

# **BLACKSTONE Portable Oil Engine #46075**

## **Technical History**

This engine is a single cylinder, horizontal, 4 stroke, hot-bulb ignition oil engine of 8hp. It is a portable engine, mounted on original chassis and wheels, complete with drawbar and a pair of adjustable wheel chocks. An original air receiver is slung under the engine with some plumbing used to air-start the engine. The air-start valve is missing.

BLACKSTONE & Co. Ltd. of Stamford, England manufactured the engine. This firm can trace its history in the manufacture of agricultural implements to 1837. The firm became aware of the possibilities of the internal combustion engine and began looking for a suitable design to manufacture in the 1890's. This was found at the Darlington Royal Show in June 1895 in the form of Carter Bros. and the "Reliance" oil engine. The Carter Bros. had patented methods of using the engines exhaust gases to heat the engine hot bulb to maintain ignition on a working oil engine without use of a continuous blowlamp.

Blackstone's acquired the license for the sole right to exploit the Carter Bros. patents. Manufacture commenced soon afterwards. It is known from old records that engine #46075 was made in 1905, one of 473 engines made that year. In the first 10 years of production, 2575 engines were made. Of these, 489 were of 8hp. 560 engines (22% of total production) came to Australia, mainly to Adelaide to the agents Clutterbuck Bros. (412 or 16% of total production). It is likely that our engine came via this route.

Engine #46075 is fitted with the forged (bent) style of crankshaft. These were phased out in 1904-05 and replaced with the more common slab (balanced) style of crankshaft. It can be seen that this engine is of a very early design, and likely to be one of a very few remaining in working condition.

## **Working History**

This portable engine was recovered from Peoria Station via Pt Wakefield, South Australia. This property had once been the centre of a grazing empire, which had long since been cut up into smaller properties, largely grain growing or mixed farming properties.

The engine was in a "lean-to" on the side of a stone and iron shearing shed, located in a way to indicate that it had once belt driven the overhead shafting. However, the shafting had been converted to electric drive and the engine filled much of what now appeared to be the "Expert's" room, used for sharpening the Shearers combs & cutters etc.

The then owner told the salvage team that the engine was well known in the area, having been used on most farms in the area between Pt Wakefield and Nantawarra, some kilometres to the north-east. Initially it was said to drive threshing machines, and be horse drawn from farm to farm.

A salvage team of Club Members spent a weekend recovering the engine. Most of the time was spent partly demolishing the "Expert's" room to gain access. The room had been built around the engine. It was in excellent original condition, with most parts intact, and the engine free. It has since been restored by a team led by Members Steve Paech & Peter Bernhardt and can be seen running each year at Power of the Past.

