



Peel Valley Torque



September 2015

Peel Valley Machinery Celebrates 50 Years in September 2015

On the 15th of September, 1965, Tamworth district farming brothers David and Barry John opened the doors on their fledgling John Deere farm equipment business in Tamworth. The business started as sub dealers for NSW state John Deere agricultural machinery distributors, W & J Farm Equipment. In 1968 Peel Valley Machinery was appointed a direct dealer to John Deere Limited, Wynyard House, Sydney as the first direct dealer for the John Deere company in NSW.

In October 1970 John Deere, a Moline, Illinois (USA) company which was started by a blacksmith named John Deere in 1837, bought out most of the assets of Chamberlain Holdings of Perth, WA, and a new Australian subsidiary, Chamberlain John Deere, was born. Peel Valley Machinery became direct dealers for the new company, and in 1972 expanded into Quirindi with a new purpose built facility in Loder Street.

Chamberlain John Deere (CJD) had continued to operate company stores that it inherited from Waugh & Josephson in Gunnedah and Wee Waa. An existing Chamberlain dealer, Amos Smith & Sons, was the dealer for Narrabri.

CJD realised in 1976 that as manufacturers they had no place in the retail market – their company stores were performing very poorly. So the stores at Gunnedah and Wee Waa were offered to Peel Valley Machinery Service to buy and operate, and in June 1976 Peel Valley Machinery effectively doubled its size in one go. The entry into the Wee Waa market coincided with the beginning of the cotton boom in that town – cotton had been grown commercially in the area since the late 1960's. John Deere manufactured a range of cotton pickers as well as its row crop tractors, and was in a very good position with product to service the growing cotton industry.

The year 1982 saw the first of David & Barry John's children, David's eldest son Steve, start work for the company. Steve's brother Andrew started in 1983, and their sister Libby, a chartered accountant, became Administration Manager in 1985. In 1984 Peel Valley Machinery bought the Narrabri John Deere dealership, Amos Smith & Sons, which also included the Subaru franchise – this represented PVM's first entry into the motor

vehicle market. This was followed by entry into the truck market in Tamworth with Mercedes-Benz and, later, Freightliner. The company's long association with Mercedes-Benz cars, now 31 years, also commenced with Narrabri in 1984 and then Tamworth in 1990.

Barry John's son, Tony, joined the company in 1994. In August 2000 David John's youngest son, Philip, started with the company as manager of the Narrabri operation, later moving to Gunnedah to head up the Gunnedah and Quirindi operations.

An expansion of truck operations was made in 2003 with the acquisition of the industry-leading Isuzu franchise in the Tamworth operation.

Throughout the length of its history Peel Valley Machinery has had significant strengths in a number of areas, all of which have contributed greatly to the company's longevity and success. Peel Valley Machinery have always focussed strongly on technical training, whether through Technical College and TAFE, by manufacturers, or in-house. Literally hundreds of mechanics and technicians have been trained in the past fifty years, mainly through the apprenticeship scheme and, more lately, the complementary School Based Traineeship scheme. Today the Peel Valley Group usually has around fifteen to twenty apprentices and trainees in training at any one time. Many training opportunities have also been made available in spare parts, sales and management. Much of the manufacturer training has involved significant travel, whether to Brisbane, Sydney, or Melbourne and even overseas.

At the same time, significant expenditure on tools and servicing plant, and the subsequent availability of those assets when breakdowns occurred, has been a real strength. This is particularly so at harvest, when machine uptime is most crucial.

Peel Valley Machinery have been early adopters of Information Technology, having had networked computer systems and "live" parts inventory, for example, since the mid 1970's. In more recent times the company has embraced precision farming technology, and set up two advanced Integrated Distance Training rooms.

After ownership by a partnership of nearly 44 years between David & Barbara John and Barry & Margaret John, the Peel Valley group of companies transitioned to new ownership from the 1st July, 2009. David John and his family purchased the interests of Barry John and his family, and as from July 1, 2009 the business has operated as Peel Valley Group Pty Ltd, trading under the business names Peel Valley Machinery Service, Peel Valley Motors, Peel Valley Trucks, and Peel Valley Isuzu. More than 130 people now work in this enterprise.



DAVID JOHN (partner)



BARRY JOHN (partner)

PVM's 50 Years in September 2015 - It's All About the People

People are the reason Peel Valley Machinery has endured for half a century. The company's founders, David and Barry John, were farmers themselves, and were determined to provide a level of service that they themselves would have liked to receive from their farm equipment supplier. The core values of Peel Val-

ley Group today still reflect that ambition. Product support is the most important service that a dealer can provide that adds value to the products it sells. Throughout its long history, that product support ethos and the people who have carried it out has underpinned the success of Peel Valley Machinery.



The early years' team at Peel Valley Machinery. This photo was taken for a newspaper advertisement in the late 1960's. David and Barry John are pictured on the far left. Peel Valley Machinery have had a number of team members who have worked at the company more than once, with several joining the company three times during their careers. One of those is Geoff Yeark, third from the right.

PVM Team, 1999



In May 1999 PVM shot a television commercial based on its product support (service and parts) core business ethic. Of the 109 employees in the shot, 82 were either parts or service personnel, with more than sixty mechanics and apprentices. There were 37 service vehicles, and two semi trailers with low loaders. There were also nine members of the John family.

Stayers

Apart from David John, who has been employed by Peel Valley Machinery since its inception, there are several employees who are in their fourth decade of employment with the company. One of them, Gunnedah Service Manager Garry Formann, pictured, is about to enter his fifth decade. On June 28, 2015, Garry celebrated thirty nine years with Peel Valley. He started as an apprentice with the company when it purchased the former company store from Chamberlain John Deere in 1976.



Master Mechanic

Cecil W Murden joined the fledgling Peel Valley Machinery on 18th September, 1967, two years after the acquisition of the John Deere franchise for Tamworth.



The addition of Cecil to the small team brought an element of certainty that could be built on and was the nucleus and foundation of the company's product support team in the late 1960's and 1970's.

Cecil was a master mechanic and a real bush engineer. He was a "born" Mr Fixit who would think an unusual problem through and many times would make or machine a part that could not be acquired otherwise.

Like many of that era or a little younger Cec was justifiably proud of having graduated from "the University of Hard Knocks".

Cec retired, a little early due to his health, on 14th August 1986 after nineteen years of devoted service to Peel Valley and the John family. Cecil's nephews Geoff and Andrew, both terrific mechanics, were also highly valued employees. In 2015 Andrew's son Drew is a very skilled senior technician in our Tamworth operation, the third generation of his family to work with the John family. Cecil Murden passed away on December 29, 2001.

Harvesting

David and Barry John were farmers and contract harvesters when they started Peel Valley Machinery, and they continued to farm and to run a contract harvesting operation for several years after starting the company. This gave them very good harvesting experience, and combine harvesting has been a product area the company has been very successful with. Proving that was in the blood, the picture below shows two of their sons, Andrew (left) and Tony John (right) contract harvesting in the early 1980's.

