

CYRIL BARCLAY STORIES BY Noel Painter

Cyril – do you remember owning a motor cycle in your earlier years, that you would put in gear, and then run like hell with it to get it started. I have vivid memories of the time I was on the back seat waiting for a ride to the corner and back. You pushed the bike, it started, you kept running and threw your leg over the seat, and I flew over the other side. You had forgotten you had a passenger.

You were the service manager for JE Peach & Co, the Ford Dealer in Hastings, and on my leaving school, employed me as an apprentice. Remember the morning you were coming to work in the Model 'A' service truck, parking it over the hoist outside. During the night someone had turned the tap on and when the air compressor was turned on inside the hoist it gradually lifted until the truck, not being too straight on, got to a certain height and over it went on to its side.

It wasn't too long before you decided to start your own business. The business was going well, then, the war started, petrol was rationed, tyres were not available, late model cars and trucks were taken for the armed forces and things appeared to be a bit grim, but older vehicles needed servicing, that's when you employed me once again. I think that made two or three mechanics, and Ray and I as apprentices. We weren't very happy at having to find, clean and put the tools away before going home at night as the mechanics left them scattered all over the place.

It wasn't until about a year later that Ray left for military service, I was in the territorials and was called in to training camp at a later date. Jobs were held open for the returning servicemen, so after coming home I returned to work in 1946. At that stage the firm was making orchard sprayers. Then came the Ferguson tractors. Sales were slow for a start, but we soon got known by orchardists and farmers alike. The trade-ins on tractors varied. Like the time you traded the horse, and let it roam around on the tennis court on the property you purchased over the road from the garage. The horse was eventually sold to a Chinese man. It brought you good luck and sales really boomed from them on. There was also a paddock of potatoes down Railway Road which were rumoured to be a trade in also.

There was the time the distributors would send a dozen or so tractors here by rail to be stored at the showgrounds. They had no batteries fitted so were towed to the grounds one at a time. It was too slow for Cyril, so you decided to rope one behind the other with a staff member steering each tractor and towed by the front tractor. All went well until we were spotted by the local traffic cop. He was furious. How you got out of that lot I don't know, but the limit being towed was reduced to two only at a time being towed (not 10 or 12).

There was great excitement when the one thousandth Ferguson tractor was sold in HB in 10 years, with a Champagne dinner being put on for the staff by the boss.

Cyril you also made the train at Fantasyland and apart from a few modifications since, it is still the original I believe – a fantastic effort.

The Barclay motors marching team was one of the top teams in Hawke's Bay for a number of years and the staff were left to make some of the floats for the blossom parades, which won a number of prizes over the years.

You were a good boss Cyril, and loaning me a car during my courting days and the Chev Coupe for our honeymoon was very much appreciated. Once again many thanks.

Staff numbered around the seventy mark when eventually sold to Wright Stephenson and Co.

So ended the private company of Barclay Motors.