

Chapter XII

Reflections

My memoir teacher Ben Taaffe said I should set aside a chapter called 'Reflections'. This is it. OK Ben? I think I'll call it: 'Lubricating the Mental Machinery'. This gels with 'burnishing grey matter' in Chapter XI. It's an appropriate sequelae. I'll explain a little later.*

Eulogising in 1994

A eulogy is a speech in favour of a person. I guess that means you leave out the malign? The year 1994 was a year for family eulogies – not all of them expected or anticipated. My mother-in-law Ponty Mackay passed away in mid-May 1994. She had been extremely worried about her youngest granddaughter Kylie Gray then in terminal decline at age twelve. Kylie was her eldest daughter Jane's only child who had demonstrated unusual neurological symptoms when only ten years of age. After exhaustive examination this was eventually diagnosed as infiltrative germinoma of the brain – a very rare cancer indeed. The mention of the word 'infiltrative' rang some extremely ominous warning bells for me. Ponty had accepted that Kylie was not going to make it but was distraught that her daughter Jane had to suffer so much.

Ponty suffered a series of strokes from which she was not going to recover. It was an easy decision in the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle for her son and daughters to turn off her life support. The family asked me to deliver her eulogy. One cannot refuse. The memorial service took place in the Scots Presbyterian Church in Guernsey Street, Scone. This was the same chapel where another son-in-law Geoffrey Elder had delivered an erudite urban eulogy when Ponty's husband Bob Mackay had been laid to rest some years before. I will not forget the day. It was Scone Cup Race Day and normally I would have been occupying the Judge's Tower at the Scone Races in White Park at the other end Guernsey Street. The Race Club was then my consuming passion. I made something of the power of my late mother-in-law in confining me to a pulpit on such a day! Why Ponty? Jesse Elizabeth Spencer was born at Camyr Allyn, Scone in 1920. Apparently she was an extremely volatile and vociferous baby. The comparison was made with 'Ponto; The Lion That Roared' in Hilaire Belloc's 'Cautionary Tales'. The sobriquet was softened to Ponty; and it stuck.

Kylie Gray reached her twelfth birthday but being in a coma she would not have known about it. She left this world in July 1994. Jane was consoled by the thought that her mother had gone ahead to pave the way. Kylie's parents Iain and Jane asked me to prepare and present her eulogy. I assumed they must have approved of my performance in May and again refusal was out of the question. I knew this was to be the most difficult thing I had done in my life.

I prepared as well as I could. The service was planned for St Marks' Church, Darling Point. I visited the church the day before at the invitation of the Minister and made myself thoroughly familiar with the surroundings.

The church was full to overflowing with a reported congregation of over six hundred. Kylie Gray had attended junior school at Ascham. What I had not anticipated was that all her classmates in full school uniform would be arraigned directly in front of me. They were in tears when I mounted the pulpit. I began my encomium by relating how Kylie visited her cousins at our farm near Scone and learned to ride on a bay pony called 'Missy'. Bay pony? I realised that city girls might not know what a bay pony was. It was not in my script but I was struck by a revelation. I said that if I say bay: think chocolate. It's the same colour. The girl seated directly in front of me whose face I can still see today began to laugh. At least a smile crossed her face. It broke the tension. I was away. I managed to complete my assignment but I was told later some in the body of the kirk thought I might not. Robbie Burns' 'My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose' is emotive enough in the cold hard light of dawn in full sobriety.

Bill,

This is a beautiful piece. You have a clear command of a formal register so that the story has the sound of one knowing he is in full control of the circumstance.

I have put a few footnotes by way of editing.

Thank you,

Ben

*'Lubricating the Mental Machinery'

Jessie Conrad wrote of her husband Joseph after his death:

*"I was thankful when one of those most intimate friends, John Galsworthy, Edward Garnett or E. L. Sanderson could be induced to pay us a visit, for a long week-end. The effect of their sympathetic and sustaining presence would **lubricate the mental machinery**, so to speak, and a good advance would be made".*

Joseph Conrad suffered from the 'trammels of quotidian life' more than most.

Priorities in Ethical Public Service

Not long ago I was standing outside the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa – as one does! There was a large plaque attached to one wall of the entry gates which stated for no particular reason the ‘Principles of Ethical Public Service’. I’m a responsible Councillor with the UHSC: the plaque captured my eye and attracted my avid attention! Listed as desirable if not essential the twelve attributes were in order: Integrity; Loyalty; Transparency; Confidentiality; Honesty; Accountability; Serving the Public Interest; Exercising Legitimate Authority; Impartiality; Respecting Law; Responsiveness and Exercising Leadership. Wow! It made me think and I wrote them down - hence this discourse. It’s also food for thought for putative aspirants in September 2012.

My next exercise was to contemplate the priorities of this listing and see where I fitted.

Priority is variously defined in dictionaries and thesaurus as: importance; precedence in order, rank; urgency; import; significance and primacy. It made me wonder how I and we fared. What do you think? This is part of the self-evaluation process and involves elements of bench marking. The NSW Department of Local Government Council’s Charter requires that we as elected Councillors act according to the following premises: provide directly, or on behalf of other levels of government, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community; ensure that provided services are managed efficiently and effectively; exercise community leadership; have regard for the long term and cumulative effects of decisions; have regard to acting as custodian and trustee of public assets; effectively account for and manage assets for which we are responsible; raise funds for local purposes by way of rates, charges and fees, investments, loans and grants; keep the local community informed about activities; ensure that in the exercising of regulatory functions act consistently and without bias.

I think you’ll agree there is a considerable amount of commonality and overlap between the two paradigms. Recent community consultation confirms in spades that it is still rates, roads, rubbish, bridges and services that most ardently interest our principal stakeholders – you the ratepayers. The hornet’s nest analogy springs to mind every time the subjects are raised! Some intriguing ideas have emerged during the debate. These include an additional user pays levy on road transport and the sale of non-core assets to establish a slush fund otherwise known as a future fund or sovereign wealth fund. Our auditor promulgated the latter and is of particular interest to me. I am forced to recall that ‘any good idea doesn’t care who owns it’. The community leadership exemplar is interesting. In response to a probing question on ABC TV Paul Keating recently defined leadership as having two components: imagination and courage.

I'd like to have more of the latter and feel less of a ceremonial eunuch. In a robust modern social democracy it is ultimately the voters who decide. Bring on the LGA elections in 2012!

What else did I learn in Ethiopia apart from beautiful people in a spectacular environment?

Women near the Entoto Historical Museum in Addis Ababa have exactly the same status as beasts of burden like the miniature donkeys performing the same task. They carry 50kg loads of eucalyptus wood 7km on their backs for sale in the market to buy household goods. All this on hot dry days while their menfolk drink the local brew and chew chat! Meanwhile Gezahegne Abera's Olympic Marathon Gold Medal Sydney 2000 is on display in the museum. I saw him in Centennial Park in 2000 when *en route* to victory. He does not even keep it: it's State property. A young girl of about 8 in a ragged green dress ran barefoot by our bus for about 2km over sharp hot rocks at Adwa near Eritrea which is at serious altitude above sea level. She never faltered, stumbled or tripped. If I live long enough, I'll see her again. She'll win Olympic Gold in 2028. I regret I do not know her name.

Bill,

Thank you for this one too. You write with a most elegant simplicity which draws your reader into the world you are describing. At the same time, I hear your voice as a narrator. You balance the two, detail and narrative voice, beautifully.

You bring David Attenborough to my mind. In every sentence he speaks, we hear the man's enthusiasm for his world and he communicates in detail the power of the world he is describing.

Ben

Cicero

"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance."

Cicero 55 BC

So evidently we've learned nothing in the past 2,067 years?

Book Club

Did I tell you about our Book Club? We thought we'd call it something else. One of the suggestions was identified as a particular brand of very personal lady's accessories. Guess who thought of that. *Book Club* it is. We muster on the third Wednesday of every month at each member's house on rotation. We time the meetings from 10:30 in the morning until 12:00 noon knowing there will be a likely overrun. The host is asked to provide a cup of morning coffee and/or tea plus a small biscuit or slice. Lunch is not part of the deal but occasionally a few agree to resort to a choice café. The whole idea is to provide an ambience which is non-threatening and easy to cope with. In keeping with this philosophy, it is a small group. My wife and I hatched the idea about three years ago to accommodate aged and ageing, mostly single women in our community who may be recently widowed or alone. Another married member has been struggling with depression and needs the support. We also invited a doctor and his wife who are local icons both well into their eighties. They provide wisdom, balance and quality assurance. I needed additional male support and professional advice on special women's business: such as nomenclature.

It was our turn this month. We bring book or books of our choice and talk about it or them. There is no set text or copy. Being the most prolific reader, I am expected to provide optimum input. I am happy to do this but strictly avoid the didactic situation. Dr John Paradice wants to pick my brains about this memoir writing course. That didn't take long, did it? He is a member of the Australian Club as are three of his sons but is unable to commit to six Wednesdays in succession. His wish is to write a memoir for his family as did one of his late partners in the Scone Medical Practice. We may be able to arrive at some mutually agreeable arrangement. Dr John Paradice and I agree on one thing. Phillip Adams can summarise on our behalf: 'Books are increasingly the sleepers on the rusting railway line of your life, the pickets in the fence of your history, the bricks with which you've built your brain'.

My brain feels like a Leunig Cartoon a lot of the time. Many would claim it behaves like one. Reading is the unravelling: writing the denouement.

Nearly all of us are devotees of the 'Blooms-berries'. I have just finished Quentin Bell's biography of his Aunt Virginia Woolf. It is recorded by Raymond Mortimer in *The Sunday Times* that 'Quentin Bell reveals every virtue needed by the biographer: narrative power, scholarship, clarity, sureness of tone, sympathy and detachment'. His views might be a tad nepotistic but I don't think I could put it any better myself. Just joking!

I suggested to our group that we might form a Memoir Club. The first Memoir Club met in Bloomsbury on 4 March 1920. The members were: Desmond and Molly MacCarthy, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Duncan Grant, Clive and Vanessa Bell, Morgan Foster, Sydney Waterlow and Roger Fry. David Garnett became a member fairly soon afterwards.

The club had no rules save that there was an understanding that members were free to say anything they pleased. Nor did they keep any records. It sounds like my kind of club, but would Groucho Marks have been acceptable? According to legend (his) he would not want to be if they admitted him. Has there ever been a more erudite cadre of literary genius and artistic merit assembled in one place at one time? Suddenly our book club members were intimidated: not a good idea. Guess who thought of that. I might put it to another writing cabal in Scone who have approached me for information. That would pose a challenge. Meanwhile our book club slowly dispersed and some headed for lunch after a very long session. The Paradices' billionaire son David – just back from Europe and his sponsorship of Cadel Evans in the *Tour De France* Cycle Race – telephoned to ask why his parents were late for their luncheon appointment. Next month I'll report back on my further activities when it is not our turn to play host.

Book Quotes

"A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." John Milton

"My books are the sleepers on the rusting railway line of my life" Phillip Adams

All I Have To Do Is Dream

I will write this from the vestiges of my memory. It's about journeys real and vicarious: theirs and mine. Life is a journey.

The first is about one of the all-time great voyages in the history of human endeavour.

A good friend has just lent me Number 117 of the London Gazette of Friday, August 19, 1768. It originally cost twopence-farthing. He claims it is authentic and has been in his family for generations. But there are some watermarks which look suspiciously like those from a photocopier to me. The writing is newer rather than older English. I would be a cynic, wouldn't I? On Page 2 there is reference to the Demon Drink. It transpires that, shocking as the account may appear, 'no less than seven soldiers have destroyed themselves on the Isle of Wight within these ten days by drinking spirits'. One, lamentable to say, was an officer. The main cover story on Pages 1 and 2 addresses the secret voyage of Lieutenant James Cook on HIS MAJESTY's Bark, Endeavour from Plymouth Sound. The article discloses certain information speculating on the true reasons for the voyage. Methinks there were leaks other than on the ship. There are detailed descriptions with diagrams dealing with the Endeavour and its fit-out at Deptford. Lieutenant Cook would take with him his special anti-scorbutic concoction containing a mixture of scurvy grass, marmalade of carrots, syrup of lemons, and other vegetables. Milk would be supplied to Officers from a goat which is the very same animal which was carried for that purpose on HIS MAJESTY'S Ship Dolphin. Did I claim I was doing this from memory?

Almost sixty years ago I was selected to represent my Quaker coeducational boarding school in West Yorkshire against our sister school at Great Ayton in North Yorkshire. I had eyes only for Margaret who had left our school and moved to Great Ayton. This was about the same time I was addicted to the Everly Brothers and their signature international hit song 'All I Have To Do Is Dream'. It was of little interest that a large statue on top of a hill dominated the village commemorating some old bloke called Captain Cook. Many years later I became enraptured with the same old bloke. Like millions of others I immersed myself in his exploits. I made it my business to explore as many of his haunts and jaunts as I could. This was my real time dreamtime journey.

I took my young family on a return visit to North Yorkshire as well as to my old school. By the way, 2005 Australian of the Year burns specialist Dr Fiona Wood is an alumnus of my school. I thought you might like to know. So is convicted rogue trader Kweku Adoboli who like me was Head Boy. Don't tell anyone. We reviewed the Captain Cook Museum in Great Ayton and also went to Marston, Staithes and Whitby. In Melbourne later I minutely examined Cook's Cottage in Fitzroy Gardens. Cooks landing at Kurnell is a given as La Perouse. On another occasion I hired a car from Cairns and drove to Cooktown in far north Queensland almost coming to grief on the way. Adventure Bay on South Bruny Island in remote faraway eastern Tasmania was my destination in the Apple Isle.

William Bligh visited the bay four times in his life: once with Captain Cook while on the Resolution and another on the Bounty. It's all in the Bounty Museum. Next year I plan to go to the Queensland coastal town of 1770. I have yet to make plans for the Pacific Islands. A cruise on the Aranui II around the Marquesas Archipelago beckons seductively. It seems like a very good idea. Let your imagination run wild: perchance to dream?

In another life I also avidly followed Robert Louis Stevenson. As an undergraduate student at Edinburgh University there was ample opportunity. We'd furtively peak and stealthily sneak into the myriad clandestine nooks and crannies (called Close and Wynd) frequented by Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. This was usually done while on the obligatory right-of-passage pub crawl down High Street from the Castle to Holyrood Palace. Darkness added cachet to the experience. I am ashamed to admit some of these impromptu opportune visits were to seek personal relief from excessive imbibition of pale amber fluid. Imagination was fuelled by the alcohol. Even worse was the dare to urinate on the Heart of Midlothian embedded in the cobblestone pavement outside St Giles Cathedral. The trick was not to be caught. Much later I made one of my very favourite vicarious forays to Tusitala at Apia in Western Samoa. Aggie Greys was special but that's another story. There the pilgrimage was to RLS's home Vailima and his resting place on top of Mount Vaea. It was a hot steamy climb. We made it and had the space to ourselves. The sense of place is intense. It's exquisitely beautiful. His self-composed requiem on the obelisk is poignantly and eminently memorable:

*Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.*

I know it's there: I've seen it. Show me the evidence. If I had been one of the Twelve Apostles, I'd have been Thomas. Is there any doubt? I couldn't have been an Apostle at Cambridge because they wouldn't have invited me. I strongly suspect any rhyme like that is beyond me: even in my dreamtime journey. I'll settle for what remains of my memory.

DVDBDODU

I want to tell you about the Dick Vet Dinosaur's Big Day Out Down Under. I'll call it DVDBDODU for short. Perhaps I should explain. A very few from the vintage graduation classes in the mid-1960's of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, University of Edinburgh have made their way to Australia. Why Royal Dick? The College was originally founded by William Dick in the early eighteenth century. It's a name that stuck. The label resonates if a little gratingly and rhymes with many similar words. It's now recognised throughout the small nepotistic world of English speaking veterinary science. Despite declarations to the contrary by the flower power people, I was there in the 60s; and I remember it. The vintage claim is sacrosanct: not to be questioned.

Pete and Judy Barnes were visiting their wild child daughter who lives in Lane Cove. Kirsty Barnes has been the main problem in their brood of five. Like many before her, she has found her niche in Sydney. The Barnes parents make the long trek from West Yorkshire almost every year. They believe it is vitally important to provide support where most needed. They were both great friends in my university days and still are. I am proud they call on me every time they visit and we share hospitality. This year I thought it would be good to organise a DVDBDODU. Sarah and I contacted Graham and Margaret Tudge in Melbourne, George and Sue Blenkhorn in Pakenham and Angus and Amanda Campbell in Balmain. Only the Campbells were non-starters. Jock and Margaret Keith from Forfar in Scotland have son at Lilyfield but they would not be in the country.

We unanimously selected from an eclectic field as the venue for a very long lunch on the agreed day and date Doyle's Sea Food at Watson's Bay. This was to be the focal point of our celebration. The ageing alumni and their long suffering partners would rendezvous at La Renaissance Patisserie Francaise, 47 Argyle Street, The Rocks: the date was Wednesday 27 February 2013. The starting point venue was selected by Graham: Margaret's relatives own and run the establishment. It could not have been better a better choice. Muster was for 11:00am. Sadly George and Sue Blenkhorn were late withdrawals. George has odious responsibilities as Mayor of Cardinia Shire Council. There must have been something in the water in Edinburgh in the 60s? I have served in Local Government while Graham has been President of Rotary International. His eldest lawyer son the Honourable Alan Tudge MP is the Federal Member for Aston. He is confidently tipped for a spectacular career in Australian Government. I digress.

