

# AUSTRALIAN AXEMAN'S HALL OF FAME

## COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



## AUSTRALIAN AXEMAN'S HALL OF FAME

The Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame opened in 2002 at Bells Parade, Latrobe, Tasmania. The building is constructed around massive logs brought from every state in Australia. The aim was to showcase the timber industry and the unique and amazing Sport of Woodchopping which spread from here around the globe.

**These are the stories behind just a few of the many artefacts in our collection.**



## Tom Reeves Sculpture

Papier-mâché sculpture of Tom Reeves, the winner of the first official World Woodchopping Carnival, held at Latrobe in 1891. It was created by artists Frankie Goodwin and Pam Thorne from *Creative Paper Tasmania* in 2008.



## ► **Walter Chellis's Gold Medal 1900**

Walter Chellis from Deloraine was one of the greatest competitive axemen. He rivalled Thomas Pettit, Abe Bryan, Gus Blanc, Tom Reeves and Jim Marshall in all the world championships in the early 1900s. Walter won this gold medal and £2 2s in the World Champion's 18" standing block at the Australian Axemen's Association Carnival held in Ulverstone in November 1900. Chellis's block hit the ground just before Bryan's.



## ▲ **Rex Kennedy's Axe Head 1959**

This axe head originally belonged to Jack Heywood. After the axe blade lost its usefulness, Bellchambers Bros (blacksmiths from Ulverstone) cut it from the axe head and welded a new blade onto the poll or butt. This new piece was made from a bulldozer spring as it was both wide and strong. The mended axe was used by Rex Kennedy of North Motton to break the world record by four seconds in the standing block at Exeter in December 1959. Rex was a descendant of Aboriginal Tasmanian, Dolly Dalrymple Johnson, and served in the RAAF in World War II.



## ▼ **Doug Youd's Hytest Trophies 1962-1974**

In 1962 the bronze Hytest Trophy replaced the Britstand Trophy (the "Axeman's Oscar") at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. It was awarded to the best overall axeman in single-handed events at the Show. Tasmania's Doug Youd won it in 1962, 1964\*, 1971 (outright), 1973\* and 1974\*.

Three of these trophies\* are held in the Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame collection. Tasmanian champion David Foster and Martin O'Toole from Victoria are the only other axemen to have won the trophy outright.





## Judging machine c 1930-1940

The maker of this rustic wooden judging machine is unknown but it is thought to have been used at Nietta, Tasmania. In the early 1940s this tiny settlement attracted over 100 entries for a single carnival. Competitors included several Australian champions. Imaginative inventors, particularly in the north of Tasmania in the early to mid-1900s, designed their own versions of these intricate devices which were intended to take the cheating out of competitive woodchopping.



## Amanda Beams' saw

“What really inspired me was to see some girls out there on the end of a saw with a guy doing the Jack & Jill.”

From the Jack & Jill, Tasmania’s Amanda Beams went on to become captain of Australia’s Women’s Woodchopping Team, competing both nationally and internationally. She was Australian Women’s Champion in the 2022 Stihl Timbersports®, breaking the World Record in the Underhand Chop and achieving personal bests in the Single Buck Saw and Stocksaw. This M-tooth steel saw was made and hand filed by North West Tasmanian champion single sawyer, Royce Berwick. Amanda and Dale Beams had many wins with the saw.



## Bill “Possum” Johnston’s Art Deco Trophy 1937

This beautiful Art Deco silver-plated trophy was presented to NSW axeman, Bill Johnston, by the National Agricultural & Pastoral Society in Launceston in 1937. For many years before and after World War II, Bill toured New Zealand, the USA and Canada competing in events and demonstrating woodchopping. He won four Sydney Royal Easter Show world treefelling titles (1938, 1945, 1947, 1948) and the Britstand Trophy (1948).

## Vic Summers Royal Axe and sash 1954 + Royal Easter Show medals 1949 & 1951

This one-off forged steel trophy axe was made by Hytest Axe and Tool Company Pty Ltd as the prize for an invitation tree felling exhibition. The event was held at Dubbo on 10 February 1954 in front of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip. ...“the Queen sat tensely in the warm sunshine, gripped by the thrill of such an event.” The winner was Queensland champion axeman, Vic Summers. Film of the event was flown to the USA where it was shown on 108 television stations.

Vic won the tree felling at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in eight of the ten years it was held between 1940 and 1952. The beautiful silver 1949 Commonwealth and 1951 World's Tree Felling medals are from two of those wins.



## Commonwealth Championship Silk Sash won by George Eaves + Harry Hanson 1929

At the Sydney Royal Easter Show in 1929 woodchop entries were the largest ever, but the competition was marred by driving rain, gusting winds, late starts and a shortage of the poor-quality logs. Competing in a field of 12 teams of champion sawyers from Queensland, NSW and Victoria, Tasmanians Eaves and Hanson ripped through the 18" log in 16 seconds. Eaves also won the single-handed sawing that year starting from scratch.



## Australian Team Singlet 1960

NSW axeman Kevin Smith may have worn this green singlet with its embroidered Australian emblem when he and Jim Lavis toured New Zealand in 1960. They attended the Southlands Xmas Carnivals at the invitation of the NZAC and AU. The rough hand stitching around its edge suggests it may have been transferred from another item of team clothing, possibly Kevin's sport shirt.





### ▲ Doug Youd's Queensland Cedar Shoeboards 1970s

Treefelling was a Youd family speciality, with Ray, Doug, Bill and Merv champions in the event. These shoeboards were made from Queensland cedar (*Toona ciliata*) which the Youds found to be the best timber for the purpose. The metal clips on the end were originally made like horseshoes by blacksmiths using forged steel. Clips from mild steel bent but, in the early 1950s, Keech Castings made a smaller, more efficient clip which grabbed the back of the hole.



### ▼ Frank Geale's Belt 1888-1895

St Leonards Athletics Club, Launceston, awarded these woodchopping silver medals annually from 1888 to 1895. Tom Reeves won the first in 1888. As Frank Geale won the event twice (1894 & 1895) he was given the belt in perpetuity. The committee dissolved in acrimony over this decision and the competition was never held again. This belt is the oldest set of medals in the Axeman's Hall of Fame collection.



### ◀ George Foster's Singlet 1970

In 1970 tobacco advertising in sport was not banned as it is today. When he was overall winner of the 1970 Centenary World Woodchopping Championships held at Ulverstone, George Foster wore this singlet embroidered with the sponsor's name Rothmans on the front and back. The navy cotton singlet was embedded with sweat, honing oil and woodchips. Teams came to Ulverstone from all Australian states, New Zealand, Canada and the USA.

Find out about the thrilling  
**SPORT OF WOODCHOPPING**  
at the place where it all began.



Learn the stories of the **Legends** who made the sport so popular in Australia and around the world.

**AUSTRALIAN AXEMAN'S HALL OF FAME**  
at Bells Parade, Latrobe.

Open: Tuesday – Saturday 10.30am – 3.00pm  
Sunday 9.00am – 3.00pm  
(Closed on Tuesdays during July and August)

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Image: Legend David Foster in action in the Standing Block competition at Latrobe.

This activity was assisted through Arts Tasmania

