



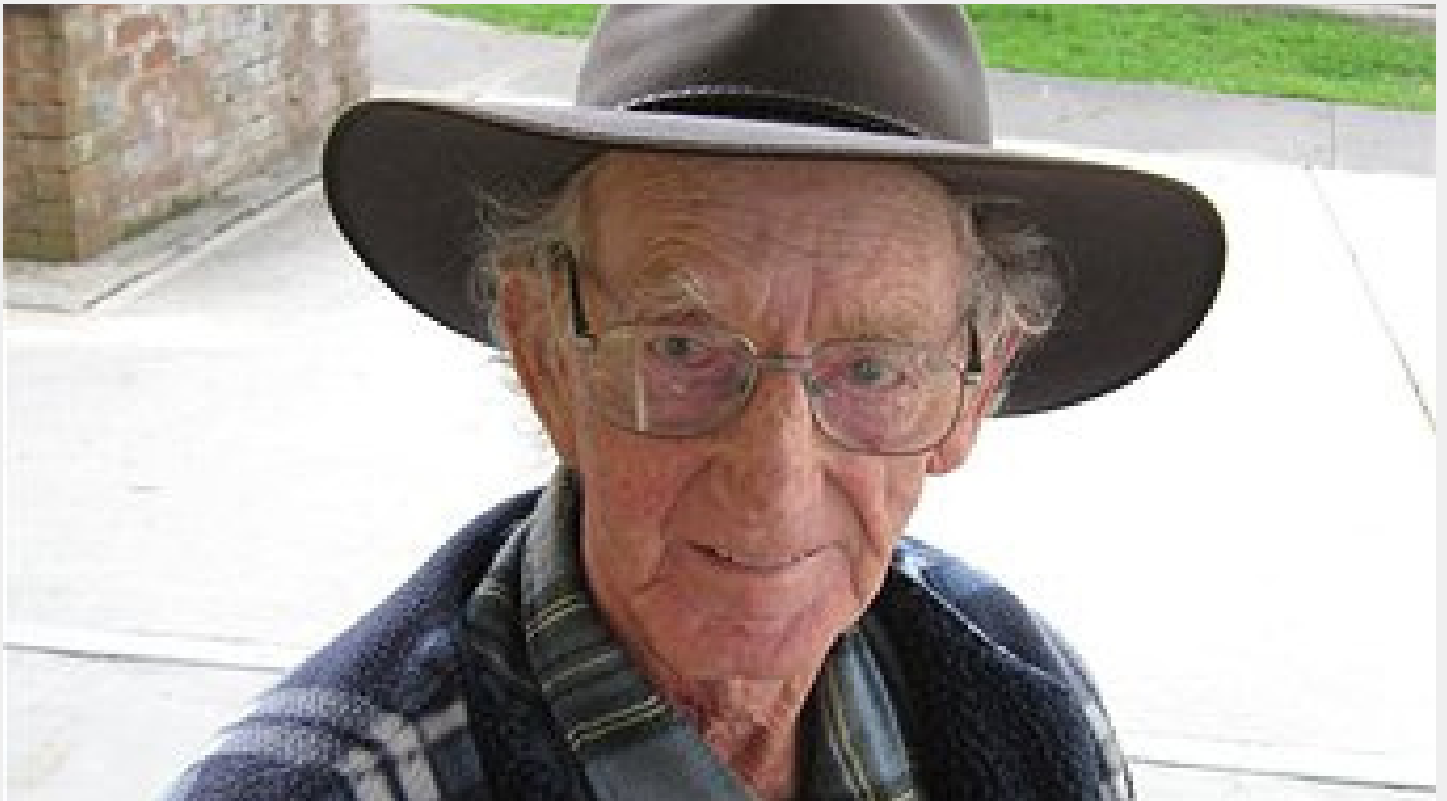
# THE BOOMERANG BULLETIN



March 2024

BOOMERANG ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA

Issue 142



## **R.I.P THE BOOMERANG MAN FROM BOWNA JEFF LEWRY 1932-2023**

“BOOMERANG MAN”

Jeff passed away peacefully in palliative care with loving family by his side on Saturday 30th September 2023, at the age of 90 years.

Loved husband of Barbara.

Loved dad to Peter, Joseph (dec), Carol, James, Mark, Naomi and Ruth.

Loved Grand dad and Great Grand dad.

WE WILL MISS HIS STORIES AND JOKES  
Text from hossackfunerals





# Join the BAA



## Membership Renewals Now Due!

Please mark in you calendar renewals are due January yearly.

### **Memberships Available**

Junior (Under 16 years) \$10.00

Social \$10.00

Competitive Thrower (16+ years) \$15.00

Veteran (55 + years) \$15.00

Family Membership \$25.00

International \$15.00

### **Payment Details**

Direct deposit via bank (Australian Residents only)

BSB: 063-151 Account: 0090 4182

For more information visit the BAA website or contact us vis email

[baaustralia@outlook.com](mailto:baaustralia@outlook.com)



# REMEMBRANCE OF NATURE'S GENTLEMEN. A STORY ABOUT THE JANETSZKI BROTHERS

---

By Jeff Lewry

---

My first real contact with the Janetszki brothers, Les and Arthur, would have been in 1963. At that time I was in business butchering in Albury, and had just started making boomerangs. I had vaguely known of the lads, as previously owning the nearby Jones St. grocery, but had never met either personally until they came into my shop to buy a boomerang.

Perhaps I could be allowed a little digression here, and add a little background: At this time, boomerangs were no more than a passing interest, I had no idea that they would become my life's work, for the next thirty something years. Whilst I tried some weird and wonderful materials to fashion my creations – some of which lasted only one throw, mostly I was making my boomerangs from naturally bent limbs, merely because I thought that was how they should be made! Also, it was a long time until I had a bandsaw in my workshop at home. In the meantime, I used the meat-cutting bandsaw in my butcher's shop. I could cut out a few shapes "after hours", and before the saw was washed for the day. The local Health Inspector just "happened" to be passing one evening when I was doing this, and reckoned that this shouldn't be done on a meat saw. I pointed out to him that the piece of wood had been picked up in the same paddock as the cattle I was currently cutting up, and they had spent their time rubbing up against it, as could be seen by how shiny it was. This didn't impress him much, so then I showed him the wooden chopping block where I cut up the meat, and asked him what was the difference? – besides the saw was to be washed with very hot water. He went on his way, but I doubt I convinced him.