Pete, Judy and Graham had not seen each other for almost 50 years. It was as if nothing had changed although delectable Margaret is Mrs Graham Tudge III. We all greatly enjoyed morning tea at La Patisserie and walked the short distance to the Ferry Terminals at Circular Quay. It was all too easy. For \$2:50 each as grey power seniors, we had the harbour at our mercy. Sydney could not have provided a more perfectly cooked summer's day: not too hot, not too cold with a gentle refreshing zephyr wafting lightly through the Heads. The ladies were enchanted: it was a good hair day. Landing at Watsons Bay via the Opera House, Double Bay, Point Piper, Rose Bay and Vaucluse is spectacular at any time. Today it was extra special. We were allotted the perfect table.

Any would have done. Lunch at Doyle's Sea Food almost on the beach is world class. Today was no exception. Two people had barramundi. Excellent wines were in super abundance: the course helpings are legendary. There are elements of guilt: what we left on our plates would feed some third world countries for a day. The nation's largest and most succulent Oysters are *de rigueur*. Judy in particular made most use of the copious cuisine. She deserves it: life has been arduous. She is a great survivor: controlled nicotine and alcohol are her props. A gentle stroll around the myriad enchanting passive relaxation parks at Watson's Bay pre-empted the ferry trip back down the harbour. We almost forgot the photographs. Sarah obliged. The shots should have been before lunch because the belts of the DVD could not be tightened.

The return journey was as exquisite as the outward. On disembarking at Circular Quay, we adjourned for cleansing ales to Australia's oldest pub: The Fortune of War in the Rocks. When is enough, enough? It's a very old habit. We were given extended license by our minder spouses. It was the perfect fix for a perfect day. We dispersed. In his very droll North Country dialect, Pete extolled the virtues of West Yorkshire. I have done Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. They do not have the same pull. The DVD is a dying breed. What better way to approach extinction.

If you change the last letter of DVDBDODU to 'O', the final four letters spell DODO: just a thought. Sydney, you hoary lubricious old whore, you did us proud.

Pride of Place

It's all about looking after what you have. At a recent meeting of your UHSC Heritage Committee, guest speaker and chairman of Murrurundi Chamber of Commerce Peter Carlin spoke passionately and eloquently about his 'pride of place' in his new tree change home at Murrurundi. He even rightly claimed ownership in stating 'we won the Bluett Award'. Pride of Place (PoP) in remote Cape York is a paradigm designed to help improve the presentation of people's houses and gardens as well as support the cleaning up of public spaces. Having a clean, neat environment will help make people proud of their surroundings, and in turn create a significant positive effect on social norms. It is also a family development project that strengthens households and communities while building people's skills and confidence. PoP encourages families to take pride in and responsibility for the condition of their homes and backyards. Improvements may include landscaping, tree planting, house painting, carport or garden shed construction. On Tuesday 14 October 2008, the City of Newcastle agreed to convene a Pride of Place taskforce. The taskforce has been working to address issues that impact on the overall amenity of the city including graffiti, vandalism, community safety, cleanliness and appearance. Representatives from business, government agencies, young people and the community are represented on the taskforce.

You will be relieved to know that you have a *de facto* Pride of Place commentarial in your UHSC Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC). The UHSC has a Heritage Strategy for the period 2011 to 2014. The mission is to protect significant places from adverse impacts resulting from deterioration, inappropriate use and over-development. The vision is for the UHSC to work with the community to identify, maintain, protect and enhance the LGA's natural, cultural and built heritage in accordance with Australian Burra Charter principles for the benefit of present and future residents and visitors. Burra Charter? Pauline Hanson would say: please explain. I'm with you there, Pauline. The Burra Charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of Australian heritage places.

We have a dedicated group headed up by consultant and Heritage Advisor Lillian Cullen whose services are available free through the UHSC. I am titular chairman – or 'tit' for short. We are spread across the geographic landscape and meet regularly between Murrurundi, Scone and Merriwa. This is a seminal moment in our and your history. Under review are the Heritage Conservation Areas for each locality. You should become familiar with the content by visiting our website and/or our UHSC offices in Scone, Merriwa or Murrurundi.

I commend your energetic and passionate volunteer representatives on HAC: Cr Deirdre Peebles, Cr Pam Seccombe, Bryan Baker, Libby Walker, Lea Lockett, Matt Dixon, Geoff Field, Barbara Riddell, Mary Woodlands, Kate Halliday, Gordon Halliday, Bev Atkinson, Murray James Paul Smith . Thanks to local knowledge, inspiration, innovation, energy, drive and vision, some outstanding things have been happening such as the Merriwa Railway Restoration Project, Murrurundi Museum and the Pioneer Cottage, Murrurundi. My contribution to pride of place amounts to mowing the grass on a regular basis on the extensive footpaths outside our residence and planting ornamental shade trees. It's not always done with good grace but it invariably makes me feel better: and proud. An additional corollary is that it improves my health and fitness. Even more important is that Peter Carlin's passion and persistence have borne fruit. With the unanimous support of your Heritage Committee the Hunter Heritage Network Seminar "Pride of Place" will be held in Murrurundi on Friday 30th March 2012. Have you seen the Belmore Hotel recently? There'll be more to come later.

Preserving for Posterity

‘Pairing and Sharing’

It’s her consuming passion. Our most admirable erudite and eminent Governor ‘Professor Marie Bashir’ expatiated in effusive detail about the Upper Hunter Valley and its latent capacity as the food bowl for the Nation: even for China. The occasion was the opening ceremony for the extensions to the Scone Medical Practice on Saturday 25 September 20010. Professor Bashir abandoned the prepared script while acknowledging prejudice and nepotism to proclaim the Hunter Valley as her favourite and preferred destination in NSW. Her eldest son Michael Shehadie had spent some of his formative years at Widden Stud and subsequently a concatenated career in the thoroughbred industry. What was not in doubt was the Governor’s genuine enthusiasm for the potential of our own home territory to sustain agricultural and horticultural production in the post-mining era for the betterment of the Nation and our successors’ successor: should that be our children’s children? The China reference was to her recent State visit to that country and her optimistic perhaps hyperbolic assumption that there was a ready and rapidly expanding export market for our surplus food produce.

While we all acknowledge the economic and strategic importance of extraction industries, we are also coming to terms with the dire need to preserve valuable agricultural land for producing what we all have to eat. Neighbouring Gunnedah Councillor and NSW Farmer’s Association Executive Member Fiona Simson is a trenchant advocate. The NSW Farmers Association’s call is for a moratorium on all new mining and gas extraction projects until a fresh map of the State is drawn to quarantine productive agricultural land ‘too precious to dig up’. As it stands at present, the unbalanced planning instruments give too much power to extractive industries for mining and coal seam gas development to proceed at breakneck speed. While we pay arguable lip service to environmental sustainability, the key word is balance. The other crucial element is water and its sequestration. An erudite friend of mine - I do have some - said recently: ‘Our forebears cut down too many trees. It’s up to our grandchildren to put them back’.

What can your Council do? We are all probably familiar by now with the outcome of the Bickham Coal enquiry and the recommendations of the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC). The Upper Hunter Shire Council has drawn the line and we must work with our constituents to establish exclusion zones for well-defined purposes. ‘Pairing and sharing’ is still achievable.

Community owned and driven land use strategic alliances might be the way to go. There exist admirable working models in other domains including everything from local to international. I represent you and your Council on the Hunter Councils Board Advisory Group on the Environment. Recently a small group of us were discussing the 'Blueprint for a Low Carbon Future for the NSW Hunter Valley'. We acknowledged that without mining the economies of Singleton and Muswellbrook Shires would collapse. These used to be agriculturally based communities. The Upper Hunter might also follow.

Where to from here?

Governor Marie Bashir, I like your reasoning and admire your passion. I'm on your side. I never did attempt to broach an argument with your 'Wallaby' husband Sir Nicholas Shehadie or your son Michael: much too big for me. Then plain Nick did present the Scone Race Club Cup in 1979 during my first year as club President. No argument from me then either.

It Ain't Over 'Til the Fat Man Spins

Or

The Acquisition of Life Skills

Oh for the good old days. I recently spent a wonderful time attending the final cricket test versus my old pommy confreres. How rapidly things can change. A few short years ago, I did the same thing versus the South African Proteas. For me, this is the apogee of relaxed convivial entertainment. The New Year game at the SCG also brings to town dry and thirsty mates from outback and way back congregating annually to assuage thirst and reinforce mutual bonds. It's a tricky manoeuvre to avoid meeting too early for fear of missing most or all the match. Peter Roebuck has great admiration for the stoical bushies and their intricate cricket knowledge. Great mate Gary from Trangie doesn't need a seat on the first day but his tongue is hanging out by Day 3. The strong Upper Hunter contingent, luminaries and veterans of the Paddington Gift are omnipresent as usual and assiduous students of form. Yes, I am a resigned flannelled fool and addicted cricket tragic. I share this ultimate fatal flaw with a former Prime Minister whom I actually met: at a school cricket match.

As a very small boy in a very distant and tiny village in the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland, England where my family had lived for well over 400 years and very far from any madding crowd, I remember my farmer father giving me instructions. He told me of a legendary fellow called Bradman from a distant Empire outpost who acquired exquisite cricketing skills. The story of stump-and-ripple-iron-water-tank is universally known. Walking slowly to the wicket to accustom one's eyes to the light was another anecdote I distinctly remember. Funnily, I noticed Matthew Hayden did exactly that when opening the batting. Fine tuning one's eyes to light in England was often an inverse exercise with the candle power in the dressing room arguably stronger than outside. I also learned of a mythical far-away place called 'The Hill' widely regarded as the ultimate testing ground of English mettle in the blazing heat of combat in the southern cauldron. My father had inadvertently sown the seed germinating to become my life's journey.

However it was the acquisition of life skills I contemplated during the intermediary breaks in play. Learning to open the batting in my view teaches you to handle the inevitable vicissitudes you encounter later in life. You have been selected as part of a team. You walk out at the start of play as an individual to face the first ball at the direction of your captain. You are welcomed with infinite discourtesy by the opposition. With tremulous cadence slow, you take guard from the umpire pretending to be brave and resilient when you are ostensibly trembling and terrified. It's time for decisions. You cannot run to Mummy or hide behind Daddy. Curtly Ambrose look alike is a ghostly blurred figure in the far distance. He charges in from 300 metres or so and hurls the tiny shiny red grenade at 450kph from a trajectory of 5.8 metres. According to the coaching manual and eons of net practice, you step onto the front foot, head down, bat straight, eyes on the ball and play a classical forward defensive stroke. Do you recall Damien Fleming talking about 'avenues of apprehension' and 'boulevards of bewilderment'? More like the 'bloody road to hell' you think.

'Curtly' arrives in an instant and something vaguely red flashes past before you've moved. You hear the inevitable chilling death rattle behind immediately followed by the raucous cheers of the opposition, all 250 of them, gathered closely around the bat. You have scored another golden primary. You tuck your bat under your arm and trudge disconsolately back head bowed 5kms to the pavilion in full view of your team and assembled throng.

In my very first representative match for my Yorkshire school under-14 team, I was the third wicket of a hat trick bowled by a fellow called Jones from Pontefract King's School. How well do I remember the details over 50 years later. I distinctly recall my elder sister Diana's shrilling trill at my utterly humiliating demise. The experience I hope steeled me for the future. Eventually I captained a few teams and carried my bat on more than one occasion. Both my children opened the batting for their respective schools. At a safe distance of 20,000km, Diana and I correspond very well these days. The point I wish to make is if you can cope with the scenario described above, go the hard yards and recover to fight again, you are well placed to deal with later exigencies: real or imagined. Rudyard Kipling had a bit to say about the *metier* in his poem with the shortest title ever.

So it's back to the cricket. For me the level of skill attained and displayed by the combatants at Test class is esoteric. It is not just the skill with bat, ball or in the field. It is the steely mental resolve finely honed and tuned over many years of competition at the highest level with all its concomitant highs, lows and sustained recovery. It is the infinite patience and consummate concentration required for many hours or even days' combat. It is the ability to raise the threshold, ignore the pain and strive for glory just the same. As ABC commentator Tim Lane correctly announced, the thumbs were down in the Coliseum when the Fat Man came on to spin on the 4th day against the Proteas all those short years ago. Not even Kerry O'Keeffe's asinine laugh could delay the inevitable. Come back, Warnie: all is forgiven. We need you now. It's about winning isn't it: or should we just move on?

W. P. Howey

Postscript:

I played against one G. Boycott at secondary school. I could leave it at that but truth prevails. It was Geoff's red haired cousin Gordon from a different school.

‘Hazardous Journeys’

Life could be arduous at times in Scone and even short journeys could be hazardous depending on the time of day – or night – and the load aboard.

There used to be a well-established Iron Bark tree on the centre strip at the corner of Guernsey and Kingdon Streets. This was a short walk from White Park and not far from the RSL Club. Unfortunately – for the tree – it was also in the path of (name deleted) attempting to negotiate a route from the Polo Club Party at the Golf Club to the ‘Hole in the Wall’. It was 3:30am on a very cold July night and an aeroplane could not have flown there was so much ice on the windscreen. Alas and perhaps inevitably, the car and the tree collided! The car was parked half way up the tree with the horn blaring! Lights started to come on around town rather like in the old advertisement for the ‘Flintstones’ series. This required quick thinking and quicker action! Climbing up a slippery bonnet and dismantling an errant and faulty car horn is not easy especially just as a police car is turning into Guernsey Street from Liverpool Street! It’s not far along the railway track to the sanctity of the ‘Hole in the Wall’. A quick telephone call to Geoff Cooper of Superior Panel Beaters at 7:00 am cleaned up the mess. It’s a very unconventional and extremely expensive method of ring barking a tree and definitely not recommended!

The railway crossing on Liverpool Street could also pose some problems especially for the unsuspecting late at night! Mrs. Crump used to live in the stone cottage by the crossing and it was her job to open and close the gates manually whenever a train was expected. After a very hard days’ night in Merriwa following a Rugby match one was almost home only to find the gates shut at 3 am ending the arrival of the NW Mail. Luckily Lester Rose used to go to work at his Supermarket very early in those days. It’s a very strange feeling to awaken in a car with engine running at 4:30 am in the middle of Liverpool Street with the railway gates open and no train in sight! After all it wasn’t Mrs. Crumps’ job to move the cars! Again this is not a recommended method or place of abode even for a short stay!

Tragically there was another tale of a ‘second coming’ when a ‘car borrower’ was not so lucky! Bill and Stan were putting away a few late ones following the weekly Tuesday Boozers celebration at the ‘Belmore’. Stan was not on police duty that night which was fortuitous. Bill decided to leave ‘early’ at about 10 pm. There was mild consternation initially as he was unable to locate his car behind the pub. This was not unusual as confusion and hazy memories often reigned supreme at this time.

Not being in the habit of locking one's car it was not unknown for 'friends' to borrow a vehicle and park it somewhere else! After a little bit of lateral thinking it was concluded Bill's car really had been purloined! Bill made his way quickly to the police station where Sergeant Graham Noble was in charge. He looked mildly shocked when Bill walked in. 'I've just had a report you've been killed in a road accident' intoned the indefatigable Sgt. Noble. It was at this very moment ashen faced solicitor Graham Hooke raced into the station. He looked like he'd seen a ghost and thought he had! He'd also heard the grim 'news'! Luckily Bill was mildly 'tranquillized' at this stage and the reality had yet to bite!

The mystery then began to unfold. Sadly there was a fatal road accident near Willowtree and Bill's distinctive two-tone Holden was involved. A wiseacre truck driver from Muswellbrook had witnessed the tragedy and assuredly identified the deceased as definitely 'the young pommy vet from Scone'. He delivered his (uncontested) opinion to a meeting in Murrurundi attended by Bill Perkins among others. Within one hour the news had spread throughout the valley. Graham Noble had evidence to the contrary and Graham Hooke was able to confirm the truth. It is to the credit of the police they never accept *ad hoc* evidence and pursue a well-defined course of investigation. Even more remarkable was the fact the late recidivist was a young man of indigenous extraction from the Breeza Plains – hardly to be confused with a florid faced Anglo-Celt?

My car was retrieved from the debacle and repaired by the insurance company. I never did feel at ease in it after that and always locked it up whenever left unattended. Some lessons come the hard way!

One other hazardous journey was made by Warren [*aka* 'Vulgorilla'] and Bill following the TB testing of a large herd of cattle on the Barrington Tops. It was necessary to stop first at the Victoria Arms in Moonan Flat and then to Jack Kellett's famed 'Linga Longa Inn' at Gundy. Warren was well primed by this time and was asked to pass an opinion on the 'bar cat'. The only consulting space available was the bar itself and the diagnosis made was definitely male! The following sequence was almost inevitable in the prevailing circumstances! An operation was performed on the unsuspecting cat with the enthralled bar audience close by. Jack Kellett used to contribute a unique Gundy column each week to the 'Scone Advocate'. This was his leader this time. It really was dangerous to travel with Warren in such a mood!

W. P. Howey

Bill,

This too is very well done: a most enjoyable tale.

My first suggestion to you is to allow the story, as it were, to tell itself. The pieces which I have suggested you take out draw attention to themselves and distract from the narrative. You have a fine sense of character and event; the text needs nothing further to articulate itself.

I look forward to reading more when the course begins.

Thanks,

Ben

Hunter Valley Hero

Have you heard of Wyatt Earp and the gunfight at the OK Corral? Almost certainly you have. Have you ever heard of Edward Denny Day and the gunfight at Doughboy Hollow? Almost certainly you have not? I contend the latter is by far the most noble and heroic. We have not enjoyed the dubious benefit of the hyperactive steroidal mythology of the American West richly embellished by Hollywood and TV.

I had the consummate honour of launching a book at the Historical Society in Scone. It is called *From Convicts to Comedies – A History of Scone's Court Houses*. Its author Veronica Antcliff is the current Clerk of Petty Sessions at Scone Court House. By remarkable coincidence Mathew Miller built the original Court House in Scone before his own home Belmore House *aka* Geraldton where we now live. It was meant to be. I am indebted to Veronica for introducing me to the remarkable career of Edward Denny Day. I was totally ignorant before.

