

Murray Joynt

as told to Sue Britt

The prototype for the Coober Pedy blower was made by Murray Joynt. It was this blower that sparked the explosion of blower numbers as opal miners copied his version and started making their own.

A marine fitter from New Zealand, Murray Joynt knew the engineering concept. He wrote, "pneumatic conveying is a very old practice; it has been used in conveying sawdust in saw mills for as long as I can remember and I believe it has also been used in some mines as a permanent fixture."

Murray's first blower had no hopper. He bought an old A40 Austin and used the engine to run the fan. The unit was mounted on a trailer made from the front suspension of the car. It used 4" rainwater downpipes and it had no hopper. It cost about \$40 in parts. Bob McKenzie bought it for \$60 and used it at Kenda Flat for sinking shafts.



Gil remembers Murray Joynt. "He used to walk everywhere barefoot, even out to the Farm. I believe he had a look at Mario's blower. Everyone did."

Joynt was working with Steve Curin in the early 1970's. According to Murray, "The truth is that I designed and built the first blower with a hopper on it in Coober Pedy. No other person had any input into the design although Steve did help me build it. I did not build or design the first blower in Coober Pedy, however, as far as I know Mario Pagnon did that."

The first blower with a hopper was designed to follow a Proline drill. It used a Holden motor and a VB4 fan. It had 7" pipes and a hopper made of two 44-gallon drums welded together. It was mounted on a trailer made from a standard Holden front suspension. Unfortunately, when the hopper was erected and the props taken away it wouldn't stand up. Murray fitted a stabilizer bar to the suspension. The blower was then so stable it could be towed across mining field tracks at 60kph. Steve Curin used this blower out at Olympic Field to follow his Proline drill. He sank 8 shafts. All the miners who saw the plume of white dust came to have a look.

Murray Joynt made a blower for John Schuman which had a new 3-cylinder Perkins engine and a slant hopper built by Maesbury Plumbers to his design. Maesbury made several of these hoppers. Murray's next blower was one he rebuilt for the Matsimanis brothers. He added a

hopper and fitted a Richardson LVK fan to it. It had 9" PVC industrial pipe, which had more less friction than metal pipe.

Murray went on to build more blowers with Ivan Tomak. They set up a workshop and were the first to produce blowers on a commercial scale. They used Richardson fans. These fans were designed for use in large building air conditioners. They are designed to move air. Later, when the partnership split up, Ivan copied the Richardson fan design but made it out of heavier steel. That workshop was later to become Outback Agencies.

Edward Radeka remembers Murray Joynt as "a barefooted mechanical genius and innovator." He made a little domestic version of his blower to clean their dugout which was featured in a television show about outback inventors. Murray also designed and built a miniature tunnelling machine with Doug Trenham.



Black Peter and Murray with a blower hopper 1993

The last blower built by Murray Joynt