To return – Les and Arthur bought a very pretty boomerang, made from the curvy root of a peach tree. It surely looked better than it's flying ability, but these were early days, and it returned O.K. They always took it in turns to throw this, but about this time the Albury Boomerang Club was started, and that was a trifle tedious, so they bought a couple of plywood boomerangs from me. I had discovered that Coachwood ply was good stuff, and bought a 6'x4' sheet. I remember I pondered for a long while, before I cut it up – I wondered if I would ever use all of it! (Later I was able to buy ply by the truckload, and even have mills lay it up to my specifications, but that's another story).



# REMEMBRANCE OF NATURE'S GENTLEMEN.

## A STORY ABOUT THE JANETSZKI BROTHERS

---

By Jeff Lewry

---

Somewhere about this time Les and Arthur really got the bug, and started making their own boomerangs. This of course led to their making some of the best-crafted boomerangs ever. Despite being in their sixties at this time, it didn't take them long to become very proficient throwers, although they were never strong, they were always amongst the top scorers in the Accurate Return comps. They were also the first to hang a thin strand of wool from a finger, to gauge the wind, both strength and direction.

As the boomerang business developed, I sold my butcher's shop in 1968, and moved to Bowna, in 1969. Arthur and Les were quite regular visitors, often driving out in their Hillman station wagon, where we had a few throws in my paddock, a cup of tea, and a good yarn. They always did everything together, and each had his own set of keys for the car, one would drive out, the other drive home. They smoked at this time (though not later) but would have a discussion on whether or not to have a cigarette, before they lit up.

Some people considered them to be twins, so deep was the affinity between them, indeed one would often start a sentence while the other would finish it. Yet there was a brother between them, a Baptist minister, from Canada, whom I met once. He was entirely different to our lads, my main memory of him was that he wore a big hat. You never saw a neater place than their house in North Albury, even the split wood in the corner of their workshop come garage had to be lined up. Their sister Ruby, who did their Housekeeping kept the inside of the house just as tidy.

Les was the boomerang maker, and Arthur did the decoration. It used to take them almost forever to make one. Les shaped each one, rubbed it down with 400 grit sandpaper, until it was as smooth as glass, then handed them to Arthur, who would French Polish each one before he started his decorations. It's not surprising that these turned out to be valuable collector's items.





# REMEMBRANCE OF NATURE'S GENTLEMEN. A STORY ABOUT THE JANETSZKI BROTHERS

---

By Jeff Lewry

---

I was in their workshop one day, marvelling as usual, at their being a place for everything, and everything in it's place, and Les was cutting a boomerang shape from a piece of ply, clamped in a vice, with a hand-driven fret-saw. I asked him how long it took to cut out one boomerang. He said it varied from fifteen to twenty minutes. When I told him that I allowed 7 seconds for that job (by now I had a large wood-cutting bandsaw) he found it difficult to believe. Next time he was visiting my place, he asked for a demonstration, so I fired up my saw and cut one shape from my usual stack. Les's eyes fairly bulged, as it took just one minute, with 12 thicknesses of ply, or 5 seconds per boomerang. I said that I allowed 24 seconds to mark the shape on the top sheet, so 7 seconds /boomerang was correct. After that I got the job of cutting out most of their shapes!

They had an undertaker friend who gave them the plywood boxes that his "Coffin furniture" came in, and beautiful ply it was, mostly beech, with up to 14 thin layers in a 3/8" thick sheet. So, when they had a number of these, they would make a trip out, shapes already marked, dodging the small holes in the sheets and we would nail several sheets together I'd cut them out and they would have another month's work ahead.

Among my treasured possessions are two boomerangs, one, a natural piece of Osage Orange (one of the hardest timbers in the world) which I shaped and Arthur polished for me. No decorations, it's too good for that, just a fine finish, on a beautiful piece of wood. The other is one of their shapes, which I shaped to suit my throwing, and again Arthur decorated it for me.

Earlier in life they were well known on the vaudeville circuit, with their duo Marimba act. They worked the "Tivoli" circuit, a famous theatre in Sydney, which did country tours. They also did a tour of New Zealand with this organization – and got diddled out of some of their money. Les was the only one to marry, and they were reluctant to talk about it, apparently the marriage was a serious error, lasting but a few weeks.

I had a bright idea, to record some of their music. I left it a bit late though, as only Arthur was available. Never mind, I set-up my reel -to -reel tape deck while Arthur got the feel of his marimba, and we got a few tunes down on tape. I remember that "My Old Kentucky Home " was one. I reckoned I just about had my recording levels and balance right, and was ready to get some really good stuff, when Arthur told me that was enough, and he meant it. So, I managed only some 12 minutes of recording. I feel sure that I still have the copy on tape, but, sadly, I've lost track of it. As it is somewhere amongst over 100 10" spools of tape, I may be some time finding it!



# AUSTRALIAN NATIONALS 2023

Stud Park Oval, Rowville VIC







# AUSTRALIAN NATIONALS

---

Perth, Western Australia.

---

## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 2024

The 2024 Nationals are heading West to Perth, Saturday & Sunday April 13th and 14th. This will also be the 55th Anniversary of the BAA. We invite you all to attend for some throwing and celebrations for this milestone.

Please let us know if you are coming, your flight details and if you need help with accommodation.

REGISTRATION from 7:30am  
COST: \$20  
OFFICIAL WARM UP 8:00-8:15am  
FIRST EVENT: 8:30am

Your organisers are:  
Christene Metzakis  
baaustralia@outlook.com  
0452 621 806

Roger Perry  
roger@rangsboomerangs.com  
0417 980 154







2024  
PERTH

APRIL 13TH & 14TH

# AUSTRALIAN BOOMERANG CHAMPIONSHIPS



Saturday 13th - Frye Park, Kelmscott  
Sunday 14th - Rushton Park, Kelmscott  
[baaustralia@outlook.com](mailto:baaustralia@outlook.com)





# WEST AUSTRALIAN BOOMERANG ASSOCIATION



WABA as usual have been out and about, promoting and teaching sport boomerangs. Some highlights for 2023 were:

Leonie is still being regularly booked for the UWA (University of WA) Sport Holiday program.