Edward Denny Day (1801-1876) was the son of Reverend John Day a clergyman of the Church of England in County Kerry, Ireland, and his wife Charlotte née Denny. In 1820 he joined the 46th Regiment as an ensign and in 1833 became a lieutenant in the 62nd Regiment. After serving in India he resigned from the Army in 1834 citing ill health. He then went to Sydney where he obtained employment as clerk to the Executive Council. He served in the office of the colonial secretary in 1835. In 1836 he married Margaret fourth daughter of the postmaster-general James Raymond. There were six sons and five daughters from the marriage. Day was appointed police magistrate at the Vale of Clwydd (Hartley and Lithgow) in January 1836, Maitland in January 1837 and Muswellbrook in October 1837. In Muswellbrook his circuit included Merton and Invermein. His duties included visiting Invermein on a fortnightly basis. His jurisdiction extended beyond the settled districts of the Liverpool Plains and the country west of the Great Dividing Range up into what is now Queensland. There were at least two episodes where Edward Denny Day established his outstanding credentials as a hero of law enforcement in the emerging infant Colony.

William Hobbs was overseer of Thomas Dangar's three properties on the Big River. He discovered that a group of aborigines had been murdered at Myall Creek (near Bingara). Consequently he wrote to the Police Magistrate at Invermein. The following letter is held at the State Records and may be viewed on their website. It has also been displayed at the National Museum as part of an exhibition of nationally significant documents.

Peels River July 9th 1838

Sir

I beg to acquaint you that about a month since I had occasion to leave Mr Dangar's Station on the Big River for few days. On my return I saw near the Hut the remains of about thirty Blacks principally women and children. I recognized them as part of a Tribe that had been at the station for some time and who had since they first came conducted themselves in a quiet and proper manner. On making enquiry I was informed that party of White men had come to the station who after securing them had taken them a short distance from my Hut and destroyed nearly the whole of them. I should have given information earlier but circumstances prevented my sooner coming down the country.

I am'

Sir

Your obt Servant

W Hobbs

E D Day Esq

Police Magistrate

Invermein

In June 1838 under instructions from Governor Sir George Gipps Day led a party of Mounted Police to arrest white men said to have killed at least twenty-eight Aboriginals at or near Henry Dangar's station at Myall Creek on the Liverpool Plains. He was away for 53 days before he reported back to the Governor in person. Day carried out a thorough investigation. Eleven suspects were arrested and walked back in chains under guard to Muswellbrook; a distance of almost 300km. They were committed to trial in Sydney. Hobbs became one of the main Crown witnesses in the subsequent murder trials. In the first trial eleven men were charged with murdering an Aboriginal man and found not guilty. Seven of the men were immediately re-arrested and charged with the murder of an Aboriginal child. In the second trial these men were found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. It was the first time a group of white men were arrested, charged and hanged for the murder of Aboriginal people.

As Police Magistrate again at Maitland he was also Commissioner Court of Requests from 1841 and significantly of insolvent estates from 1842. This was somewhat ironic. Day had liquidity trouble later himself. He played a major part in public life in Maitland becoming a foundation member of the Australian Immigration Association and elected chairman of the Maitland branch.

Edward Denny Day's most famous exploit involved chasing and capturing bushrangers. On Sunday 20th December 1840 he happened to be visiting Muswellbrook on private business. He learned of a gang of bushrangers led by Edward Davis (The Jewboy) who had terrorized settlers in the Scone district for several months raiding cattle stations and breaking into homesteads. In one raid the clerk in a store at Scone John Graham was murdered. Captain Day organized a party of mounted men fortifying his posse of sturdy locals with ticket-of-leave men. Does it take one to know one or at least think like they do? He pursued the bushrangers without any assistance from his successor Police Magistrate in Scone. The Jewboy Gang raided and pillaged on their rampant foray north replenishing their reserves with food, ammunition and fresh stolen horses on the way. Eventually Day and his gallant troupe came upon the bushrangers' camp. They arrived about three hours after the outlaw gang. Following very heavy rain they had to reload their damp firearms. The lawmen engaged with and captured five of the outlaws after a short skirmish at Doughboy Hollow near Ardglen just north of Pages Creek (Murrurundi); a sixth was arrested the next day. At least eighteen shots were fired by the renegades including two aimed directly at Denny Day. It may be their aim was somewhat sullied by bibulous behaviour: they had raided a pub at Pages Creek. The bushrangers were desperate men and knew that capture meant certain death.

The detained desperados were eventually escorted back to face justice under guard and secure in chains. All were tried and found guilty: they were hanged on 16 March 1841. Grateful residents of the Scone district presented Day with a service of plate for his efforts. He would not have been short of crockery because he received several similar gifts on subsequent occasions. It may be that he would have preferred the presents in hard currency as he was somewhat profligate in trade and cavalier in commerce.

Edward Denny Day's subsequent professional career was less eventful. On 16 February 1844 he laid the foundation stone of a new gaol at East Maitland. This was the same gaol where in 1897 Charles Hines a son-in-law of Mathew Miller was executed for the rape and carnal knowledge of his step daughters and daughters between the ages of 10 to 14 at Gundy. Is this too much information? Never delve too deeply into family history. In January 1846 as representative of Governor Gipps Denny Day laid another stone for a new hospital at Maitland. Day's business ventures proved less successful and his estate was sequestrated in 1848. Liquidity became a problem until rescued by a government pension. Next year he was appointed to Sydney and from 1 January 1851 was provincial inspector of police for the northern district. He was obliged to resign this position following a drunken incident at the Mayor's fancy dress ball. His career had indeed passed the pinnacle. In June 1853 he was appointed stipendiary magistrate at Port Macquarie; after five years he was transferred to Maitland where he served until 1869. He then again retired at Maitland where he died on 6 May 1876. He was buried in the Anglican cemetery at East Maitland.

Edward Denny Day had indeed demonstrated enormous courage and liberal fortitude. The almost two month sojourn in the saddle to Myall Creek in the high New England country would have severely tested the mettle of anyone. Confronting the desperate heavily armed Jewboy Gang with an amateur posse demanded exceptional pluck. Both episodes are firmly entrenched into Australian folklore. The hero has remained all but anonymous. There are numerable press references and plaques commemorating his resolution and devotion to duty but nothing approaching the tributes for Sheriff Earp. It may be that gunfight at the OK Corral resonates much more than the equivalent at Doughboy Hollow? Police Magistrate Edward Denny Day does not have quite the same ring to it as the Earp brothers and Doc Halliday. Perhaps we can invent better titles. Is this nominative determinism at work or simply representative of superior American chutzpah?

Horse Away!

It had been a hard day's night for Tom from Merriwa and his steed 'Ginger'! The annual Scone Rodeo traditionally on the 'hot' last week end in October was a challenging event. It had to be celebrated in true bucolic style by as much competitive and social interactivity as was humanly possible! Tom and 'Ginger' were tenacious combatants of the old school and had successfully completed another furious round of camp drafting and 'pick up'. It was very thirsty work of course and it was essential to immediately replenish depleted fluid reserves! 'Ginger' liked pure water and had his fill. Tom preferred a less pure brew but being a Sunday his poison was much harder to procure. There is always a solution for the assiduously perspicacious bon vivant!

Norm and Becky kept a very congenial household at 13 Oxford Road. Having no immediate family of their own they were generous in 'adopting' and caring for a few surrogate bachelor sons. Today was another of their special social Sunday soirees. No stranger to the odd scotch on his own account Norm had just completed a long innings at the Rodeo himself! Because he was in the agency game and holding the distribution rights for 'Scottish Cream' demand was never seriously challenged and supply rarely threatened! Bill R., Bill H. and Tom with 'Ginger' in tow made up the party just as the sun was setting over a long, hot and dusty early summer week end.

It may have been the cold water but Ginger started showing warning signs of early gripes. No problem! Bill H. was there and being a veterinarian must have had the solution to the problem. Initial consultation and treatment appeared to effect some relief and the early success of therapy was celebrated with another cold 'KB' or three. When 'Ginger' began to relapse it was decided to instigate more drastic therapy. It may have been the gathering twilight or accelerating perspiration but at this stage 'Ginger' appeared to be changing colour from strong chestnut to 'KB' bay? One could have been mistaken of course!

Bill H. required further supplies from the veterinary pharmacy at the Grazcos establishment in Kelly Street and elected to drive the approximate 500 metres. It was not a wise decision! There was a small access lane way beside the building further impeded by the addition of an outside toilet added as an additional afterthought to the main construction. It was always difficult to negotiate the alley. Bill H. managed to clip the near corner of the dunny on his landing approach in the trusty 186 Holden. Max Brogan had been working back late that night anticipating a busy week for Grazcos. He was attending to ablutions in the loo just at this moment.

It was a tremulous and deathly ashen faced Max who emerged from the most cathartic experience of his life and the most definitive cure for constipation ever conceived!

Deciding Max would survive, fuelled and fortified by now with auxiliary supplies of the right medicine, Bill hurried back to Oxford Road to resume his miracles. On opening the gate into the garden 'Ginger' saw the opportunity and made his break. As they say in the song 'never let a chance go by'! Ginger didn't! Deciding he'd endured enough torment for one day he took off out the gate lickety split, helter skelter up Oxford Road! 'Horse away' was the frantic and frenetic call!

Luckily he turned right! With Bill and Tom in very labored and distant pursuit 'Ginger' assumed he'd secured safe sanctuary within the close confines of the Catholic Convent at the end of Oxford Road! He could not have found a better place!

It was a much relieved Tom who somewhat surreptitiously retrieved him from the sacred precinct of the sanitarium. We'll never know if it was the medicine, the threat, the flight or divine intervention but 'Ginger' fully recovered, rejoined the party at Norm and Becky's! It was very long time before Max Brogan deigned to enter the old loo at Grazcos especially if he suspected Bill was imminently returning slightly hazy from a long stint in the Widden Valley!

W. P. Howey

Bill,

I like this very much. You write in the spirit and style of Henry Lawson. Were you consciously imitating the story "The Loaded Dog."

The tale is vigorously told. The elements I've suggested you take out are clichéd and diminish the force of the writing. It is best too not to use inverted commas. Allow the language you use to do its work without your drawing attention to it.

Thanks,

Ben

Goethe

'Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it boldness has genius, power and magic in it'.

Fair Go?

I know this is a bit 'political' but that's where we're at. In a recent 'Issues' feature in 'The Land' weekly newspaper (Thursday April 5 2012) admirable erstwhile Scone resident journalist Bronwyn Farr reflected on the perceived inequities of the NSW government's distribution of royalties for regions accruing from mining activities in our prefectures. Her article was peppered with aphorisms such as 'Still waiting on royalties riches', 'Missing funds at Muswellbrook' and closer to home in Scone 'Unprepared for traffic hit in the Upper Hunter'. It appears we are not alone but there are no surprises there. In some ways Gunnedah is most like Scone with modelling of the rapidly escalating rail traffic predicting that Gunnedah like Scone will be divided in the next few years with trains rolling through every 17 to 19 minutes. The trains may take up to 14 minutes to just pass through. Work it out. Gunnedah Mayor Cr Adam Marshall states "We were led to believe Gunnedah, along with other communities in the region like Narrabri and Quirindi, would receive a fair share of the Resources for the Region program, but when it's come down to the details, we've been snubbed'. If you substitute a few names it could apply here? The devil in the detail yet again! The common theme of all the community leaders cited is money for urgently needed infrastructure projects. Sound familiar? There appears to be a contretemps between NSW and the anticipated \$6 billion Federal Regional Infrastructure money made from the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT). NSW is raising its own State royalties to recover what it claims will be a \$944 million impost from federal Labor's Carbon Tax. Meanwhile we wallow in the mire of uncertainty.

NSW Shires Association President Cr Ray Donald says "The detrimental effect that mining and corresponding heavy freight vehicles have on infrastructure – local and regional road networks – needs to be addressed by ensuring mining royalties are returned to local communities". Our own Mayor Lee Watts rightly states that a growing proportion of our residents work in the mining industry and as it expands this places extra pressures on availability of housing and the increased demand for public services and facilities. In parallel with the massive development on the Liverpool Plains to our north there will concomitant increases in heavy loads damaging our roads and bridges. Not surprisingly Mayor Watts expressed dismay that the NSW Government's promised Economic Assessment of Mining Affected Communities excluded regions adjacent to mines and relied on only one year's data. With 1000 coal trains per week and counting we are certainly impacted by mines! When are we too close but not close enough? How do you catch a cold? There is a photograph of long term real estate agent John Flood who is not the Mayor of Muswellbrook but looks like he could be as he surveys his domain? John applauds the buoyant market driven by mining and its service industries but rues the inequitable distribution of the 'missing funds' to resuscitate decaying infrastructure especially the hospital and provision of aged care. Actual Muswellbrook Mayor Cr Martin Rush says the Economic Assessment Report is a significant step forward in recognising some of the infrastructure imbalances endured by communities in the Upper Hunter as a result of intensive mining activity. Certainly Singleton and Muswellbrook appear to be 'short changed'? They are the heavyweights in the game generating 57% of State royalties in 2010/2011 at \$709 million and eclipsing all other NSW regions by the racing equivalent of a distance. Muswellbrook Shire produced more than \$10,000 in mining royalties per capita but only \$5396 flowed back. This was \$662 below the State average. Maybe we'll just have to wait a little while longer for our turn? Lets' hope it's worth it in the end? We really don't mind sharing with Muswellbrook and Singleton too much do we?

Focus 2012

Travelling Forward Looking Back

Now in non-elected administrative retirement mode I'm free to contemplate 'the trammels of quotidian life"! Of course I didn't compose that line – I 'borrowed' it! Hearty congratulations to the new Council. You carry our very best wishes and collective confidence for the next four years. Gough Whitlam notably proclaimed his then nascent College rowing experience was the perfect preparation for a career in politics: "you are travelling on one direction while looking in another"! Only he could get away with that! As elected Councillors we regularly received a tabloid-size newspaper entitled Local Government Focus. Sometimes I read it and sometimes I didn't. My average was a purview perusal at best. The January Issue for 2012 caught my eye because of the headline on the front page: 'Top ten issues for 2012'. I thought this should be interesting, prescient and directional? The lead article states that 'Local Government faces a raft of challenges in 2012. On social, economic and political fronts, Councils must deal with a fast changing and varied set of issues and concerns'. I'll subscribe to the fast changing claim! The issues listed are: Climate change and the pricing of carbon; Financial sustainability; Constitutional recognition; Local infrastructure funding; Cost shifting and the Inter-Governmental Agreement; Population and settlement issues; Strengthening emergency management and disaster resilience; The national Broadband Network and information technology; Workforce planning including skills shortages and Environmental and natural resource management issues. Riveting stuff? Read on!

While some of the issues are a 'given' such as financial efficiency others are more whimsical and esoteric. ALGA President Genia McCaffrey has stated that Councils must identify and take advantage of new clean energy package programs. This means effectively the landfill waste sector which can account for 3% of Australia's total emissions. Are these wildly rampant 'fugitive emissions'? Don't you just love it? Strategies to reduce these escaping gases include capturing landfill gas to generate electricity, flaring methane, waste diversion, recycling and composting. Sound vaguely familiar? Tamworth's Regional Government GM believes the biggest challenge is the maintaining and replacing of key infrastructure. Could a designated 'future fund' be part of the solution? Recent cataclysmic weather events throughout 2011 demand that Councils must strengthen the resilience of communities through better preparedness and more effective mitigation including risk management and better land use planning and stronger recovery mechanisms. The ALGA has called for a separate disaster mitigation fund. The NBN and IT rollout into 93% of Australian homes by 2020 should revolutionise the way the people of Australia work and live. Delivering broadband speeds of 100 megabits per second will be 100 times faster than dial up and 20 times faster than the average broadband speeds. Business and social interaction must surely be the great beneficiaries?

Australia will need to focus on skills for the public sector in the areas like planning and engineering. The booming resources sector in which we live has gobbled up much available talent and left many vacuums in the ageing workforce of our two speed economy. Where will we find and/or train such people? How can we either reclaim and/or sustain them? Water is always a big issue. The Murray Darling basin is very high on the agenda but not much consolation if you live at Gundy. Many of us will have greater access to storage in 'Glenbawn' but must nevertheless concomitantly provide greater efficiencies in the use of recycled water for parks, gardens and ovals. More water usage equals increases in sewerage and effluent.

Wasn't it either Kath or Kim who famously said they 'wanted to be effluent'? What a good idea! Back to ALGA President Genia McCaffrey: "In the next 20 years integrated management of our water, energy and waste resources will play a key role and solutions should incorporate these areas to create sustainable solutions". How will all this affect my rates, roads, services and bridges; probably and/or insidiously quite a bit? Could this be a checklist for the old guard and/or a running sheet for the new breed? Will we have Regional Government within the next generation incorporating the UHSC, Muswellbrook and Singleton LGAs and later the greater Hunter Council? Just musing! Would Gough call this travelling forward while looking back? With time on my hands I'm thinking of forming SOFA – the sanctimonious old flatulent association. Any takers?

Knowledge speaks. Wisdom listens.

The National Farmers Federation (NFF 21/07/04) defined successful and sustainable rural enclaves as: 'Vibrant local volunteer communities concerned with health care, aged care, education, employment, adequate policing, public transport and committed to arranging events such as shows, gymkhanas and tennis tournaments'. This of course could apply equally to Scone, Merriwa, Murrurundi, Aberdeen or the smaller villages of Moonan, Ellerston, Timor, Cassilis, Blandford, Wingen, Gundy, Bunnan or Rouchel. All on them should 'matter' to aspirant or extant UHSC Councillors. We could identify and relate to proactive 'volunteers' and interactive groups in each location.

