brian Thomas.

Thanks to the Blacktown Council for the Showgrounds & to Roger Perry for his boomerangs.

Farewell to Koji who returns to Japan next month with a new skill!

Weather: Mild and fairly calm with wind gusts now and again, often changing direction.

Thanks to our organisers Peter and Shirley Lewry.

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