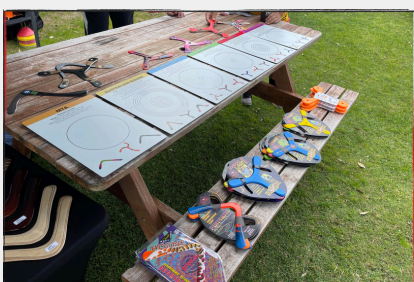
We were invited to demonstrate and teach before a Wedding in September, for the bridal party and guests.

We did have one request from the Father of the Bride which he asked if by chance we happen to know any Japanese translators, we offered one better, we told him we actually had a Japanese thrower living in Australia! So the next step was to fly Jess and Takeshi to Perth from NSW for a mini weekend away.

The venue was a lovely winery in the Swan Valley where we surprised all the guests with boomerangs, it did rain a little but luckily the winery had a large enough undercover space where we could teach.

Turned out to be a lovely day and all who attended really enjoyed it. Turned out that the bride had a mutual friend of Jesse's. (talk about small world).

Having some of the WABA team work at the Fremantle Markets also means we can set up throw days for those who buy boomerangs. Leonie recently met up with a family from the US to give lessons, we hope to see them in Denver for the WBC



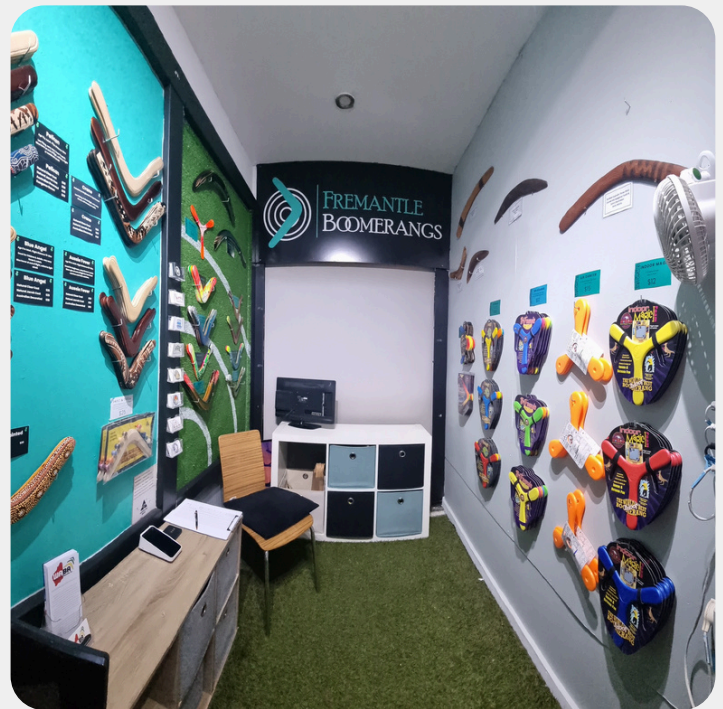


FREMANTLE  
BOOMERANGS

## New Kids on the Block

If you live in Western Australia or have travelled there, it's a good chance you have visited the Fremantle Markets. The Fremantle Markets are considered one of the worlds premier tourist markets. Way back in the early 1980's Sam Blight first took up residence at the market selling his boomerangs, that torch was then passed to Roger and after a few hand overs and Covid, I have been fortunate enough to be able to take over the small business.

Welcome to Fremantle Boomerangs. The little narrow 1.45m wide stall has had a few name changes over the years but have continued to sell the same range of boomerangs. Moving in wasn't so unknown to me as on occasion I had worked for Roger at the market.



FREMANTLE  
BOOMERANGS

Leonie and I hit the ground running since officially starting in May (2023) its heart warming hearing passing comments like "wow the boomerangs are still here" and "I still have my boomerang I brought back in the 1990's" We have many locals stopping in to share what they remember about the boomerang stall in the early days.

We have a great range for beginners and experienced starting with an indoor foam, working through to outdoor foam, polymer and woods. We also carry a small range of Aussie Round boomerangs, throw sticks and traditional aboriginal boomerangs and throw sticks from Rob Crolls collection for sale.



# FREMANTLE BOOMERANGS

Our goal is to always ensure anyone who buys a boomerang and even those who just stop for a chat get the right advise on making sure they get their boomerang coming back. Every boomerang we sell we give the basics with how to hold, wind factor and have detailed instructions with troubleshoot to ensure they get the best experience that we would expect.

One advantage taking on the small business at the Fremantle Market is that we are in a very unique position to share this great sport with locals and tourist, seeing international visitor's eyes light up when we tell them the sport is global is very humbling.

I hope to work with all associations to incorporate and incentive programme to encourage more people to join our associations around the world to help the sport continue to grow. Something as simple as a card from us to take home, and if they join an association there is some discount or incentive. That way we can also see the connection we are having with the world of boomerangs.

We do have a Facebook page and would like to soon have a website, but this will be slow to grow working 7 days has its challenges since I still work full time but in the end I am hoping to be able to focus all my attention to boomerangs from the shop, our associations and throwing.



# FROM THE CARTERS

---

Written by Bruce Carter

---

This afternoon An American who has lived in Australia for 11 years. -brings his brother who is visiting Australia – Both guys well into their 50's  
Heavy rain all day but only drizzling when they arrive – they only have 45 minutes as their other brother had been in Sydney for a couple of days was landing in Melbourne

So first off a throw in the street with back yard boomerangs. Trent has been in Melbourne a few days so he did the demo and helped teach ..20 minutes of fun by now a bit wet onto part 2. Inside with a zoy toy..- Helping us out with the indoor comp was TROY CARROLL son of Adam who is living with us for a week as he has made the list for a week of trials to join a mainstream soccer club. – a trick comp of Carters rules but final throw and both Troy + Trent manage a foot catch ..

By now its raining, Molly has been locked outside as her teeth and indoor booms aren't a good match she never misses catching one of them .

Now Craig arrives, so on with the rubber boots and we venture out side. Let out American guests throw a couple.. of course Molly takes the first catch of a hornet !