Every day I make it my business to walk down Kelly Street in Scone where I lived and ran a business for many years. I have trained myself to listen to opinion. It can be as enlightening as it is daunting at times. I have absorbed the issues our constituents feel are the most important. The services and functions councils provide are defined in the NSW Department of Local Government's publication: 'Becoming a Councillor'. These are in order; providing and maintaining infrastructure, planning and sustainable development, protecting the environment, supporting community development and safeguarding public health. These are a given. It's an interesting exercise to check each box and see where value adding can be achieved. Supporting community development further refines community services as including libraries, retirement homes, home-care services such as 'meals on wheels', swimming pools, playground facilities and child care centres. Some fertile ground for target activities there!

The Scone Visitor Information Centre provides insightful objective advice on how we are viewed by tourists and 'outsiders'. It is vital we should know what we do not provide as much as what we have to show and share. As current custodian of one Scone's oldest residences I would like to invite the community to share our precinct on the long week end in October at the Scone Garden Ramble. The Rouchel ladies will provide luncheon with the proceeds to support the Rouchel Church. I have one mild reservation in quoting the title caption. It is assigned to Jimi Hendrix!

Defining Moments

Are you rapidly approaching your use-by date when you begin to contemplate defining moments? Psychotherapist Mel Schwartz prescribes as follows: "Defining moments occur when we direct our lives onto a new pathway, borne of an illuminating insight and an expanded awareness". I was actually somewhat flattered when former long term Councillor Peter Hodges remarked my statement in the UHSC chamber on Coal Seam Gas was a 'defining moment'? Journalist Matt Walter (SMH Monday May 21, 2012) described Darren Lockyer's magical try in the State of Origin decider in Melbourne in 2006 as a 'defining moment' for the Maroons? I like the association but not the colour of victory. The Diamond Jubilee Stakes at Royal Ascot this year was designated by most percipient pundits as a defining moment for Black Caviar. Thanks to Luke Nowlen and his self-confessional brain fade how close was that call! Georgina Robinson in the SMH (Tuesday, June 26, 2012) states the clean sweep of Wales by the Wallabies was a defining moment. Suddenly I'm feeling elated and in exalted company. After elation arrive deflation and its back to the prosaic present. I suppose many of you are already thinking any 'defining moment' involving me would inevitably include something to do with an overabundance of gas? The CSG industry has conceived an amusing euphemism: 'fugitive emissions'. I could expatiate at length about it! I suggest there have been quite a few defining moments during the current term of the UHSC? Cast your mind back to the Scone Traffic Lights, New Administration Building, Bickham Coal Mine, Timor Limestone Quarry, Bluett Award, Air Quality Monitoring, Wind Farms, Water Augmentation, Road and Rail Corridors in Scone and latterly Coal Seam Gas exploration? It's quite a list. These happenings hardly fit into the Mel Schwartz definition but are defining decisions in the lifetime of an elected LGA. Previously I reflected on balance ('Balance or Manifest Destiny'). Essentially balance is the process and outcome of a robust democracy. It may well be that 51% of you agree and/or concur and 49% vehemently disagree?

Which brings me to stewardship? As a mildly reluctant pre-teenager I vaguely remember being perched in a church congregation well over 50 years ago. My late mother was the organist and prevailed on my support to supply power to the hand-pumped bellows organ. While squirming on my rock hard elevated organ pew the presiding minister based his sermon on the interrogative: 'Give an account of your stewardship'? I cannot recall anything of his address but even today I still reflect on his title pronouncement? Now it's my turn? Ubiquitous Wikipedia defines stewardship is an ethic that embodies responsible planning and management of resources. The concept of stewardship has been applied in diverse realms, including with respect to environment, economics, health, property, information, and religion, and is linked to the concept of sustainability. Sounds like the running sheet for a LGA? The bottom line says you look after something belonging to someone else. For me this has meant writing prepared statements on most if not all the defining decisions reflected above. 'Say what you do and do what you say'? I have reported on some of these via this medium. I would like to think I/we had earned a pass mark. During my extended University career I acquired some acumen in attaining 51%. Maybe this was prescient preparation for a truncated career in local government? You try to please a marginal majority. Robert D. Kaplan in 'An Empire Wilderness – Travels into America's Future' has defined democracy thus: 'Democracy has evolved as the lowest common denominator of practical wisdom for a nation of individuals, most of whom prefer to be left alone to make money'. Churchill considered it to be the worst form of government except for all the rest! Suddenly I feel better!

Are you/did you contemplate 'throwing your hat in the ring' come September? Perhaps it'll be your turn to define the moments? Constructive suggestions and studied solutions are most palatable. I know from experience that it's much more productive. As the "Two Ronny's" used to sign off: "It's goodbye from me and goodbye from him"! Thank you for your support or otherwise tolerance and patience during this term of local government!

The Lessons of History

It's a well-worn cliché but veritable nonetheless: 'If you fail to learn the lessons of history you're condemned to repeat the same mistakes'. This message was profoundly reinforced for me during a recent cultural/historical tour the Southern USA. How well they have reinvented their enchanting history and cherished heritage! Charleston SC is now the most favoured destination for internal tourism. Remember Rhett Butler was the visitor from Charleston in 'Gone with the Wind'? 'Frankly my dear I don't give a damn' might jolt your memory? When it all seemed lost following General William Tecumseh Sherman's scorched earth 'march-to-the-sea' policy the Deep South is once more firmly embedded in the American psyche at a time when some other things are not going so well?

It made me think carefully about our rich heritage and wealthier inheritance. Remember it was no less a person than Sir Donald Bradman who proclaimed we are merely transitory custodians of the game? One of the best examples of this is my former 'cathedral' the Belmore Hotel. I have quite a long association with this noble establishment. I wrote about the 'Tuesday Boozer's Club' (TBC) in my history of Scone – sadly much of this is not for consumption in a family newspaper. There was universal admiration especially from the dairy farmers for a lady with most impressive pectoral dimensions who used to work there. I held my buck's party in the hotel. My hosts erected a plaque in my honour: "Bill Howey once drank here". One night my car was stolen from the car park and I was reported killed at Willow Tree – but that's a long story also in my book! One of Scone's early residents Matthew Miller built the original single story Belmore Hotel then called the Railway Hotel in 1866. The Hotel was renamed in 1871 in honour of the visit of the Earl of Belmore when he opened the railway through Scone. Mathew Miller was a highly respected Alderman and also built 'Geraldton' as his home and is where I now live. There have been many metamorphoses since in different ownership.

The point I wish to make is that any alterations to a heritage listed building are subject to a Statement of Heritage Impact. This is a NSW State Government requirement and the Statement must be submitted with the Development Application to the UHSC. The UHSC is then responsible for the work carried out to satisfy these sometimes stringent and exacting requirements. To their enduring credit 'the current owners are sympathetic to the heritage significance of the building and site and are eager to return the hotel to a past aesthetic that will include reinstatement of former details and features that have been removed over time'. Who knows – this might even include my wall plaque? The local builder and his team are incredibly and justifiably proud of their work and skill and are worthy of the utmost commendation. This is a prime example of owners, consultants, builders and Council working collaboratively to produce an outstanding outcome for the benefit of the whole community. Conjointly they/we are guardians for posterity. Other great examples are the White Hart Hotel in Murrurundi and just out of our territory the Willow Tree Hotel over the range.

There are many extant examples of newly renovated 'old' buildings raising the whole tenor of a street, suburb or locality. Why am I preoccupied with hostelryes? Perhaps it's because 'pubs' are frequently the most historically significant buildings in country towns? Maybe it's where you detect the beating heart of a community – and the bleeding hearts. OK I've been tub thumping about heritage for long enough – but as Chairman of the UHSC Heritage Committee maybe I should? How about the SCADS Theatre and Civic Theatre next? At least they're not booze shops!

I might even make a thespian like my cousin David Howey at the Brind School of Theatre in Philadelphia – although I seriously doubt it? I do know how important the protection of heritage is for future generations. Time will both tell and judge. It was Rudyard Kipling who wrote: 'The game is more than the player of the game, and the ship is more than the crew'. I think even Sir Donald Bradman would approve.

Vision Splendid

I take it you won't want to know what I had for breakfast so I'll write about *Vision*? I rather suspect this has been done before? Banjo penned not a bad line and Dorothea from Gunnedah poetically articulated the broader view for future generations? Sir Edmund Barton reminded us all at the Federation Convention in Adelaide in 1897 that 'we are trustees of posterity for the unborn millions'. I now live in a 'heritage' house once occupied by his descendants. We are 'guardians of heritage'. I feel a vicarious sense of responsibility! Sir Donald Bradman admonished us we are merely 'custodians of the game and it's our bounden duty to leave things better than when we found them'? Vision is a not about what is not in your back yard but rather what *is* in your front yard? The former is arguably concerned with 'caring' and the latter with 'sharing'? 'Vision' is defined in the 'The Oxford Dictionary' as: *thing seen in dream or trance; supernatural or prophetic apparition; phantom; thing seen in the imagination; (without article) imaginative insight; statesmanlike foresight; political sagacity*. I'm beginning to warm to the idea!

How much far reaching vision do we really have? Are we overly concerned with NIMBY to the detriment of progress? Do solipsism, sophistry and vested self-interest prevail? Sorry! I'm waxing polemical – again! I too harbour a 'vision splendid' for the Upper Hunter. In my dreamtime I can see an 'Upper Hunter Highlands Way' similar to the equivalent in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Most if not many of the essential elements are in place. It's a well drilled axiom in (veterinary) medicine that 'if you remove the cause you cure the disease'. How much do major transport arterial thoroughfares impact detrimentally on our society? Are we impotent eunuchs at the mercy of national transport and multi-national industrial behemoths? Negotiating the perilous obstacle course ('The Duel' – Phillip Adams, 'Lifextra', October 18-19 2008) along the New England Highway between Singleton and Muswellbrook reminds us how dependent we have become on mineral resources and their conversion to energy and power. Have we forgotten all Solar System Energy emanates originally from the sun and is stored? $E = MC^2$? Have we 'conveniently' overlooked the constant and utterly reliable daily supply from the original source? I agree this is 'big picture stuff' but should we just blithely, stoically and submissively tolerate it? More constructive noise please!

The National Farmer Federation (21/07/04) defines any successful local electorate as a: '*Vibrant local volunteer community concerned with health care, aged care, education, employment, adequate policing, public transport and committed to arranging events such as shows, gymkhanas and tennis tournaments*'. We at the UHSC espouse: 'A Quality Rural Lifestyle – in a caring and thriving community'. During my term of elected duty I will be trying my damndest on all fronts - as I have in the past! Encouragement! Enlargement! Enhancement! Enrichment! Embellishment! I think that's enough philosophy for one day! I'll make one core promise – to deliver on aged care! Vision? Is anyone really looking? Visionless troglodytes? Who? Us? Just wondering! Next time I'll write about 'aspirant leadership' through the eyes and ears of an 11 year old! Pity I don't write like Banjo!

(Cr Bill Howey).

Making Your Marque

Messages from the Mare and Foal

Have you ever contemplated the message as depicted on our most identifiable tourist totem and emblematic icon? Have you ever even read it? I must confess I had to seek it out myself? It reads as follows: *"This sculpture identifies Scone and the Upper Hunter Valley as the Horse Breeding Centre of Australia. It commemorates the role horses have played in the development of Australia and is a tribute to one of mankind's greatest friends"*. Profound poetical stuff! Well done David Archibald and his able acolytes as well as fellow guarantors: Herbie Phelps, Barry Chapman, Jim Rodger, Jeremy Francis, Charles Duke and Alan Atwill! I don't know much about art but I study animals a lot. It's exactly as sculptor Gabriel Sterk always intended.

Erstwhile Newmarket (UK) resident Jim Rodger stated at the time: 'He wished Newmarket had something like it'? The 'Mare and Foal' admirably captures the ethology (behaviour), spirit and emotion of the moment. It's almost 30 years since we unveiled our community 'user friendly' statue on 3rd March 1982. Officiating Minister Eric Bedford MLA and local Scone Shire Councillor Ken Cosgrove were brothers-in-law well remembered by war hero Alan Brideoake as 'predatory young guns' from the West Wyalong region. Doug Scott (Harper's Cottage Gallery) was chairman of the then Scone Shire Council Tourist Committee responsible for its commission, accession and some fund raising? Col Cooper was an enthusiastic auxiliary. Col recalls muted even desultory community support but vividly recounts the return horse float trip to Adelaide to transport the 1.4 tonne statue – no mean feat by Dave Archibald and Cr. Herbie Phelps – a genuine horseman and a mechanical minder! It was important to secure the sculpture – and pay for it – before the sculptor decided to sell it elsewhere! The float provided by David Macintyre insisted on an involuntary sojourn in Broken Hill on the return journey! The committee were given four models to choose from and wisely opted for the current prototype. One alternative was a depiction of equine concupiscence which was deemed inappropriate!

Athene Lambley reminded me that the statue was 'accommodated' on the lawn at Alan Atwill's 'Redbank Stud' until it was time for its permanent placement in Elizabeth Park. Athol Preston and his Commonwealth Bank extended abundant fiscal sustenance when most needed. The guarantors might have suffered more than a few anxious moments? Coleen Pinkerton provided secretarial support – her initial foray into LG and perhaps her most challenging role! Chris 'Vogue' Sellis, Bill French, Andrew Bowcock, Cr David Macintyre and the then proprietor of the Airlie House Motel were other avid proponents: the latter fervently believing *its capacity to enhance tourism, promote regional pride and encourage 'trade'*? Tim Abrahams was the landscape specialist retained to provide the 'architecture' for statue enhancement. Regrettably the small scale model provided as the prize for a fund raising raffle was surreptitiously 'borrowed' and never returned! More weight on the Commonwealth Bank! The replacement trophy secured *poste haste* from WA was won by committee man Alan Atwill!

John Maxwell (Priefert) stated recently *'the foal is the most ridden horse in the country and the duo the most photographed'*. He's probably right? Our visitors love it/them! Belinda McKenzie at the Scone VIC will affirm. You will agree recent improvements to Elizabeth Park are favourable – the result of community and Council planning and preparedness? For most transitory visitors Elizabeth Park is our virtual shop window.

I've seen the statue of 'Hyperion' outside the Jockey Club in High Street Newmarket UK and the magnificent 'Man O' War' in the Horse Park in Lexington KY USA. Guess what? You can't touch either! When we talk of 'twinning' these are the areas we compare ourselves with? We really do have a lot to celebrate, share - and promote! The underpinning philosophy captured in the citation is the driver. Sometimes it's good to be reminded of what we have? Neglect of history jeopardises our future? Adumbrations of progress from the Upper Hunter Equine Infrastructure Working Party sound OK to me? Recent good news from the Australian Stock Horse Society is encouraging. Our Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan seeks to protect substantiate and promote our brand as well as maintaining the UHSC as horse capital of Australia. We must never lose sight of our unique stamp during the CSG debate. Remember how passionate many of the presenters were and how long it has taken our forebears to develop this marque? Think how much Tamworth would like us to step aside! It also makes us different from Muswellbrook! *Viva la difference!*

The Inglis' International Equine Art Prize was held this year in Melbourne, Sydney – and Scone! Further enrichment, enhancement and embellishment are coming! We even have out-and-out national champion Peter Snowden to help us commemorate! Here is a quotation from all those years ago to remind us of our rich heritage: *"The passion for horses may be ridiculed by persons of narrow mindedness and sedentary lives; but the feeling has ever been characteristic of the most intellectual and powerful races of mankind, and the highest order of literature and art has been inspired by the contemplation of this admirable gift of the creator"*. (Sydney Morning Herald, October 3, 1857). Our 'Mare and Foal' really has become the marque by which we identify ourselves as truly unique and firmly establishes the brand as our 'point of difference' marketing totem.

The Shape of Things to Come

OK two hundred words it is! Write less and mean more. That's putting the restraining bit on me? I have been contemplating how it will look in fifty or one hundred years' time? Sustainable or non-sustainable – that is the question! The true deniers say nothing much will change? Dr. Phil McManus (Sydney University) states 'the Upper Hunter is not a sustainable region'?

*'Sustainability promotes the perpetuation of environmental quality for present generations, future generations and other species. Ecologically sustainable development (ESD) is defined as using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and quality of life for both present and future generations is increased. Effective water management (in the horse industry) is only possible if various cultures of nature are understood, where necessary challenged, and subsequently included in **policy and planning**'. 'Tactics without planning is the noise before defeat' (General Sun Tzu).*

Water is our most precious finite resource. Perception equals reality in the horse world. It's the semblance versus substance debate? The UHSC Management Plan 2008 includes a vision statement "to build a prosperous environmentally sustainable future". This also includes freshwater ecosystem health and air quality: "Protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including the promotion of development, which is compatible with the area's natural environment and which will enhance the area as a place to live and work".

Bickham Coal proposes to mine \$3.6 billion worth of export coal in 25 years from a 216 ha pit. Hot topic! Viable commercial land use strategy? That's a lot of cattle, sheep, goats – or TB yearlings! Mining jobs pay very well? All Bickham coal will be transported by rail? More trains through Scone! Predicted 500% increase looks modest? The Gunnedah basin development will have an exponentially greater impact. It has the capacity to decimate if not devastate the 'divided' town of Scone. "What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing". (Oscar Wilde). Cynical? Who? Me? 'Only when the last tree has died, the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught, only then will we realize we cannot eat money' (Wolf Robe Cree Chief 2009). Rude ruminants eructate (in polite society) a lot of Methane gas into the atmosphere! Will our great-grandchildren be vegetarian – of necessity? Could that be when the river base flows return to normal in 100 years? Sustainable? Your call! I'll take off the rearing bit now! OK – let's say 300 words?

