

## WHEN IS A SCAM NOT A SCAM?

by Ralph and Wendy Thomas.

After reading about a couple of scams in a recent edition of The Oily Rag, it was rather disconcerting to find ourselves possibly in the middle of one.

After advertising several pieces of machinery on Gumtree for a few weeks; we received a reply from 'Ed' via that website, requesting more information on three items. After being told he was in NSW, we were inclined to forget the possibility of this sale, and wait until a local buyer came along.

However, at Ed's insistence that he really wanted the items, we agreed to a deal, giving him an extremely good rate after taking into consideration the transport costs he mentioned; and our bank details were given to him, on the understanding that he would deposit the money in our bank and make the arrangements with a trucking company to pick up and deliver the goods on a date not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

Three days later the money had still not been deposited and a further email contained the information that we had given him the wrong account number, (which we would have to dispute) and could we resend the information, and as it was a weekend, (we were told) nothing would go through the bank anyway.

Another email was sent, along with bank details again, to which Ed replied with thanks and a phone call to say he was teeing up the truck company and they would contact us soon. He also sent another email telling us the money had been paid into our bank account. He also made mention of any other items we had for sale in the future, saying he would be interested in further purchases.

The next morning the truck company rang to say they were ready to pick up the machines and get them to their depot ready to load on a truck heading east in two days' time. As the money had not yet come through, we told them we would contact them when it had and the machines would be ready to go. A day was spent packing the extra loose items and strapping them all together on the respective machines, to prevent as best we could, any problems with cartage over such a long distance. During this time there were several emails, phone calls from Ed, and many to the bank enquiring the balance of our account. By this time we had requested Ed's full name and his home address, which was never forthcoming; but still we did not think too badly of him as we had a mobile phone number from which he was calling quite frequently.

On the last morning, Ed was supposedly at his bank when he rang, and he requested yet again our bank details, saying that the money had been sent to WA, but returned because there was no such account number! Surprising really, as we had withdrawn money from that same account the day before!

Our last contact from 'Ed' was the following email –

*"Ralph. These machines r avoiding me. First u sent wrong details then when correct ones sent i got wrong due to big fingers on small keys. Then my trucky was unable to wait any longer and went.....so disater alround. Mate its got to hard for a number of reasons so best i forget about it????*

*Sorry but what can i do?? No truck now until he returns. I have never had so much trouble and i have bought everything from everywhere including w.a. Sorry*

*Regards*

*Ed*

*Ps iwill call kater when stopped driving"*

We replied to this email, expressing our disappointment, but offering to hold the machines for him until the money was deposited and the delivery details rearranged, but so far have had no further contact from him.

Our advice here, Seller Beware, and make sure the money is in the bank before allowing your machinery off your property.

PS: If 'Ed' reads this, I hope he thinks twice before he tries it again! Not everyone is as gullible as he thinks!

As we run two websites, the NHMA ([nhma.com.au](http://nhma.com.au)) and the MPC of WA ([machinerypreservationclub.com.au](http://machinerypreservationclub.com.au)) we are considering posting details of possible scams, which will hopefully protect both Buyers and Sellers. If you have been subject to anything similar and would like to send us the information, it may be of some help to others. Names will not be mentioned.