Now they have to go, as brothers plane has landed ! Craig steps up and throws - Dog gets under his feet ! Craig now in long wet grass very wet . Trent would not come out into the rain !

The an impressive display – a 4 blader whistling like a plane ! -then the trick catches that touched the clouds ! -then why not impress with a 65 metres Ausse rd, then a Broadbent 50 metre boom that came in low and fast. So quite a few throws of each with the guys standing in the rain gob smacked and filming -Molly was attacking him and jumping into his kit -jumping on him every catch  
Brother at air port had long been forgotten !

But like me, wouldn't have missed a minute of what was on display today.  
Molly is knackered and Craig was partly drowned !

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

---

Written by Tony Butz

---

## 1. The first ten years: 1966-1976

*[Having thrown boomerangs for over fifty years, and having made it my prime sporting interest for the last thirty or so, I have decided to write down how it all began; first, because I get asked this a lot, especially when I give talks on Boomerangs, and second, because these things get lost over time if they are not recorded. There may be some inaccuracies, but this is how I recall the first ten years.*

*-Tony Butz]*

### 1950s

At some time in the 1950s, my family visited the French family at a farming property called The Oaks, at Camden, west of Sydney. The parents were Sylvia (with whom my mother had served in the army during the war years) and George. I would have been about 7-8 years old, and my brothers and I were taken to see the cows being milked and then we were entertained by Sid, who would have been about 12 years old. His entertainment consisted of showing us how to throw a boomerang. I don't remember much about it except that it was big and heavy, and, when he threw it, it came crashing back with an almighty thud, often into one of the many cow pats lying around. He asked us to have a go but I thought the idea of holding something that had just been removed from a cow pat was quite disgusting. It didn't worry Sid, who was running through them barefoot, anyway. I ran back to the house to avoid both the cow excrement and the danger of a crashing boomerang. Over sixty years later, I see the irony of all this – I came to love that which I feared (well, the boomerang, if not the cow pats) and experienced it in the very locale where the boomerang in flight was first seen by a European, another "French" man no less, Ensign Francis Barrallier of the NSW Corps, in 1802.

### 1960s

My first positive experience with a boomerang was as a high school student in 1965, when I saw a man throwing a boomerang in our local Willoughby Park. Not only was he throwing it out and returning it successfully and in a controlled way, he was occasionally catching it. I was fascinated because he made it look so easy and safe, compared with the only experience I had had. (I was to find out, more than twenty years later, that this man was probably Ken Arthur, who joined the Boomerang Throwing Association of NSW which I formed in 1981, and who later told me he used to throw in Willoughby Park). But where was I to get a boomerang that actually worked like that? I was aware that there were a few around in Sydney shops, but they didn't return; they were boomerang shapes painted with pictures of kangaroos and koalas, and only good as souvenirs and wall decorations.

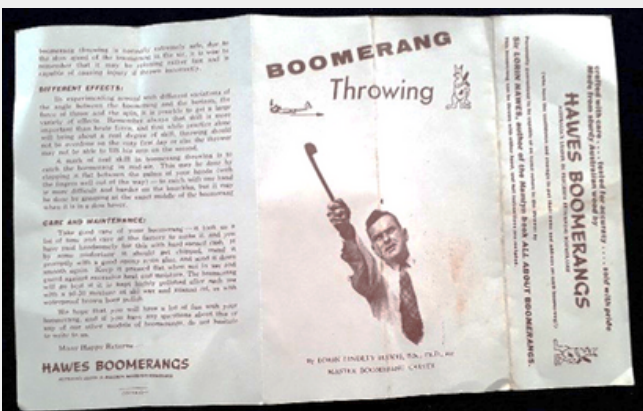
# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz

Then, in 1966, in the back of an Australasian Post magazine, in the classified ads, was an ad for Hawes Boomerangs in Mudgeeraba, Queensland, saying something like, “Our boomerangs aren’t painted with pictures but they do come back. Guaranteed!” So, I sent my money by postal order for it, and it duly arrived in the mail: a Hawes M-17 plywood boomerang, stained with brown boot polish and with a sheet of instructions and a piece of kangaroo fur to polish it with. I was up to the park to try it out immediately, and, after that, as often as the weather (wind especially) allowed. It took me a few sessions to master it, and even more before I could catch it, but I was hooked. I still have that boomerang among my collection of over a thousand. I threw it hundreds of times before it hit a cricket pitch and split down the middle. I was devastated, but soon learned that Araldite glue could fix anything. After the repair job, I must have thrown it thousands of times and it is still intact and flying well – saying a lot for the Hawes M-17 boomerang ... and Araldite.



*My first boomerang, a Hawes M-17, showing split repaired with Araldite, varnished and painted over the original boot polish finish. A camp boomerang, 3 inches larger and with no proper shaping of the edges “because that would interfere with the printed designs”.*



*A later Hawes Boomerangs instruction sheet*



*My first Aboriginal kuburras and kwettere*

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

---

Written by Tony Butz

---

One of the big appeals to me with boomerangs, from the outset, was the simplicity of it – just one piece of equipment, with no moving parts, nothing to come loose or get lost, and no need to find someone else to play with or against. Another appeal was the sheer satisfaction of throwing it away and having it come back, like a trained falcon. It was the first time I had ever felt that I was (what would later come to be called) “in the zone”. So, I would throw for an hour or two, after school or on weekends, gradually improving and competing only against myself for how accurately I could return it or how often I could catch it without missing or dropping it. Sometimes, my throwing times were cut short by an efficient park ranger with a strong Scottish accent (whom we called “Tex”) who would say, “Here, laddie, ye canna throw a boomerang in a public park!” I repeatedly pointed out to him the council sign that said no archery, golf or model aeroplanes were permitted, but which said nothing about boomerangs. Tex would stand his ground and I’d go away, but would come back after he left, and keep throwing.