Postscript! Forget the polemical! I have just returned from the Murrurundi Public School celebration of 160 years young (since 1849)! Fourth oldest in the State! Brilliant! Uplifting! Sublime! Well done Principal Jayne Schmarr and P & C Donna Rea plus staff. One more quotation from School: 'If there is an inland valley equal in scope and balanced beauty in NSW, I have yet to find it'. (Harold Sims *aka* Uncle Benny).

W. P. H.

Working Bees?

I am prompted to write this as I contemplate my previous dissertation on 'Horse Capital? I purported a thinly veiled adumbration to the concept of 'self-help'? When I first came to Scone in October 1967 my very first week-end (Sunday 8 October 1967) was devoted to 'hard labour' under the direction of my first employer the late Murray Bain. With the assistance of Olga Thurgar and local farmer David Tilse we planted two rows of trees at the Glenbawn Dam Road intersection at Segenhoe. This was the now defunct Tree Planting Society in action! It was also my first introduction to a crow bar. I was an 'assisted passage migrant' ('Ten Pound Pom') and the thought crossed my mind that not much had changed in 200 years? In addition the sun was shining brightly on brilliant white ('red') skin and yes I was under some duress! Stupidly I had removed my shirt so exposing my unprotected upper body to UV radiation rarely experienced in far northern climes?

Move forward a few years and think White Park? Think also of the major users (at that time) the Scone Race Club and the Scone Golf Club? The Scone Bushman's Carnival fitted somewhere in between laying justifiable claim to the title of first use? Tom Payne's judge's tower was the totemic reminder! Representing the Race Club the old Scone Shire Council White Park Committee was my introduction to community contribution in Scone – after the Rugby Club? We argued, bickered and fought – but we managed to reach a patina of agreement? Both well primed the Jack Kelso versus Jim Fuller verbal stoush was worth an admission price alone! Bob Robb and Herbie Phelps (SGC) were no shrinking violets either! It was always user pays – something? I can speak for the Race Club. We did nearly all the work ourselves. The Committee organised major working bees as required and especially at Cup time in May. This also coincided with the annual thoroughbred sales and was the prodromal forerunner of what is now the 'Upper Hunter Horse Festival'. We cleaned, mowed, trimmed, built, constructed, painted, fenced, planted trees, ran 'illegal' lotteries, renovated, collected garbage and even parked cars and gathered the gate money! The iconic and unique Race Club Garden Committee was entirely voluntary with Mrs Holly Lucas as chair ably assisted by dutiful committee wives Sarah Howey, Sue Bath and Libby Robertson. All shared devotion and passion. Frank Lucas and Arthur Banks 'supervised'. Fun filled fund raising events were held especially at the St. Andrew's Day meeting in late November. The old ladies champagne bar with straw bale seats attracted a perennial claque of acolytes from Sydney. The OUTCOME was an 'atmospheric' precinct evoking the love of many and the envy of most. It led late great racing journalist Bert Lillye to famously proclaim 'he would rather come to Scone than attend the Melbourne Cup at Flemington'!

Are working bees so old fashioned they are now considered to be extinct? Are we way too precious? When Peter McBeth, Denis Turnbull and myself started junior soccer we had no money but guess what? We built the goal posts ourselves! Feeling a little frustrated Sarah and I decided to clean the steps of the Civic Theatre. We spent thirty minutes (7:00am – 7:30am) on Thursday 11 November 2010 to achieve our objective using our own brooms, brushes, dusters, sponges, mops, water, bleach, detergent and buckets. It was really that simple and the results (for us) so rewarding! Have we reached the stage in our society where we are too proud to 'dirty our hands'? Are we populated by a whole generation of 'Queen Bees' and 'Drones' – or am I being altogether too pejorative and sanctimonious? 'I told you so'? Back to White Park! May I respectfully suggest we re-focus on 'user makes and creates' – with a little help from some friends? Remember any good idea doesn't care who owns it?

“They”

I am writing this with some trepidation because a previous dissertation on ‘leadership’ was edited to shreds! Perhaps I was too prosaic, prolix and verbose? My apologies to co-author Stuart Guihot! I will try to be more succinct! Have you ever wondered who the arcane and mythical ‘they’ are? Almost every day in Kelly Street I am regaled if not harangued with opinions prefaced by: ‘Why don’t they.....’! This is fine because we all want to air our views on a range of subjects and many ideas are excellent if not enlightening? Please be encouraged and keep them coming! Quite a few putative projects and ‘solutions’ carry a price tag exceeding \$100 million - but no matter. I like dexterous conceptual planning and imaginative business modelling.

Try to define who ‘they’ are within this context and perhaps well outside the envelope? Wasn’t it the newly incumbent JFK who famously proclaimed: ‘Ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country’? I wish I’d thought of that first! Mind you JFK paid an ultimate price none of us would wish even on the enemy we keep closest! When I’m in glass half empty mode I resort to etymology! You may have noticed? ‘They’ is defined in my trusty Concise Oxford Dictionary as ‘them,’ or ‘he, she, it’ and ‘persons in authority who have raised the rates’! Ouch! That last one is a bit too close for comfort!

I would like to propose a slightly differing interpretation and alternative philosophical premise? I respectfully suggest the mythical ‘they’ includes you, thee, me, we, and us! That also includes ‘I’! I’d love to extirpate the ‘I’ factor! I think I’d have ‘Buckley’s’? Which brings me to volunteering and what it entails? All of us on Council are ‘elected volunteers’ carrying with it certain obligations and responsibilities. This is not denied. Again I resort to my word tome. ‘Volunteering’ includes ‘make voluntary offer of one’s services’. Where is all this whimsical ephemera and patrician philosophy leading? The concept of self-help and identity generated action items: that’s where! Everything is better in writing - indubitably. It makes it to the agenda! Upper Hunter Shire Council Action Request Forms are available in ‘hard copy’ at the three Shire Council Offices.

Alternatively the website cites the following advice:

Upper Hunter Shire Council is taking an innovative approach to identifying any areas of concern residents may have regarding public assets. There are 10,000 pairs of eyes in the community using these facilities every day and Council is encouraging residents to notify Council of any problems. Residents are asked to complete ALL sections of the form as clearly as possible to enable Council to investigate the request. The forms can be returned by email, posted, faxed or hand delivered.

It works for me! Who are they - thee, me, we, you and us? I?

W. P. H.

29/05/09

Holy Water?

'Day after day, day after day,/We stuck, nor breath nor motion;/As idle as a painted ship/Upon a painted ocean./Water, water, everywhere,/And all the boards did shrink;/Water, water, everywhere,/Nor any drop to drink'.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge put it like no other could in his iconic 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The jury is still out on its verdict of the significance and purpose of the poem as well as the purported identity of the 'Ancient Mariner'? I like to think it refers to Fletcher Christian and his 'guilt' – but perhaps not? What is undeniable is that water together with energy and oxygen is fundamental to life on earth and that there is a finite amount available. We cannot make more water. We can promulgate storage and augment supply. Recently La Nina has smiled benevolently in our direction but rest assured the El Nino brothers will return despite Macca's (ABC Radio 'Australia All Over') signature song that they have been shot! Vitally important is how we use this axiomatic essential element. Your Council is committed to the ongoing provision of fresh potable water for this and subsequent generations.

The Upper Hunter Rural Water Scheme is rated a very high priority indeed in the Rural Development Australia Fund application stakes. If we are to continue to flourish and grow not only must we become more efficient users of available water but also able to access a reliable and abundant source. To do this we must expand our infrastructure. It all boils down to the enhancement of the supply chain to the stored water in Glenbawn Dam. We are talking about another newer bigger better pipeline for end users in Scone, Aberdeen and ultimately Murrurundi with all villages and settlements in between and eventually our whole Shire including farms and properties in intimate propinquity. Every journey starts here. The best news is that water is on its way – big time! With the pipeline the UHSC is committed in the next four years to *'the biggest infrastructure program ever undertaken by a district LGA'* - in the prophetic words of GM Daryl Dutton. He further states: Proposed borrowings this (coming) financial year include again the Aberdeen/Scone Water Supply Augmentation, funded from loan repayments within the Aberdeen/Scone Water Fund, allowing for subsidy being provided from the NSW Government's Country Towns Water and Sewerage Program. You can check the detail in the UHSC Delivery Program & Operational Plan 2011/2012 – 2014/2015 available at your local Shire Council Office and online.

Any time soon you may be asked to subscribe to the enhancement of water supply by a rate levy above the 'exclusive' NSW pegging level? Mayor Lee Watts has explained: *'the Scone/Aberdeen Water Augmentation scheme is budgeted to occur over the next four (4) years with the NSW Government Subsidy to be paid in years three (3) and four (4). Increases to water charges in the order of 8% are proposed to cover the increased capital costs across all water supplies. Water, sewer and waste services are not subject to the rate pegging limit and are increased to enable capital works and/or payment of the NWS Government Waste Levy'.*

This is generally viewed as unpalatable by some, indigestible by many and unacceptable to a few. However the guaranteed maintenance of water supply is paramount and not negotiable. If we do not act now are we bordering on irresponsibility? Your Council respectfully requests your unqualified support for this vital initiative at this crucial time. These are the hard decisions from which we must never resile however 'unpopular' they may at first appear? This is somewhat akin to 'Albatross exorcism' but we don't want the same demons that so relentlessly pursued Coleridge and his Ancient Mariner 'perpetually pervading our prefecture'?

Horse Capital

Councillor Johnsen pre-empted me by writing about it in the 'Advocate' on 14:10:10 although I had already prepared this draft. Many citations are generic rather than specific. What do we have that others don't? What makes us 'unique'? We claim the title - but have we earned it? It is always enlightening to reflect on the passage of time and digest the lessons of history. The late Stan Keene implemented thoroughbred sales at White Park with William Inglis and Sons in 1947. In the same year the Scone Race Club instituted thoroughbred racing at this same location – a 'community' decision not without its detractors! The 'evils of betting and gaming' was the inimical catchcry.

The title '**Horse Capital of Australia**' was appropriated and claimed about the time the 'Mare and Foal Statue' was promulgated (by David Archibald and others). The 'Scone Horse Week' and then the 'Scone Horse Festival' emerged at about the same time. They were built on the back of Scone Thoroughbred Week initially put forward by the Scone Race Club in c. 1968? My former employer Murray Bain actually made the original suggestion. This was also the time when the Horse Box concept at White Park was promulgated (also by Murray Bain) and financially supported by him/us + TB breeders + Pitt Son & Keene and Wm. Inglis. The late Stan Keene introduced TB sales @ White Park (in conjunction with Wm. Inglis & Sons) in c. 1947 - at the same time as TB racing commenced on White Park. There were 2 days of sales (Monday & Tuesday) and 2 days racing (Wednesday & Thursday - Scone Cup Day) + Scone Thoroughbred Week. Scone Cup @ White park gained enormous momentum in the 1950's with the large 'immigrant' labour force building Glenbawn Dam. Races such as the Scone Guineas and Sires Produce Stakes were well supported from Sydney (T. J. Smith, George Moore, George Ryder et al) before there was a lot of mid-week racing.

It has maintained this premier position today. 'Gunsynd's' final appearance in 1971 drew the largest crowd to Scone I remember. During my time at the helm of Scone Race Club (1978 - 1984) we increased to 3 days of racing (Thursday/Friday/Saturday). Off course TAB betting made it financially expedient/imperative to make the change. Scone was actually the first country race club to run a full mid-week TAB meeting. We formed the Hunter Valley Blood Horse Breeders Association (now HTBA) in the mid 1970's and the first 'sponsored' sale was held at White Park in 1979 with Mike Willesee as guest speaker.

The Australian Stock Horse Society was formed in 1971 after an inaugural meeting in Tamworth - but much of the formative dialogue took place in the Belmore Hotel at the Tuesday Boozers Club! Fortuitously the headquarters are located in Scone! The historic impact of the Upper Hunter as a long term producer of 'Walers' is very well known.

In relation to other equivalent major horse centres throughout the globe I think Scone/Upper Hunter is the acknowledged centre of TB breeding in Australia - **but that is about all!** The studs are world class. During the 1970's Mudgee almost became the centre! Denman claims it is! We lack a major TB sales complex and 'iconic tourist attraction'. Lexington (USA) has major TB and STANDARD BRED studs and racetracks as well as the Kentucky Horse Park. It also has the 'Keenland Complex' which should be the model for us. (I have written about this in my 'Dreams that could be realised'). The 'Red Mile' (SB) is world renowned. Newmarket (UK) has over 3000 racehorses in work and is the home of the august Jockey Club as well as Newmarket Heath. (It is also only c. 1 hour from London). Another strong point-of-difference supporting Scone is its long and strong association with Polo.

In summary I think the following support Scone's claims:

- Major TB Horse Studs
- ASHS head office
- Waler history
- Polo Club(s)
- Eventing (and other recreational horse events)
- Equine Veterinary Facilities and Services
- Education facilities (TAFE)
- Research Facilities?

Weaknesses include:

- Sales complex 'dated and mature stock'
- Covered arena
- Accommodation
- Tourist 'attraction'
- Access to horses

I am hopeful that much more will emerge at the Meeting & Workshop @ the Australian Stock Horse Society on Thursday 12 March 09 (next week). Much preliminary work has been done and there is no advantage in 'reinventing wheels'. As you know tentative enquiries from Wm. Inglis & Sons are 'encouraging'. We must not lose this initiative? This is the best opportunity we have had with most branches of the horse industry sitting around the table. It has taken me 42 years so far! I actually heard of Scone, NSW, Australia at an International Veterinary Meeting in Edinburgh in August 1965 - Murray Bain was giving a talk and published his work in the scientific literature! I was an interested undergraduate student.

Work in progress!

Regards

Bill

“The passion for horses may be ridiculed by persons of narrow mindedness and sedentary lives; but the feeling has ever been characteristic of the most intellectual and powerful races of mankind, and the highest order of literature and art has been inspired by the contemplation of this admirable gift of the creator”.

(Sydney Morning Herald. October 3, 1857)

Philosophical Peregrinations

This section could almost be part of 'Unreliable Anecdotes' and/or 'Philosophical Perspectives' but I thought there was enough difference and distance to separate them! Quite a few of these are 'dated' also and relate to times when I was Director of the PGFVS. Recently I read an excellent book 'Helen of Troy' by Bettany Hughes. What a woman! However I digress. I'm good at it! In her epilogue the author adduces 'Myth, History and Historia'. A 'historia' is defined as a mesh of inquiry, observation, analysis and myth. There are elements of all four in my modulated panegyric.

'A Fortunate Life' or 'The Decline and Fall'

Here he goes again: 'Bipolar Bill' pontificating and waxing lyrical about life, limb and libido! It's amazing from where motivation can spring! I so annoyed my two children with my trade-mark aphorism:

"Just as necessity is the mother of invention
So is motivation the precursor of achievement"

It's been consigned to the scrap heap until now! They have both now safely flown the nest and are embarking on nascent careers in Corporate Law (Filly) and Corporate Accounting (Colt) following admirable primary, secondary and tertiary achievement in each case. They will be greatly relieved not to be reading this! I contemplate reflectively their emergence into the professional sphere had more to do with motive than with need compared to my own? No polemic hard feelings there it's just times, places and opportunities (or lack of) were very different between generations. I confidently anticipate neither will persevere forever on their initial paths. My son is ideological and inclined to teaching and the church. My daughter is more pragmatic and currently leans towards anarchy, mayhem and nihilism! I believe she may mellow and mollify in time! I told her in order to bring about effective change in society one has to gain access to the corridors of power! She just might do it if determination counts for anything!

I've just secured a second *déjà vu* diagnosis of bipolar mood disorder as opposed to "unipolar". I rather suspect the consulting psychiatrist gave 'Bipolar Bill' a bipolar bill for the consult! Perhaps it might be cheaper to be one thing at a time in future? This revelation may come as no surprise to any of you. It certainly didn't shock me as it's the second time around in approximately twenty years of fluctuating vicissitudes on the roller coaster of life. I seem to share the experience with an inordinately large number of fellow travelers many of whom are aligned in one of my professions.

In recent times I have entertained ongoing dialogue with a colleague from the Riverina who has struggled of late with life and society's exigencies. He wrote me two highly intuitive and percipient accounts of his deliberations on the health status of our profession and where we fit in the communities we serve. It is soul searching stuff! I include one of them entitled "Mental Health & Mental Illness" for your consideration with this message. I feel I can speak objectively and with some authority as one with experience on both counts. I used to treat such claims with disdain! "This could never happen to me"! "It's just weakness and an excuse anyway"! Sound familiar? Many years our great advocate and mentor TGH told me: "If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen"! I'm proud to say I'm still in the kitchen stoking the fires Tom!

Another of my formative instructors (AMB) using a reproductive context background also told me: "There's only so much in the well". Do we go to the well too often? Will the well run dry? For those of you with drought management experience I think I can accurately anticipate your answer!

Reflecting after almost forty years of my own efforts I think the drought well analogy is fair. Have we allowed enough time for replenishment after each successive dipping?

Solipsism, sophistry and vested self-interest; what does this mean to you if anything? Are we too, too selfish, narcissistic, egoistic and self-centred in our own deliberations and considerations? Is self-aggrandisement the holy grail of a modern democratic society? Is a sensitive new age society the apogee pinnacle of a highly developed culture and consumer driven humanity?

As usual I find inspiration from those I consider quite the reverse of 'solipsistic self'. Two such people are A. B. Facey (*A Fortunate Life*) and Billy Connolly (*Billy*) as depicted in their autobiography and biography respectively. Both emerged triumphantly from "jungles", one rural and one urban, embracing all aspects of desertion, neglect, abuse, horror and excessive trauma. I vividly remember with some residual chagrin visits to parts of Billy's Glasgow domain as a young man! Remarkably neither considered himself unfortunate. Each ultimately discovered solace, consolation and fulfilment in the love of a beautiful woman.