## **National Fitness Camps**

In 1969, having had my Hawes M-17 for two and a half years, I started doing the National Fitness Vacation Camps in school holidays, as an aid to my teacher training and to learn a few new skills and activities. One of the activities listed for the kids was Boomerang-throwing, so I took my Hawes M-17 on my first camp as a counsellor-in-training. For reasons I have detailed elsewhere, the 10-day camp started out disastrously and I just wanted to go home. I was only three years older than some of the kids, and felt I didn’t have their respect as a leader. When it came to our turn for Boomerang-throwing, the lodge counsellor brought down a box of large thick plywood boomerangs to the oval and proceeded to explain (very minimally) how to throw a boomerang, then asked the kids to get up, six at a time, and “have a go”. I thought, “This will be good!” and, sure enough, two kids got hit, one badly, and the others ran for cover. They were doing “zoomers” – throwing too flat and thus making the boomerang crash down hard. It reminded me of Camden. The other groups were no more successful, and the counsellor didn’t seem to know how to correct their throws, even calling ones that landed 20m away “pretty good”. He then asked if I would like a go, and I said I would throw the one I had sticking out of my back pocket – the M-17. The first throw wasn’t good, but the second worked like a charm, did a beautiful flight and came in for an easy catch. The kids were amazed, applauding and cheering and saying, “Do it again!” as if I were a magician (which I was – but that’s another story). I had arrived! I had not only their respect but also their admiration, and that was important for the rest of the camp.



# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz

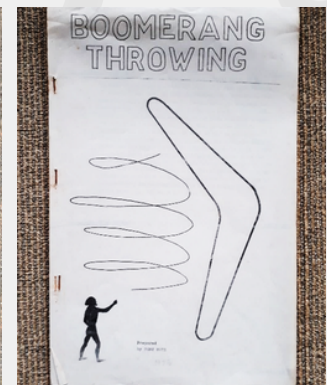
In addition to the camps for the kids, there were also weekend Training Camps for Vacation Camp staff, three times a year, to learn the skills for instructing the various activities. In May of 1969, one of the activities listed was Boomerang-throwing, so I asked Head Office who was the instructor for it and was told it was “Ces Burwell, a retired RAAF man who now makes boomerangs for a living”. This was great – now I could ask someone how to make boomerangs as well as throw them. Ces was rather “rough and ready”, chain-smoking and short on answers, but he knew his stuff and he could throw well enough to impress the instructors, even if (as teachers) they didn’t like his answers to their questions: “If the boomerang lands behind me to the left, what am I doing wrong?” “You’re not bloody throwing it right!” (Oh, thanks). So, it was with some reluctance that I stayed back to ask him about different types of boomerangs. “You should really talk to my son, Bob. He likes making different types – big ones, small ones, three-bladers, four-bladers, and he’s a bloody good thrower, too. Better than I am. He’s been throwing since he was three”. So, I came away with an address for Bob and a keenness for learning more about boomerangs. What I couldn’t work out was why the camps were using such big, clunky boomerangs for kids, when even the adults couldn’t make them work well and just wanted to get out of their way if they did return.

## 1970s

I continued both my university studies (in Education, History and Linguistics) and National Fitness Vacation Camps to 1972, in which year I was asked to do an Honours Year in Education at Macquarie University and decided to do my thesis on the camping activities, because I had come to enjoy them so much. I also used this time to delve into a vast collection of books and magazines that had been bequeathed to the university on Australian Aborigines, as I had become intrigued with Aboriginal lore and culture through the camps, especially Broken Bay with its Aboriginal rock engravings, and, of course, anything on boomerangs. I saved up all my 5-cent pieces for photocopying my finds in the university library. I also discovered the first detailed scientific explanation of the aerodynamics of boomerangs, written by Felix Hess for the November edition of *Scientific American*, and this gave me some understanding of why the heavy clunkers didn’t work and how I could start making boomerangs that would not only work but would be easy for kids to throw successfully.



Felix Hess article in *Scientific American*



My 1973 Training Manual for NFC staff

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz



## Bob Burwell

In the meantime, I was corresponding with Bob Burwell and he was making a variety of boomerangs and posting them to me in Willoughby where I was still living with my parents. Bob's help and influence in this time was invaluable. Although we had never met face-to-face, I felt I had found a kindred spirit in boomerangs – someone who could share my passion for them and answer my questions about them. Still bothered by the fact that all the camps used big, clunky boomerangs with which people (adults or kids) had little success, I asked Bob to make me some smaller, lighter ones, which he did – six that he called "Juniors" and six thinner ones that he called "Minis". He was happy to send them "raw" (without varnish, paint or decoration) as he just liked making them. Following Bob's advice, I would give them three coats of two-part Estapol gloss varnish, then paint brown, white and black bands on them as my trademark Aboriginal ochre colours. I liked the Burwell logo of a boomerang with wings, so stamped my own Snoopy-in-a-Roman-helmet logo on the backs of mine as well as painting it on a wooden boomerang case that contained my collection. In 1972, the Willoughby Council recreation officer, Gai Speight (who knew my father through Scouts), asked me if I would conduct a boomerang-throwing activity group for kids on a weekly basis for two months at Willoughby Park – how ironic: the very park that Tex wanted to throw me out of, for throwing boomerangs! I used Bob's Juniors and Minis, and the kids had great success with them. I designed a badge/ logo for the club, the craft group screen-printed it as cloth badges for us, and the kids wanted to get boomerangs for themselves, but Bob wasn't in a position to mass-produce them, and I didn't have anywhere to try making them. Good working boomerangs were still largely unavailable.



1972 club badge



Bob's "Junior" and "Mini" boomerangs



My logo and boomerang case

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz

In 1973, I got my first teaching appointment, to Broken Bay NFC – a dream come true. While there, I conducted some research on how well the kids did with a variety of different boomerangs (from four of the camps and Bob Burwell’s Juniors and Minis). It was no surprise to me that the kids using Bob’s boomerangs got far higher accuracy results than any of the others, and it was no surprise to Bob, either, when I posted him the results. When I asked at NFC Head Office why the camps persisted in using clunkers, I was told it was because the larger ones were easier to screen-print designs on as souvenirs for the kids to buy at the end of camp. I was not happy with this answer, saying it would be better if the kids could buy something they would use rather than a souvenir to stick on a wall, but I was unsuccessful in convincing any of the camps to request smaller, better-working boomerangs. I asked Head Office if I could run a training camp for all NFC staff on Boomerang-Throwing. They agreed and I produced a 16-page training manual for it, detailing Aboriginal pre-history, articles from The Australian Museum, techniques of teaching and throwing, games using boomerangs and references for further reading.

Finally, in 1974, I got to meet Bob Burwell in person as he was travelling around, meeting boomerang enthusiasts with a view to getting some serious competitions happening. Among the boomerang identities in Sydney he hoped to meet were: Duncan MacLennan (who had a shop selling boomerangs made by the famous Aboriginal Joe Timberey, as well as others from around the country) and Bruce Kyle (who ran a boatshed in Sydney and was a keen and very consistent thrower); then he planned to go south to meet Jeff Lewry (of “Yarrakilla Boomerangs”) at Bowna, and then the Victorians. Bob was a Telecom technician, but had also served in the army, and was powerfully built yet very mild and reserved in manner. If he had to criticise anyone it was minimally and with obvious restraint. I liked that from the start, as did my parents who also met him and were very impressed with his demeanour. Apart from their mutual interest in boomerangs, Bob and his father had little in common, as Bob was at pains to point out.

## **Two Boomerang Associations – ABA and BAA**

Bob told me there were two Boomerang sporting bodies in Australia and he was not impressed with either. The first was the Australian Boomerang Association, run by Stephen Silady who in turn was a protégé of Frank Donnellan who had claimed to be the “holder of all records” in boomerang throwing. The problems with the ABA, according to Bob, were that: the President, Secretary and Treasurer were all the same person – Stephen Silady; the ABA never had meetings or regular competitions; there was no membership list because everyone who bought a boomerang from Silady was automatically a member; everyone had to use the same boomerang – one designed by Donnellan and made by Silady (at Derwent Plastics in Gladesville) out of plastic; and there was no independent verification available to support any of Donnellan’s claims. Bob had already visited Silady and had asked him to come out for a throw, but Silady had said he was sick and couldn’t.

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

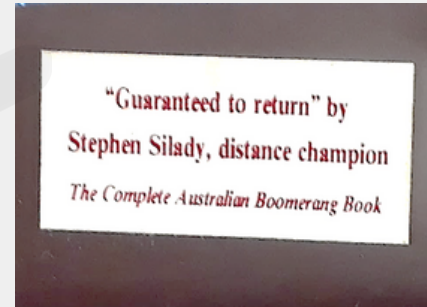
Written by Tony Butz



*The ABA car sticker*



*ABA plastic boomerangs, designed by Frank Donnellan and made by Silady at Derwent Plastics, Granville*



The second body was the **Boomerang Association of Australia**, based in Victoria, and formed in 1969. To Bob, this group looked more promising (as they had held competitions for Moomba in Melbourne, in Darlington Point (Riverina), Syndal, Swan Hill, Canberra and Albury) but, still in its infancy, was experiencing a lot of difficulties, not least of which was regular communication with those who joined, and daring to call a competition the “World Boomerang Championships”. He also didn’t like the idea that the competitors also took it in turns to be the range stewards and other officials, making impartiality a bit of an issue; but he acknowledged that it would be hard to find twenty people to be officials (but not throwers) at a boomerang contest. Bob gave me the contact details of both associations and told me the BAA was having its National Championships in Canberra at Easter, and that there were no qualifying rounds – anybody could enter if they were members. So that became my next goal – to join the BAA and compete in an actual boomerang competition.

Meanwhile, with the ABA (aka Stephen Silady) only a few kilometres away from where I lived, I decided to pay him a visit. The first thing I noticed at his house was that on every step, on every fence post, on every verandah post, and on a lot of other things, were stickers: “Stephen Silady: Boomerang Champion” and “Stephen Silady: World Amateur Distance Boomerang Champion”. He was pleasant enough to talk to and confirmed everything Bob had said about the ABA. So, I asked, “How does a left-hander compete if everyone has to use the same boomerang in ABA competitions?” He took out his pocket-knife and carved a piece off one end of a plastic boomerang: “There. Now it’s a left-hander!” Hmmm. Okay. “How can you verify Frank Donnellan’s claims, especially his claims on long-distance records?” Silady told me that there was no doubt about them because there were reporters there from newspapers! Did they use tape measures? No, but they knew how long the park was! Had they been trained to judge such things? They didn’t need to! How could he and Donnellan both be the world champion? Well, Donnellan was the professional champion and Silady was the amateur champion! And so it went on. So, after buying six Derwent Plastics Donnellan boomerangs (including the “left-hander”), an ABA car sticker and cloth badge, I thanked him for his time... and hoped the BAA would be a better experience.

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

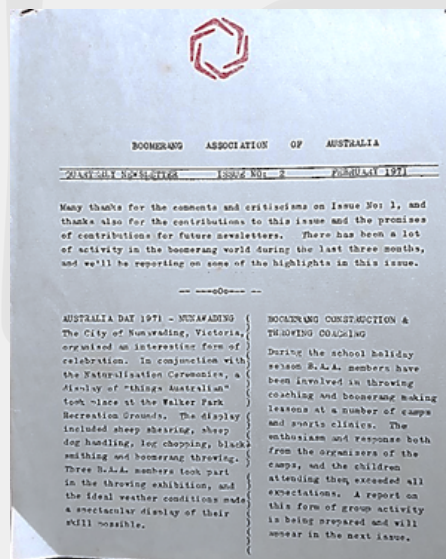
Written by Tony Butz

## The 1974 BAA Australian National Championships in Canberra

Taking place in Canberra on 21st April, the competition was held in atrocious conditions – cold, wet and very windy. I had only practised throwing for the Accuracy and General Championship (combining accuracy and catching), so I was surprised to find there were also competitions for: the shortest time for ten catches, the most consecutive catches, and the longest distance. I was also surprised to see the variety of boomerangs being used, especially Bunny Read's hook boomerangs which cleaned up the first contest, as very few others (myself included) could catch anything in the dreadful winds, and so we retired early. Likewise, for the most consecutive catches, because if you missed the first catch you were automatically out. Twenty of us competed in the General Championship, but the three top scorers were well ahead of the rest, using heavy boomerangs of wood or fibreglass that could take the wind, as well as Bunny Read's wind-defying hooks. By popular vote, it was decided that, in future, a less windy venue was necessary to see decent scores and close competition, especially for something calling itself the Australian National Championships. Albury was settled on for the next ANCs. I came away demoralised: I don't know what I expected, but it wasn't that. In some competitions, I didn't score at all. Coming back on the train to Sydney, I thought I would forget competitions entirely, and just throw for the fun of it and for the pleasure of watching kids enjoy an experience that was both new and ancient.