This reminds me of a portion of a letter written by my friend in the Riverina to the Editor of his local paper following a macabre murder in the town:

The question arises have we progressed in 2000 years? It would appear not. In his epic historical study of the collapse of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbons identifies five reasons. These are:

- 1. The breakdown of the family structure*
- 2. The weakening of a sense of individual responsibility*
- 3. Excessive taxes and government control and intervention*
- 4. Seeking pleasures that become increasingly hedonistic, violent and immoral*
- 5. The decline of religion*

Not even considering the last four factors but the first demonstrates the depth of the problem within society with a relationship breakdown rate approaching 50 per cent. It is well known that stress not only affects thought processes but emotions. It is also a fact that a "problem shared is a problem halved" and this requires an effective knowledge of self and effective communication skills. Communication skills are acquired by the age of five from within the family of origin and not at school. The World Health Organization identifies family breakdown as a major causal factor in mental health problems.

The problems of our society will only deepen and become more prevalent whilst ever simplistic thinking predominates and real issues are avoided. Many changes are required in the awareness of all individuals if our society is to survive and people to live fulfilling and satisfying lives.

Contemplation drags me back to consider one of the most profound and poignant declarations of love ever penned in the English language (in my opinion!):

The following year my wife became very ill and she was sent to hospital several times, for weeks at a time. I engaged several different doctors but she never got much better. She seemed to get worse as the years went by and she had several blackouts. Then, on the eighth of July 1976, she became unconscious and stayed in that state until the third of August 1976. She died at seven o'clock at night in my arms. We had been married for fifty-nine years, eleven months and twelve days. So on this day the loveliest and most beautiful woman left me.

Evelyn changed my life. I have had two lives, miles apart. Before we married I was on my own. It was a lonely, solitary life – Evelyn changed that. After our marriage my life became something which was much more than just me. - A. B. Facey.

Thank you Albert: "Much more than just me" Every time I read (and think) of this tears well in my eyes just as they did in Debbi's as I read it out just now! You are the most unselfish of men and richly deserved your fortunate life after starting in the work force at eight! You make me feel very humble and exceedingly privileged!

After two years at the helm of the PGFVS I have discovered many responses I elicit appear to be couched in terms of "I don't agree/that doesn't agree with that point of view/culture/religion so how can you promulgate it". I confess this disturbs me! As I have written before I do not profess to be the censor or editor of collegiate veterinary opinion but rather promulgate free press expression of the full range of views as espoused and defended by Voltaire et al! Sir Gustav Nossal, Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research recently cited ignorance, poverty and cultural isolation as sowing the seeds of hatred, instability and zealots. At the same SU Vice-Chancellors' Distinguished Lecture forum Lord May suggested greater openness between science and society, more consultation and exploration of the questions raised by ordinary people to elucidate the problems of a "more complicated tomorrow". Giving the Templeton Lecture Lord May, President of the Royal Society openly advocated deliberately seeking out dissenting voices. By listening to dissent can we arrest the decline and fall and live fulfilling fortunate lives?

W. P. Howey

Director

Education

Further enlightened education has always been a fundamental premise for successive generations of veterinarians in Scone. Commitment to life-long learning as a continuum has formed the basis of a prevailing philosophy for the incumbents at any one time. The birth of this process can arguably be traced back over 50 years. Murray Bain was resident veterinarian and manager of Alton Lodge Stud in New Zealand. He gave a talk entitled “Problems Associated with Infertility in the Brood Mare” to the NSW Division of the Australian Veterinary Association at The Veterinary School, University of Sydney on Tuesday April 6th. 1948. It was an extraordinarily intuitive treatise challenging many of the inculcated but outdated tenets of the day. Murray brought this prescient mind to the Hunter Valley with him in 1950.

It is a legacy which endures to this day on a local, national and international stage. Murray and his cohorts arranged a series of seminars for interested stud people as early as 1968 with the inaugural one taking place in the Scone Bowling Club with John Kelso in the chair. Following Murray’s tragic early demise in 1974 the ‘F-squared Club’ was formed by Peter Morris and Bill Howey. From this the Hunter Valley Blood Horse Breeders Association emerged and subsequently also the Hunter Valley Equine Research Foundation. Scone TAFE College was established in the mid-eighties at Muffett Street and dedicated to equine and rural courses. The new Hunter Valley Equine Centre became part of a larger complex embracing the TAFE College and Race Track as well as the Research Centre.

Veterinary education also flourished. Together with fellow icons Vic Cole and Tom Hungerford Murray had been one of the early visionary founders of the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science of the University of Sydney in the sixties. Only Julie Rose’s mother (Bill’s mother-in-law) momentarily deflected his driving passionate commitment to this organisation. Bill Howey was to become the third full time Director of the PGFVS in 2000 following Tom Hungerford and Doug Bryden. The PGFVS enjoys a global reputation as the leader in continuing veterinary education having been the very first of its kind.

A major course featuring international speakers was held in Scone under the aegis of the Australian Equine Veterinary Association (AEVA) in 1977. Bill Pickett (USA), Cliff Irvine (NZ), Margaret Evans (NZ) and Percy Sykes augmented local speakers in the Arts and Crafts Centre. The following year (1978) the initial AEVA Bain/Fallon course with Leo Jeffcott was held in the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney. The course was named in honour of Murray Bain and Peter Fallon who both died tragically early in 1974. It is an enduring monument to this day and the principal flagship of the AEVA.

Veterinary commitment to general education endures through the various courses available through Scone TAFE. Most significant among these are Veterinary Nursing and specifically Equine Nursing – again the first of its kind internationally. The now *de rigueur* ritual migration of veterinarians and stud hands between the hemispheres is also an education extension process.



Cambridge Education!

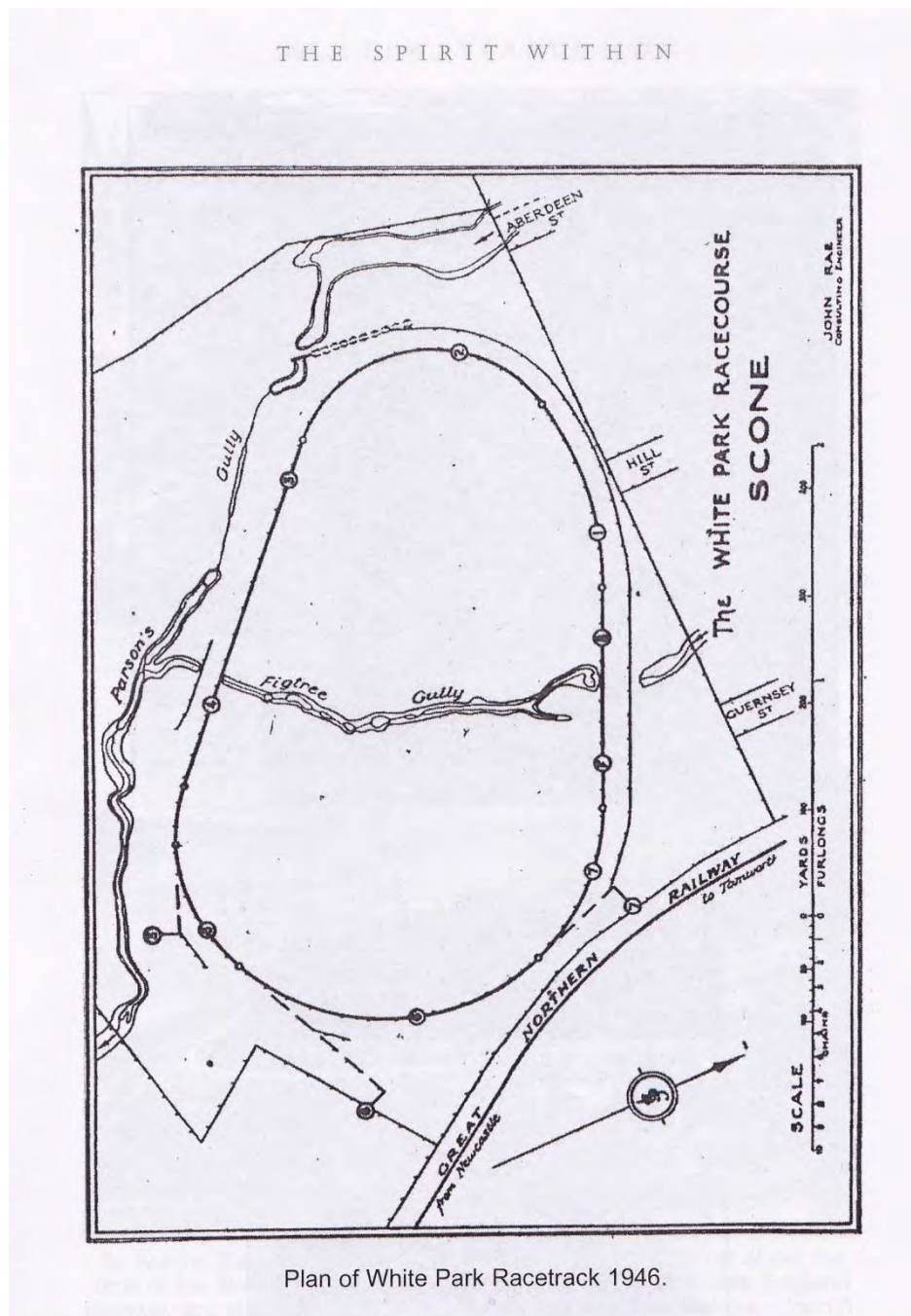
The author and Mr. Pat Nicholas are 'on tour' with the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science of the University of Sydney. This photograph was taken at Kings College Cambridge University UK in 1973.

Pat was a former 'Wallaby' and on the Council of the PGFVS when the author was its third Director

White Park Horse Boxes & Sales

Historical Perspective

Since 1947 Thoroughbred Sales had been conducted at White Park, Scone under the auspices of Scone Agency Pitt Son & Keene Pty Ltd and William Inglis & Sons of Sydney. According to local intelligence this was driven by agent Stan Keene. Simultaneously the recently constituted Scone Race Club held its first cup meeting on Wednesday 7th May 1947. Doug Robertson of historic 'Turanville' was the inaugural chairman. Mr Reg Inglis of William Inglis & Sons donated £50 towards the building and construction of the Judge's Tower. The transaction was handled by SRC Committeeman Laurie Morgan of 'Redbank'.



The annual May Thoroughbred Sales were established as a pivotal component of what was to emerge as Scone Thoroughbred Week held during the second week of the month every year. Traditionally the sales were conducted over two days on Monday/Tuesday with the Cup Races following on Wednesday/Thursday. The carnival rapidly built momentum in the 25 years 1947 – 1972. It was firmly established as one of the leading country racing festivals in the State. Initial patronage was richly fuelled by the massive transient workforce imported for the construction of Glenbawn Dam. This created a tradition which still exists today (although much diminished) of cadres of original workers returning to the fray for a 'good time'. The sons of the original proponents now in their 60s book the Golden Fleece Hotel for convivial reunion each year.

Horse Box Construction

Track Redevelopment and construction of the Horse Boxes at White Park gathered more momentum in the early 1970s. The original concept was the brainchild of the fertile mind of local veterinarian Murray Bain. Thoroughbred sales peaked in the late 60s with some very lucrative dispersal sales conducted at White Park. The original component of about 70 tie-up stalls, parade ring and yards was inadequate to accommodate the growing consignments to both races and sales.

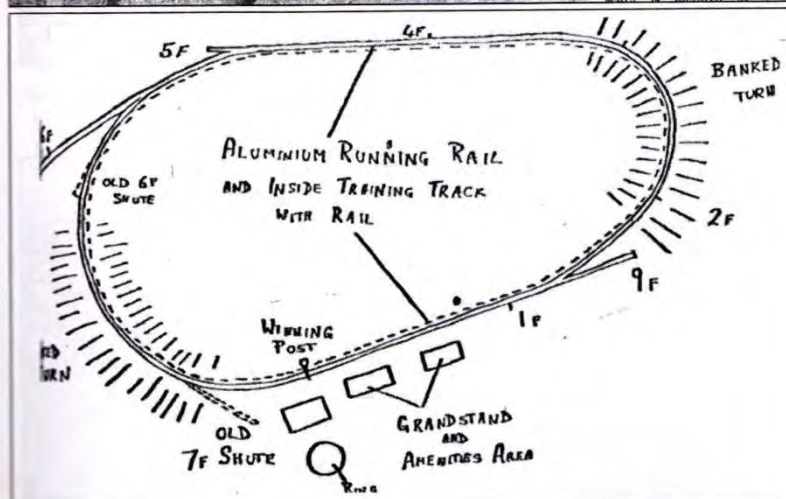
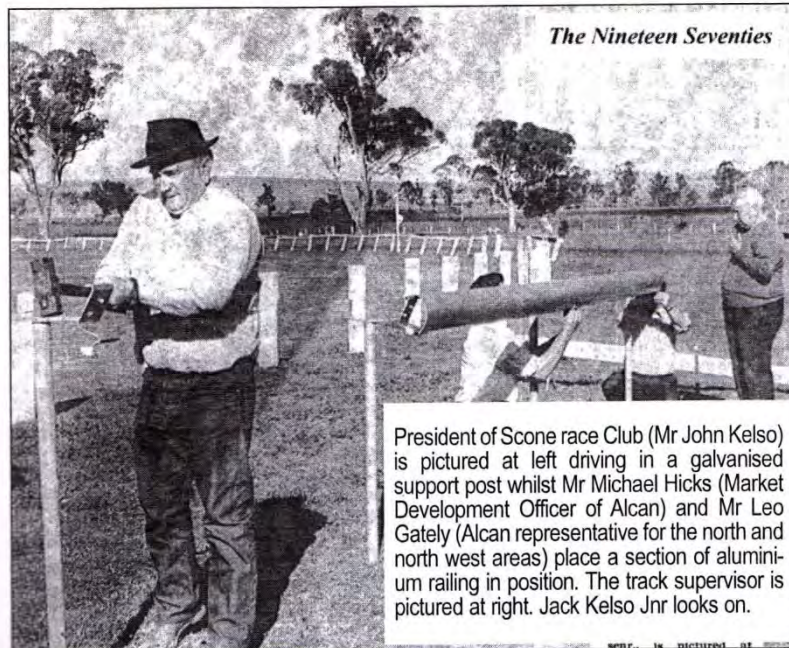
Murray Bain composed personal letters to most if not all the stud masters in the area to secure funding for the new concept of horse box construction. Murray Bain and Associates contributed the first \$1000:00 to establish the embryonic fund. Douglas Alger Staff QC of Baerami House Stud quickly followed up with \$100:00. This was matched by John Kelso (Timor Creek), Frank Thompson (Widden) Vivian Bath (Bhima), Alec Terry (Tarwyn Park), James Mitchell (Yarraman Park), Lionel Israel (Segenhoe), Carl Powell (Brooklyn Lodge), Stanley Wootton and many others. The Scone Shire Council as trustees of White Park was a strong supporter vigorously backed by then extant Scone Shire President David Macintyre (Kayuga).

The concept of horse boxes marched in tandem with the redevelopment of the White Park Race Track. This was all made possible by the donation of three-and-a-half acres of adjacent land in two blocks by Mr & Mrs A M Bain ('Chivers') and Sir Alister & Lady Thelma McMullin (St Aubins). The former was Vice-President of the Scone Race Club and Sir Alister the Patron. A new 1400 metre (7 furlong) chute was constructed on the new acquisition. This allowed for construction of horse boxes on land which had been the original 7 furlong chute and start right next to the public enclosure.

The minutes of the Scone Shire Council of 10 April 1974 record the tender of Concast Pty Ltd for the construction of 110 boxes costing \$69,771:00 was accepted "subject to satisfactory arrangements being made to provide additional finance of \$14,000:00". The first series of 90 boxes were built at a cost of \$60,000:00 solicited through donations from industry secured by the Murray Bain inspired fund with the Scone Shire Council as trustee. \$10,000:00 each from Pitt Son & Keene and William Inglis and Sons added enormous impetus to the project. I think it is fair to claim it would not have proceeded without? The caveat was a binding guarantee from Scone Shire Council that the combined agents had exclusive rights to sell Thoroughbred Horses in the local government area covered by Scone Shire Council for 20 years from November 1974 to November 1994. This was agreed with celerity and alacrity. Armed with this backing the Scone Shire Council raised a loan of \$40,000:00. The boxes were first used for the 1975 May sales.

The second stage of the three-stage program to build a further 80 boxes were completed by December the same year at a cost of \$87,800:00. Further donations were received from William Inglis & Sons (\$1000:00), Scone Shire Council (\$10,000:00) plus a grant of \$73,574:00 from Gough Whitlam's Labour Government Rural Employment Development (RED) Scheme. This came at just the right time.

THE SPIRIT WITHIN



The illustration shows the new improvements to Scone Race Course which will be completed prior to the Summer Cup Meeting in December. The work includes the new seven furlong shute, two banked turns, a running rail and inside training track. The Race Course Development advanced \$12,000 towards the cost of the work.

The author was the very amateur 'draughtsman' of the diagram. The new 1400 metre chute is partially obscured in the top left hand corner.

By 1980 further improvements were made to both the race track and the horse boxes. \$58,000:00 was spent on the grandstand plus amenities block and a further \$10,000:00 on the horse boxes.

THE SPIRIT WITHIN



Horse Talk, what else? Jim Gleeson, Wilf Barker, Ross Snowden and Harley Walden catching up on Saturday. Snowden was a jockey who rode at White park for 40 years.



Organisers of the special White Park wake meetings on Saturday and Monday were Warwick Norman, Harley Walden, Bill Howey, Athol Rose, Jack Johnston and Stan Wicks (absent Alec Ashford).



Early Bloodstock Sale: John Inglis (with gavel) and Stan G. Keene (with pen) taking a bid from a prospective buyer. Claud Megennis of the Inglis staff is at far left.