Both the ABA and BAA had cloth badges (this BAA badge is a later (1980s) design).



BAA Newsletter No 2 (1971)

It wasn't a total loss: my thinking on boomerangs had been broadened to include an immense variety of shapes (from hooks to straight-arms, and many angles). By BAA rules, all boomerangs had to be "of conventional Aboriginal design", which meant only two arms (no multi-bladers or novelties) but could be of any material. Bob was working on vulcanised fibre v-shaped boomerangs for the long-distance event, and I was wondering why Bunny Read's hooks were doing so well in both accuracy and catching events, especially in the strong winds, as they were fairly light coachwood plywood boomerangs.

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz



*My first Bunny read hook that made me re-think boomerang designs, especially for windy conditions in competitions*

The other positive was that I had got to meet Morris and Dennis Maxwell, Bunny Read, Jeff Lewry, Billy Knight, Bro. Brian Thomas, Bruce Kyle and Duncan MacLennan – all of whom I had read about in the BAA newsletters, and who were very involved in running the BAA or stamping their mark in competitions. Stephen Silady was also there, but I wished that Bob Burwell had been there also, to see how these two would have gone, head-to-head.

In this day and age of computers, internet and emails, it is hard for people to realise just how difficult communication was before all of that. The BAA newsletters (3-4 editions a year) were typed onto a wax stencil, printed on quarto-sized paper on a Gestetner printer and posted to members. Long-distance phone calls were very expensive, and timed, so nearly all communication was by post. It was slow and difficult. The newsletters had shown that Morris Maxwell (Inaugural and continuing BAA Honorary Secretary) realised the need for regional groups if the sport was to grow, and there were constant discussions on improving competition rules (such as recently moving from three to four accuracy circles). It seemed to me the basic field layout of concentric circles was a good one, but long-distance throwing required a whole extra set of officials, acute judgement, a much larger field than a soccer pitch and very different boomerangs. I kept writing to Morris about my thoughts on all this, even though I had no intention to compete, proposing in 1975 that we have five accuracy circles, like an archery target, to enable both more competitors to score and to get an accuracy score out of a neat 50 points for five throws. We also needed to be able to deal better with adverse wind conditions (Lorin Hawes had always insisted the only fair competition was in zero wind, but that was a practical unreality) and establish proper means of recognising claims of records. Meanwhile, I preferred to continue doing research on Aboriginal boomerangs, teaching kids to throw, and having fun catching a three-blader on the index finger of my right hand, and (seconds later) a four-blader on the index finger of my left hand – kids loved it and we called it Snoopy versus the Red Baron because it looked like one boomerang was chasing the other in a WWI dogfight, and I was an avid Peanuts fan (hence Snoopy in my logo).

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz

## **The 1976 Australian National Championships**

In 1976 I was appointed by the NSW Sport & Recreation Service as the Director of Borambola Sport & Recreation Centre near Wagga Wagga. I was back in camping (after a year in the classroom at Crookwell High School) and, of course, made sure we had Boomerangs on the program. This was as close as I had ever lived to Albury (on the NSW-Victoria border), now being called “The Boomerang Capital of Australia” because it hosted the National Championships, in a somewhat central location for the eastern states, and in much more predictable weather patterns that promoted closer competition. So, despite my reluctance to be involved in competitions, I couldn't pass up the opportunity of meeting with the BAA people again, especially when Bob Burwell informed me that he would be coming down from Queensland to compete. Because throwers were scattered all around the eastern states, the ANCs were really the only time that so many members were together in one place, so it had become policy that the AGM of the BAA would also take place on the weekend of the ANCs (Easter, so people could have time off work for travelling and competing). By going there, I could also hear what others were thinking about the future development of the sport, the BAA, competition rules, recognition of records, etc. So, I went.

Bob Burwell had come down by train from Queensland, right through NSW to Albury.



*“Snoopy and the Red Baron” multi-bladers – favourite for children’s boomerang demonstrations.*

I went in my VW Kombi van, so Bob asked if he could use it as a secure storage area for his boomerangs and personal gear while he was out throwing. Of course, I obliged. This was the first time I had seen him throwing, and he did not disappoint. In the General Championship (now usually referred to as the Aussie Round event), I was keen to see whether he would go for distance, accuracy or catching points, where the established record for this event on BAA rules was 120 points. Bob went all out for all three aspects, won the event, and set a new record of 131 points. I was amazed at two things: his consistency and the easy nature of his throwing style – weight on the left foot and a skip with the right foot in the air. It looked effortless. As he came back to the Kombi, I congratulated him on his record, but he, typically, just said, “Well, that was good. I can go home now”. Bunny Read came second, equalling the previous record on 120 points.

# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

---

Written by Tony Butz

---

But Bob wasn't finished. In the interests of encouraging research into boomerang design, there were also competitions for the Largest and Smallest Boomerangs that could make the qualifying 20m minimum outward distance and return with accuracy (to the 7.5m circle). Bob won both of these events as well, and then he both shocked and delighted me by offering me his big boomerang: "Do you want this, for looking after my stuff? I don't want to cart it all the way back to Queensland on the train".

The other things that grabbed my attention this weekend were Bro. Brian Thomas and international news. Bro. Thomas was teaching at Christian Brothers in Albury, and had managed to get a keen group of kids interested enough in boomerangs to compete in the Junior events at the ANCs, with Junior competitors outnumbering the adults (Seniors), 35 to 22. As teachers, Brian and I found much to talk about (education, theology and boomerangs) while we were helping to mark out the accuracy circles, and it would be the beginning of a decades-long friendship that eventually took him to become the Australian National Coach and me the NSW State Coach in boomerangs. But international interest in boomerangs was also accelerating. We heard that: the USA, Austria, West Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK and New Zealand were all having competitions; some had formed national associations; and Morris Maxwell was travelling to the US to the Smithsonian Institution's competition to help with that and to establish a US national association. It all seemed to be happening, and suddenly (but surprisingly to me) I wanted to be part of it.