This montage of old photographs should read from the bottom to the top

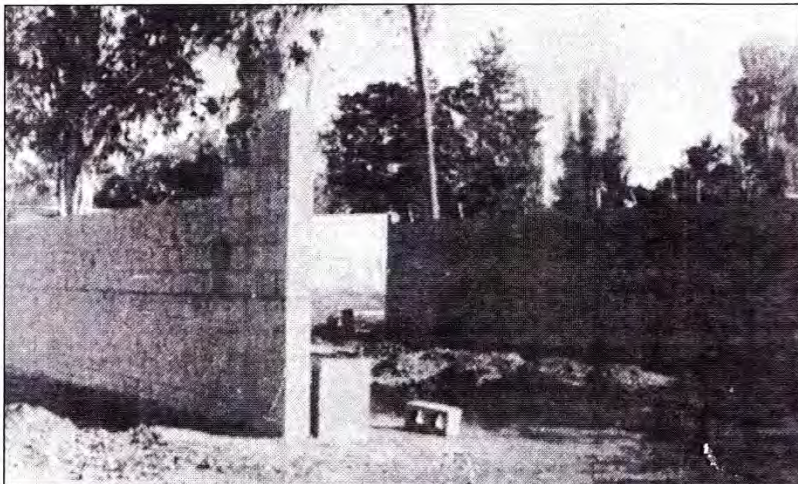
The Nineteen Seventies

NOT MANY BETTER ...

Over the past ten years, White Park, Scone has developed into one of the best sporting area's in the Upper Hunter.



The new grandstand at White Park, under construction will be utilised for the Cup, even though it will not be fully completed.



The 'new' grandstand was completed early during my (W P Howey) term of Office as President of Scone Race Club. We had received a grant of \$40,000:00 from the Race Course Development Fund of the TAB of NSW. Unfortunately we were about \$30,000:00 short. With some others I/we managed to cajole sufficient funds from Studs and individuals to allow construction to begin. We used the original Murray Bain approach with the addition of debentures (\$250:00) which could be multiple, redeemable or interminable in perpetuity. Included in donations and debentures were significant amounts from Morgan Howey Fraser (Veterinarians), Widden Stud (Bim Thompson), Bhima Stud (David Bath), Gyarran Stud (Jack Sheppard), Rosehill Stud (Boyd Gageler), Bill Howey (Hepple Farm), Yarramolong Stud (David Casben), Kelvinside (Hilton Cope), Peter Morris (Derby King Ranch, Woodlands). The stand was opened by Mr Ron W Auswild OBE Chairman of the NSW TAB on 1st December 1979.

PRESENTATION



Mr Bert Lillye, turf writer for the Sydney Morning Herald, presents Mr 'Bim' Thompson with the owners trophy, who accepted on behalf of himself and co-owners Messrs Bragg, Parry-Okeden, Wilson, Thomas and Mann. after their horse Idol, won the Bert Lillye Lightning Stakes Wednesday May 16, 1979.

Summary

It would be accurate to claim that the history of both racing and thoroughbred horse sales at White Park 1947-to-date represented a working symbiosis between like-minded people throughout the industry. Progress and development marched in unity. Partners included the Scone Race Club, Scone Shire Council, Thoroughbred Stud Masters and Breeders, Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Breeders Association, William Inglis & Sons, Pitt Son & Keene Pty Ltd, local businesses, individuals and the whole Scone community. There was clarity of vision and unity of purpose; mostly!

THE SPIRIT WITHIN

Saturday, 6th December
1975



Bill Howey and Race Club President Mr Jack Kelso congratulate Mrs Betty Shepherd, owner and trainer of Titaria, who won the Murray Bain Memorial Cup.



Pictured are the magnificent Dewars Scotch Whisky trophies which were presented to the winners and placegetters in the Dewar Cup at Scone on Saturday.



Andrew Murray Bain among the thoroughbreds he loved

Murray was the owner/breeder of 'Todmaid', 'Obelia', 'Little Gum Nut' and posthumously

'Dark Eclipse' (Golden Slipper 1980)

Bibliography:

'The Spirit Within': Scone's Racing History	Harley Walden	HVP
'Scone Shire': A Centenary of Local Government'	Audrey Entwisle	HVP
'The Infinitive History of Veterinary Practice in Scone':	W P Howey	HVP

W. P. Howey

Scone 15/05/17

The Hunter Valley Blood Horse Breeders Association

The major sponsor for the Scone Race Club Cup Carnival is for the first time (1996) the Hunter Valley Bloodhorse Breeders Association (HVBHBA) with the \$40,000 HVBHBA Scone Cup (1300m) and the \$50,000 HVBHBA Dark Jewel Quality Handicap (1400m) for fillies and mares on Friday 17th May 1996.

The incumbent committee is to be warmly and sincerely congratulated on this magnificent initiative to promote their local industry. It begs the question of the origin, incentives and objectives of the organisation.

Research has revealed that a meeting convened in Scone on 31st November 1951 led to the formation of the Upper Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Society. Present at that meeting were G.A. Christmas (Oak Range), L.R. Morgan (Redbank), A.H. Young, Scott Johnston (Tyrone), R.M. and J. Bowcock (Alabama), A.W. ('Bert') Riddle (Kia Ora), Cliff Duncombe (Kingsfield), W.M. Bate, R.A. Basche, and Noel Hall (Cressfield). Apologies were received from F.W. Thompson (Widden), L.B. Israel (Segenhoe) and J.W. Johnston (Tyrone). The stated objectives of this embryonic society were to promote the thoroughbred racing industry in the Upper Hunter. Presumably, this association did not have a long lifespan as it appears to have fallen into liquidation within the decade. This may well have been attributable to the (also) recent formation of the Bloodhorse Breeders Association of Australia (NSW Division) some of whose major protagonists were common to both committees.

The next significant and energetic drive to galvanise the industry and achieve consensus was achieved by Murray Bain and John Kelso who combined to convene a series of meetings designed to discuss mutual problems based on scientific (veterinary and management) presentations. The first of these seminars was held at the Scone Bowling Club in July 1968. Out of this, sprang the Murray Bain led crusade which culminated in the construction of the first set of yearling boxes on White Park. This was financially backed by William Inglis and Sons and Pitt Son and Keene as well as local Stud Masters and Veterinarians. Gough Whitlam's 'RED' Scheme was to further augment this construction between 1972 and 1975. Later, Peter Morris (Derby-King Ranch) and Bill Howey formed the 'F2 Club' with a similar legacy to promote regular meetings of thoroughbred breeders at the beginning and end of each breeding season and to meet socially. (The 'First and Final' Service Club).

By the mid-1970's a ground swell of opinion began to emerge, partially orchestrated from what was to become a familiar source, that the philosophy of this type of seminar should be expanded to include a far wider range of topics for discussion and decision by regular like-minded gatherings. It was left to Peter Hodgson (Chamorel Park Stud, Upper Rouchel) and Jack Sheppard (Gyarran Stud) to systematically drive the genesis of what was to become The Bloodhorse Breeders Association of Australia, New South Wales Division, Hunter Valley Branch (HVBHBA). Peter and Jack constituted a formidable duo combining 'new age' acumen and vision with traditional knowledge and values

A series of well-attended and enthusiastic meetings were subsequently convened in Scone and in mid-1978 the Rules of The Bloodhorse Breeders' Association of Australia, New South Wales Division, Hunter Valley Branch were formally adopted.

Rule 3 states:

The objects (sic) for which the Branch is formed are:

- (a). To promote and advance the interest of the Breeders of the Bloodhorse in the Hunter Valley district.
- (b). To regulate or assist in regulating the days of sale, order of sale and procedure in connection with the Hunter Valley Branch Yearling Sale or Hunter Valley Branch Sales.
- (c). To co-operate with and assist all other divisions and Branches of the Bloodhorse Breeders' Association of Australia.

The inaugural committee elected in Scone to implement these objectives included the following: Peter Hodgson (Chamorel Park), Jack Sheppard (Gyarran), John Harris (Holbrook), 'Bim' Thompson (Widden), John Kelso (Timor Creek), James Mitchell (Yarraman Park), David Bath (Bhima), David Casben (Yarramalong), Peter Morris (Woodlands D-KR), Hilton Cope (Kelvinside), Betty Shepherd (Trevors), John Clift (Kia Ora), Ray Gooley and Bill Howey (Veterinarians). Their success or failure may be judged against today's values.

Amongst many of the early deliberations were the promotion of racing at Muswellbrook, sales at Scone, co-operative buying groups for goods and services and a 'black list' of bad debtors ! The legal profession under current legislation might have discovered fertile territory had some of these come to fruition?

Perhaps the major early significant achievement was the promotion of the First Annual Yearling Sale, White Park Racecourse, on Sunday 4th March 1979 at which 204 lots were catalogued. There was a barbeque and parade of yearlings at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday 3rd March 1979. This followed the Denman Race Club Meeting at Skellatar Park, which was sponsored by the HVBHBA with the Upper Hunter Breeders Improvers Handicap (fillies and Mares), 1200m., \$1000 prize money with a Winners' Trophy of \$200 and Breeders Trophy of \$100. Woodlands Stud, Balfour Stud and Yarraman Park Stud were also major sponsors on the day.

The sale was officially opened by media personality Mike Willesee who purchased his first yearling, Lot 115, the Chestnut Colt by Coolness ex. Liquid Fire consigned by the Holbrook Partnership, Widden Valley. The liquor licensing laws of the period demanded that on Sunday, alcoholic beverages and refreshment could only be provided by 'committee' from the minute bar at the Scone Race Club. There were some very interesting accounts and 'shouts' from that arrangement which the combined tyrannies of time and distance fortuitously prevent accurate recall and/or redress.



Mike Willesee

Mike Willesee opened the inaugural sale in 1979 and purchased Lot 115

It was measure of the calibre of the man that 'Bim' Thompson voluntarily elected to vacate some of his 'choice' boxes on course to accommodate well-presented yearlings consigned by Sledmere Stud who had been allocated the less favourable tie-up stalls. Would this be likely to happen today!?!



'Bim' Thompson

The social highlight of the year for the HVBHBA had undoubtedly been the Annual Dinner and Presentation of Awards during the Scone Horse Festival in May. Unique accolades are the 'Murray Bain Service to Industry Award' and the President's Award for Industry Achievement. In the spirit of the 'F2 Club, very successful

Christmas Parties have also been held. Occasionally, as needs arise, very important industry collaboration has taken place whenever new disease or other threats appear. Paramount among these was the gathering of 400+ at Scone Bowling Club in July 1977 when the 'twin disasters' of 'Jubilee Clap' (CEM) and Viral Abortion were anticipated and repelled.



Mutual congratulations!

The author [President's Award] and Jack Johnston [Murray Bain Service to Industry Award] shake hands at the HVBHBA Dinner in 1995. The author had just delivered the eulogy in favour of Jack who was 81 years old at the time. Jack announced he was retiring from the Scone Race Club Committee having attended 48 consecutive Scone Cups at the 'old' White Park Track

Perhaps the most significant of all 'new beginnings' to emerge from the original HVBHBA conceptus has been the nascence of the Hunter Valley Equine Research Foundation (HVERF) in the mid 1980's. This was the brain child of the author and the inspiration for front runner Brian Agnew of Wakefield Stud. As history has dictated it has been the underpinning organisation in the startling, impressive and holistic development of the Hunter Valley Equine Centre at Satur.

The HVBHBA has followed a circuitous path to arrive at today's crossroads and is a rather different organisation than that originally envisaged and constituted. However, it has been constant in promoting races even since its inception, and surely the scale and magnitude of the promotion of the Scone Cup Meeting 1996 and the quality of the catalogue for the HVBHBA Yearling Sale, Sunday May 1996 represent the culmination of effort and pinnacle of achievement to date??



The author presents the HVTBA Presidents Award to Major James Mitchell [Yarraman Park] in 1998. The good major surprised everyone when he remarked he was the only male member of his family not to have been in gaol!

Australian Stock Horse AUSTRADE Delegation to China 2004

Marco Polo Peripatetic Peregrinations 2004 Style



An intrepid 'cavalry cluster' delegation representing the Australian Stock Horse Society Ltd. set off on a 12 day 'whirlwind' tour of modern China on 25th. September 2004. Marco Polo would not have been so perfunctory or peremptory!



Terry Blake and Brian Atfield after praying

First stop was Beijing via Guangzhou. Immediately we were apprised of cultural and language differences! Some of the Mandarin translation into English is exquisite! I 'deciphered' the following subtle warning on arrival in my hotel suite:

Notice to Electric Kettle

'When you use the electric kettle, please pour water to the 2/3 of it, order to avoid the boiling water out to be dangerous'!



Things are not always what they appear to be! This is a supermarket!



This is a second and or recycling shop; exquisite translation?

Our soigné, erudite and urbane host for the first part of the visit was Mr. James Sun who as Executive Director of the Project Planning Department of the Ministry of Agriculture was responsible

for local arrangements in Beijing. James also 'doubles' as editor of the official mouthpiece of the Chinese Equestrian Association: 'The Chinese Horse Industry Journal'. There are about 8000 horses and nearly 100 riding [equestrian] clubs in the vicinity of Beijing. Many elite riders have made Beijing their training base obviously with a close eye on incipient events in 2008.



Helen Xie and James Sun

The Beijing Junxing Breeding Farm is located in the vast urban periphery of this massive metropolis of some 20 million people. It included a domestic breeding farm and ancillary training centre both appearing to be 'residual' military facilities 'inherited' by the present incumbent Mr. Lu who is a four star major in the Chinese army. The horses were of mixed domestic breed and quality with some recent thoroughbred importations aimed at improving the overall genotype. There were some 'thoroughbreds' from Japan and Russia. We were royally entertained by the 'Major' and his dutifully obedient acolytes to the first of many traditional bountiful banquets! A military bus was generously provided for our cross city transport with Major Lu in the vanguard in his late model 4-wheel drive with his hand constantly on the warning klaxon! In China it is still advisable for the inscrutable locals to make way for the military! There were many near misses but no collisions!

The Beijing Longtou Farm is a converted chicken raising facility of some 120 acres and owned by Japanese interests. The paddocks were enclosed by the ubiquitous brick walls/fences so prevalent in this part of northern China. The walls are far cheaper than post-and-rail fencing with the ready availability of abundant cheap labour and raw materials. Mr. Isamuishida informed us over 4 million bricks were used in construction of the fences which provide excellent wind shelter in winter. The farm stands three USA bred thoroughbred stallions in Thrill Show [USA], Golden Pheasant [USA] and Tight Spot [USA]. Mares located at Longtou Farm include the progeny of Roberto, Tony Bin, Conquistador Cielo, Soviet Star, Helissio, Jade Robbery, Ogygian, Arctic Tern and Groom Dancer. The project represents a confident investment by the Japanese Company in the future horse racing industry in China. The aim is to produce quality thoroughbreds for the local market at 1/10th the cost of production in Japan.



Longtou Horse farm

The Beijing Tongshun Jockey Club and Beijing Huanjan Breeding Farm are located on the periphery of Beijing and constitute the most significant and advanced thoroughbred racing and breeding complex yet constructed in modern China and still expanding. Anecdotal evidence suggests in excess of A\$700 million has been allocated thus far. The facility is owned by the Domeland Consortium so prominent in Hong Kong and Australia. Over 3000 Australian thoroughbreds have been imported to date with new arrivals expected constantly. 'Tierce [AUS]' and 'Bigstone [IRE]' are two resident sires familiar to Australian interests. The very prominent advertising billboard adjacent to the main track proudly proclaims the local presence of Randwick Equine Centre. We were very fortunate to be entertained by expatriate equine veterinarian Dr. Michael Robinson as well as Director of Racing Kevin Connolly as the last race was run on Sunday 26th. September 2004. Only modest crowds of some 2000 patrons are attracted to the races at this stage. Betting is officially 'illegal' but unofficially and pragmatically condoned with a system akin to 'voting for a horse'. Racing also includes provision for 'small children pony events' based on the Jesuit principle of 'catch them while they are young'! The facility also caters for the Chinese National Event Training Centre where the team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics is in preparation. The Beijing Tongshun Jockey Club is the only one of eight Jockey Clubs in China open for daily operations with eight events contested each Saturday and Sunday. As soon as lights are installed the Sunday meeting will be transferred to Wednesday evening similar to the successful format in Hong Kong. The first Forensic Racing Laboratory ['Dope Testing'] was founded in Beijing in 2002. The first evening in Beijing included a most memorable perambulation through Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City dominated by the massive tribute to Chairman Mao.



Beijing Tongshun Jockey Club

The Beijing Sunshine Valley Equestrian Club hosted the 3rd. Asian Equestrian Games in September 2003. It is located about 2 hours 'army escorted drive' in the high country to the north of the city and well above the 'smog layer'! It is a most impressive facility in an exquisite location in the Days Inn Rose Valley at the foot of the Badaling Great Wall. The indoor riding arena is the largest in China and is a superb construction. On Monday 27th. September 2004 the very first Polocrosse match ever played in China took place here with a demonstration by a scratch team of visitors and then an 'International' involving the bewitched and bemused locals! Days Inn Rose Valley is an International ski resort during winter months and the group availed itself of the opportunity to visit the Great Wall which is every bit as impressive as its proud publicity proclaims. The facility is also the home of the 'Museum of Horse Culture in China'. Constructed by a consortium consisting of the Chinese Equestrian Association, Chinese Horse Industry Association, Chinese Cultural Relics Association and the Government of Yanqing the museum covers some 2700 square metres and houses more than 1300 exhibits. The exhibits are in six sections and embrace the rich historical horse culture of China stretching back c. 4000 years with modern updates including many Australian and NZ images located in the 'England and America' display! The museum is absolutely first class in every respect and is aimed at the flood of visitors confidently anticipated in 2008.