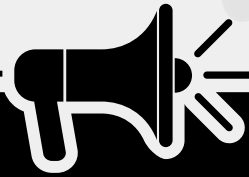
The BAA had also learned a lot, making more changes to competitions, some because of increasing numbers of competitors, some in response to weather problems and others for safety reasons. Shortest Time for Ten Catches was changed to Five Catches, throwers were allowed a warm-up throw before scoring, and females competed against males in the same events, in both Junior and Senior (16years+) divisions. There was still some disquiet felt about the Darlington Point Competition (held independently of the BAA, but with usually the same competitors) calling itself the World Championship, but at last there was generally more agreement than disagreement about rules and regulations and the recognition of records. . There were different (strong) opinions on how to measure a boomerang for the Biggest and Smallest competitions – overseas (in Europe and the UK), only the span length (straight line from tip to tip) was measured, but this did not take into account the arch height which depended on the angle of the arms; a formula to account for both was introduced here, but overseas countries stuck to using just the span length.



# HOOKED ON BOOMERANGS

Written by Tony Butz

This led me to ask: should other countries be using our (BAA) rules, or should we be accommodating theirs; and if there was ever going to be an international event, who was going to determine the rules for that? There was still also a big problem in having so much work done by so few, and without any remuneration. Our meagre \$5 annual BAA membership barely covered the printing and posting of newsletters. We had to get a bigger membership base and we had to get businesses interested in sponsoring competitions, especially now that there was so much overseas interest in boomerangs and talk of international competition. However, I felt all this was something I could live with, and work within. Ten years after getting my first boomerang, I was just starting to realise how big this interest could become.



**HAVE A STORY ABOUT BOOMERANGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE? WE WOULD LOVE TO INCLUDE IT IN OUR NEXT BULLETIN.**

**OLD OR NEW STORIES, EVERYTHING IS WELCOME.**

**EMAIL: [baustralia@outlook.com](mailto:baustralia@outlook.com)**



# WBC 2024



Information for the World Boomerang Championships is now available. [www.wbc2024.net](http://www.wbc2024.net)

The WBC will run from 6th July - 16th July

Westminster, Colorado is a beautiful suburb of Denver, Colorado, famously known as "The Mile-High City" because of its elevation.

The City of Westminster is a home rule municipality located in Adams and Jefferson counties, Colorado, United States. The city population was 116,317 at the 2020 United States Census with 71,240 residing in Adams County and 45,077 residing in Jefferson County. Westminster is the eighth most populous city in Colorado.



Australia will have a team of 4 Australians plus a throwers from Indonesia and one from North America.

Please show your support by checking in and watching from home when we give updates throughout the comp at both teams and individual events.

A list of Aussies and the team heading over will be supplied at a later date.

July 2024							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
30	Jul 1	2	3	4	5	6 WBC Westminster WBC Arrival Paint Field Captains Meeting	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
WBC Westminster WBC Team Events		Team WeatherDay Auction	Aesthetics	WBC LD Team Awards	WBC Excursion IFBA Meeting	WBC Individual	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
WBC Westminster WBC Individual		Weather day Individ Awards Games	Departure				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31	Aug 1	2	3	

# 2023 WORLD RESULTS



## European champion male

1. Alexander Opri (Ger)
2. Andrea Sgattoni (Ita)
3. Manuel Schütz (Swi)

## European champion female

1. Marie Appriou (Fra)
2. Julie Appriou (Fra)
3. Heidi Möller (Ger)

## European champion senior

1. Adam McLaughlin (Gbr)
2. Fridolin Frost (Ger)
3. Olivier Chelmas (Fra)

## European champion junior female

1. Julie Appriou (Fra)
2. Heidi Möller (Ger)

## European champion junior male

1. Matteo Guerrero (Fra)
2. Lennard Schön (Ger)
3. Otto Möller (Ger)

## European Champion Accuracy:

Andrea Sgattoni 84p

## European Champion Fast Catch:

Fridolin Frost 23,32s

## European Champion MTA:

Adam McLaughlin 49,22s

## European Champion Australian Round:

Andrea Sgattoni 81p

## European Champion Trickcatch

Manuel Schütz 113p

## European Champion Endurance

Guillem Parmain 63c



## US champion male

1. Logan Broadbent
2. Richard Bower
3. George Essig

## US champion female

1. Rachel Smucker
2. Betsylew Miale

## US champion senior

1. Gary Broadbent
2. David Hirsh
3. Tim Maultsby

## US champion female

1. Rachel Smucker

## US Champion Accuracy:

Jason Smucker 77

## US Champion Fast Catch:

Richard Bower 22.4s

## US Champion MTA:

George Essig 94.6s

## US Champion Australian Round:

Logan Broadbent 72p

Daniel Bower 72p

## US Champion Trickcatch

Richard Bower 93p

## US Champion Endurance

Logan Broadbent 64c

# 2023 WORLD RESULTS



## Indian champion

1. Stephane Marguerite
2. Prasath G
3. Sanmugaram G

## Indian champion junior

1. Praveen R
2. Shivenesh G
3. Lohit Ashva K S

## Indian Champion Accuracy:

1. Mareeskumar S
2. Sanmugaram G
3. Dhanusha R

## Indian Champion Fast Catch:

1. Prabhu A
2. Prabu V
3. Yash Shukia

## Indian Champion MTA:

1. Sanmugaram G
2. Stephane Marguerite
3. Santhosh M

## Indian Champion Australian Round:

1. Mareeskumar S
2. Prabhakaren S
3. Vijay M

## Indian Champion Trickcatch

1. Stephane Marguerite
2. Prabhakaren S
3. Vijay M

## Indian Champion Endurance

1. Stephane Marguerite
2. Mari Selvam G
3. Yash Shukia



## Japan champion

Overall Ranking

1. Haruki Taketomi
2. Shinji Nishizaki
3. Junji Maiya

Rookie Award: Naoto Yamada

Day1

AC: Haruki Taketomi

AR: Yuji Yanagimoto

MTA was canceled due to sunset.

Day2

EN: Shinji Nishizaki

TR/DB: Haruki Taketomi

FC: Haruki Taketomi

Overall rank

1st: Haruki Taketomi

2nd: Shinji Nishizaki

3rd: Junji Maiya

Rookie Award: Naoto Yamada