Indoor Arena Sunshine Valley Badaling



Polocrosse at Sunshine Valley Badaling

'Chairman' Terry Blake and young descendants of Genghis and Kublai

Wherever we went we were constantly apprised of the fact that the 'turbulent' ['tyrannical'] events of the 20th. Century had all but obliterated the ancient horse culture in China which numbered as many as 700,000 horses involved in polo, racing and in circuses. They are acutely aware of the need to start again from 'scratch' and re-establish a viable equine industry in China. Since the early founding of the People's Republic in China in 1952 over 1,100 stud horses were imported from the former Soviet Union to improve local 'China breeds'. Arabians have also been introduced in significant numbers in Military establishments. Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang appear to be the best areas for horse breeding.



The 'Gang of Five' at the Great Wall

Two days in Nanjing followed our initial foray into Beijing. We were first met and entertained by Mr. Wu and his cohorts of the Nanjing Horse Racing Enterprise Co. Inc. This comprises a massive very busy construction project now underway closely emulating the facilities already provided in Beijing and Wuhan and probably approaching the total amount in expenditure. Mr. Wu was careful to point out that whereas the Beijing concept is essentially a private and local government arrangement the Nanjing project is a 60% private [Mr Wu] and 40% State [National] Government scheme with an option to 'purchase' the latter. The Nanjing facility will host the National Equestrian Festival in 2005. It is clear the visionary concept in China is for an all embracing equine/equestrian carnival including all disciplines of competition such as racing, show jumping, eventing, horse sports, trick riding and entertainment in general. Once more we were 'subjected' to yet another eclectic luncheon banquet arranged by our ever attentive and courteous hosts! For many including the author this began to produce spectacularly cathartic gastro-intestinal results! The evening concluded with a celebration of the 'Moon Festival' in downtown Nanjing and ample opportunity to indulge in ever more shopping! Even so it was hard to drag oneself away from the luxury of one's accommodation at the Jinling Resort on the Baijia Lake.



Nanjing Riding Club



Nanjing Riding Club Bar

On Wednesday 29th September 2004 the 'cluster' was very warmly welcomed at the Department of Clinical Medicine in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the Nanjing Agricultural University. This is the second most prestigious such campus in modern China after its Beijing equivalent. We were greeted by seven Professors and five Academic Associates including Dr. Rong Rui DVM PhD and Dr. Kehe Huang DVM PhD. One elderly faculty member had spent two happy years in Sydney with Professor Cliff Gallagher. The physiology department was especially impressive with its leader an extremely erudite lady boasting esoteric credentials including time spent in Melbourne in human health research and many years in Germany. We enjoyed a fully escorted tour of the whole campus and shared morning tea with the faculty elite which included a power point presentation in English by a young and extremely enthusiastic academic with a passion for horses called Dr. Sun Junling.

Both he and Professor Kehe Huang went to great pains to explain the ‘marriage’ and incorporation of both traditional ‘Eastern’ and modern ‘Western’ veterinary medicine and surgery into the Nanjing clinical training curriculum. The author proposed a vote of thanks to the host faculty – fortuitously translated into Mandarin! – and presented an AEVA tie to the young academic. At this stage the facilities for clinical teaching in Western methods for both companion and production-animal streams is limited but improving. Mr. James Sun points out that due to exceptional historical circumstances there are as few as 10 ‘dedicated’ expert equine veterinarians in China. Most of them are ‘ageing’ and come from the State or Provincial-level agricultural colleges and combine both eastern and western disciplines. ‘Foreign’ veterinary expertise is being imported by the emerging race clubs [Beijing JC] and in 2002 the first international equine veterinary workshop was held in Beijing.



Nanjing Agricultural University

Experimental Buffalo

The afternoon of Wednesday 29th. September 2004 was spent at the Jiangsu Boama Ltd. International Equestrian Club owned by Dr. Gao Huan who has spent a lot of time in Perth, WA. The club is set in idyllic surroundings near the ‘Purple Mountain’ on the outskirts of Nanjing. It is typical of ‘new age’ riding clubs centred on established stables catering for the emerging middle class demand for such active recreational activity. The stables were ‘old world’ in comparison to the newly constructed edifices at Beijing and elsewhere. We were treated to a demonstration of ‘traditional’ method of slinging a horse in a crush with cotton ropes in order to effect routine farriery procedures. The horse in question had long-standing hoof problems possibly due to chronic laminitis.

The local Farrier at the club was able to achieve remarkable results with vintage tools resembling chisels! There is clearly a deficit in the area of suitable training and 'new age' farriery equipment. The evening concluded with beers in the exquisite garden at the riding club and thence to an 'Austrade' hosted wine appreciation dinner at the 5-star Jinling Hotel in the city. It was very good to eat 'western', quaff some Hunter Valley brew and repulse the 'Chinese Way' challenge to 'skol' a few beers in the vibrant hotel night club!



Horse 'Crush'

A late night was less than ideal preparation for an 'early mark' and departure for Wuhan. The China Wuhan Equestrian Festival at the Orient Lucky City was a sight to behold. The Orient Lucky City Horse Group is the brainchild of Hong Kong based Mr. Jacky Wu. It is a multi-national corporation with comprehensive and diversified business in China and overseas including international horse racing, environmental protection technologies, telecommunications and real estate. The Wuhan complex incorporates the four elements of horse racing, tourism, commerce and property. Mr. Jacky Wu is a Hong Kong citizen and leader of the Company. He was one of the first entrepreneurs to invest in mainland China following the recent 'glasnost'. Mr. Wu is a forward thinker, a strategic advocate and charismatic leader. The concept of bringing equestrian and horse racing activities, commerce, tourism and property business all under one roof is his unique idea. It appears to provide the role model for future development in China into the 21st Century.



Australian Stock Horse Society on parade at Wuhan

The Orient Lucky City complex hosted the 'China Wuhan Equestrian Festival' from 1st. – 7th. October 2004 so coinciding with 'National Week' otherwise known as 'Golden Week' with obvious implications for commerce and trade. The ASHS mounted a trade stand at the exhibition with the 'Ranvet' Company also present. Three members of the delegation [including the author] were interviewed for local consumption on CCTV. The Australian and ASHS Flags were proudly displayed at the opening ceremony with two mounted visitors resplendent in Akubras, Drizabones, 'RM's' and Moleskins performing the honours. We were royally entertained by local Orient Lucky City employee 'Jenny' and enjoyed the 'run of the place'. Orient Lucky City is located at the Gold-Silver Lake of Wuhan. It covers an area of 1 million square metres and includes an International Racecourse, the Jockey Club, the Equitation School, the Equestrian Exhibition, the Amusement Park, a 5-star International Convention Centre Hotel, Luxurious Houses and Apartments, the Intelligent Office Complex and the Mega Store. The total investment to date is US\$200 million.



Bamboo Stables Wuhan



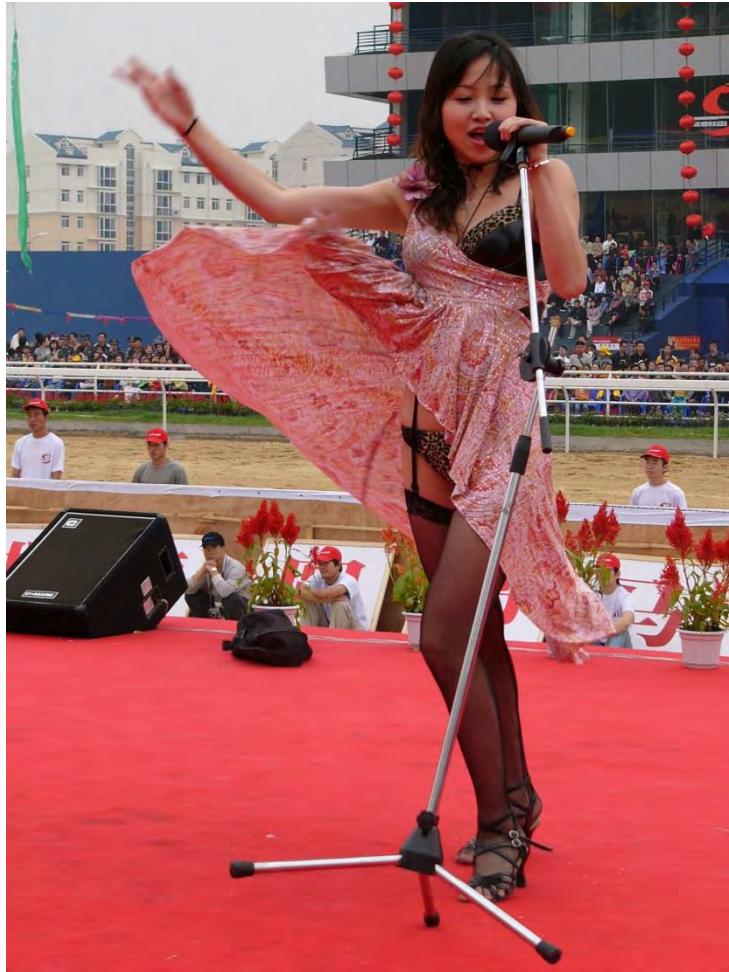
Polo at Wuhan

The Orient Lucky City premises are dominated by the six-storey grand stand and deep sand all weather running track. Horse related activities included trick riding, show jumping, racing, a local variety of polo and various other horse sports. The same 'eclectic' mix of horses appeared to be used for most activities with the exception of show jumping. Teams from 12 Chinese Provinces including Hong Kong were present to compete for national supremacy in this discipline.

Competitors [and horses] rated from sublime to less so! The Aussie contingent mounted challenges in Polo Cross and 'Polo' much to the delight of the local patrons. The former was a demonstration match and the latter 'International' ended in an honourable 1 – 1 draw with ability to 'dig' the large polo ball from the deep sand on the race track a paramount skill! The finale for our delegation was to be present on stage with Mr. Jacky Wu and the full Orient Lucky City contingent for a wide range of entertainment and spectacular demonstrations including scantily clad fish-net stocking dancing girls, party games and singing as well as an 'incidental' horse race incorporating local ownership. One of our entourage was 'selected' by pass-the-parcel to deliver a rendition of 'Waltzing Matilda' much to bemusement of the local fraternity! Racing in China certainly is different! The Aussie delegation mounted an impressive display of 'whip cracking' following which a tall imperious female delegate dazzling in Akubra and boots presented a home made trophy to Mr. Wu. We trust he did not misinterpret the signal as indicative of a subtle invitation to some bizarre sado-masochistic ritual?



Whip Cracking in Wuhan



‘Pulse Racing’ in Wuhan

Two days in perennially mystical Shanghai provided the perfect back stop for our delegation. While ‘Seventh Heaven’ Hotel on Nanjing Road Mall was somewhat ‘dubious’ in reputation and did not match its elaborate title the location was perfect for exploring the myriad delights of both old and new Shanghai. The Yuyuan Gardens of Happiness were spectacular as were the old ‘Bund’, Pudong New Zone and hustling, bustling Nanjing Road itself.

The overall impression of the horse industry in China is one of ‘re-invention’ following the internecine turbulence of the 21st Century. There is an urgent need for re-skilling in some of the basic tenets of accepted best practice in general horse husbandry in the West. This includes all aspects of housing, drainage, bedding, ventilation, farriery, hoof and teeth care as well as fundamental nutrition. Nonetheless there is extraordinary will, drive and vision among the many people we met who were universally courteous, gracious, attentive and generous to a fault! A few of the major players including powerful ‘new age’ entrepreneurs will avidly pursue their goals and drive their grand plans to ultimate fruition. One of our entourage stated: “I may not be the beneficiary of this detente but my successor’s successor will”. It is a long term project but things will indubitably happen very quickly in the rapidly developing ‘new age’ China. Marco Polo? At least we had the ‘polo’ part right – or should that be ‘polocrosse’!

Acknowledgements:

ASHS Steve Guihot and Ray Hines

HEC Don Champagne and Helen Xie

OLC 'Jenny'

W. P. Howey Honorary Veterinarian ASHS AEVA EO

Early on this trip we met an extremely motivated young Chinese veterinarian at the Nanjing Agricultural University. He gave an impeccable address in English which he had learned by rote. His name was Sun Junling although it was not easy to establish this fact; he agreed with all our interpretations! In Chinese culture it is considered very rude to tell a visitor they are wrong. Renamed Jimmy by Derek Major at Agnes Banks we were able to provide a fellowship through the NSW TAFE Commission for Sun Junling to spend 6 months on study leave in the Upper Hunter Valley. It all worked out very well. I was lecturing to the Darley Flying Start trainees by then. Thanks to intervention by inaugural Darley Australia Manager Ollie Tait 'Jimmy' was accepted into the trainee program. I was his mentor. As such I was invited to his graduation at Dalham Hall Stud, Newmarket UK as the guest of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He may not have known but I travelled Business Class all the way including a stop-over in Dubai; all expenses paid. Sarah declined the offer to accompany me.

Scone's New Race Track

The Exodus, the Genesis and a Dream That Could Be Realised

The Evolution of a New Racecourse

On one of his frequent visits to the Upper Hunter Valley, Emeritus Professor Rex Butterfield, President of the Australian Equine Research Foundation and Keeneland (USA) representative in Australia, remarked on the similarity of events at that time to the genesis of the “Keeneland Concept” in Kentucky in 1936. The date was sometime in the early 1980's and the Upper Hunter was witness to a flurry of activity in the development of thoroughbred racing and breeding in the district, possibly unprecedented, even in the bench mark/cornerstone industries so important historically to the locality.



Emeritus Professor Rex Butterfield [Centre]

Inaugural Vetsearch-RIRDC Equine Research Award 1995

Mr. Keith Hyde [RIRDC left] and Mr. Ian Champion [Vetsearch right]

In his concluding remarks addressed to a mass meeting of breeders and others interested in racing at the Lafayette Hotel on Wednesday afternoon March 20, 1935 Major Louie A. Beard said: "This may seem like a dream, but I believe it is a dream that can be realised." (*The Thoroughbred Record (USA) October 10 1936*)

The meeting witnessed by Professor Butterfield was held at the Scone Bowling Club. It was a gathering of like-minded people representing the fledgling Hunter Valley Bloodhorse Breeders Association (HVBHBA) and inevitably the local racing industry. The significance of the astute Professor's observations as we approach the closing of White Park Racecourse (22:10:94/24:10:94) and the opening date (18:11:94) of the new course at Satur can now be placed in true perspective. Actually the rebirth of the new track is in fact a return after a lapse of c.100 years, to racing in the Satur locality. As detailed in Daniel Morgan's excellent thesis "The Reality of the Turf" (Scone's Colonial Horse Racing, 1842 - 1900) first class racing was held at Mr. Frederick Augustus Parbury's property from 1892 - 1915 under the auspices of the Scone Jockey Club.

During the late 1970's to the early 1980's some vitally important decisions were reached in a remarkable chronological sequence which were to have enormous impact on the future development of racing in Scone, and indeed to rescue and secure its (precarious) position. Pivotal in this process were a few individuals, most of whom represented either or both the Scone Race Club and the HVBHBA. The committees of both these organisations had enjoyed a recent period of growth and strength at a fortuitous time.

The early seed for the concept of a better race track for Scone had evolved from the fertile mind of local agent F.W. (Bill) Rose (FWR). The committee of the Scone Race Club had long deliberated on the restrictions and deficiencies imposed by the less than adequate White Park and the sharing of the facilities with the Golf Club in particular. The Club was being thwarted in its efforts to attract funding for development from the Racecourse Development Fund established by the NSW TAB.

The hidden agenda behind consistent refusals or pittance donations by the TAB was that the discerning decision-makers did not support the further development of White Park Racecourse!

To its great credit, the Scone Race Club Committee at the time accepted the stark and harsh reality of this observation. The major problem was what to do about it and achieve a realistic feasible solution acceptable to the Race Club and the broad community in general. The initial response was for the Scone Shire Council at FWR's instigation and insistence to purchase Dal Adams farm adjacent to White Park and to develop this 'ideal' location as a Sports Complex in perpetuity for the citizens of Scone. To the great credit of all concerned, this conceptual plan was rescued from potential and established as reality from this time. The Sporting Development Committee under the chairmanship of Brian McGrath was constituted by Scone Shire Council to expedite and oversee this project.

The secondary agenda underpinning this idea was to separate the interests of the sometime feuding Golf Club and Race Club and to permit the expansion of the Racecourse to a 2000 metre track within the confines of White Park. No golf fairway was to straddle the course proper. At an 'on site' sub-committee meeting comprising Brian McGrath, Terry Barnes (Scone Shire Clerk), Bill Rose and the author the overall practicality and financial feasibility of the total concept was addressed. The quotation for the erection of 3 new creek crossings to support the enlarged track was detailed at \$180,000.

The two Race Club delegates conferred and volunteered the opinion that considering this scale of finance the concept was not viable and an alternative solution should be found. To say that this revelation surprised Brian and Terry would be a gross understatement! It was, however, agreed that the harsh truth of this decision was realistic and that the proponents of change should consider other avenues. The importance of this deliberation cannot be overemphasised as absolutely basic and underpinning all future decision and debate!

The outcome for the district was the establishing of a magnificent Sports Complex accommodating a wide range of sporting pursuits but did nothing to alleviate the existing and ongoing problems of the Golf Club and Race Club!

The Chairman of the Sydney Turf Club at this time was Mr. George Ryder, a long time Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Breeder first at 'Woodlands Stud' and latterly at 'Kia Ora'. George was an enthusiastic, energetic and innovative administrator, but who on occasion "ran his own race". He was an active proponent of the total concept to restructure country racing in NSW. In some cases this involved amalgamation and pooling of resources of race clubs in close geographic proximity to improve the overall standard in general and not to in his opinion fractionate the TAB distribution 'cake' into too many small nonviable fragments. It was the perception by many close to the action that this represented the strong majority view of AJC, STC and TAB committees as well as NSW Government Policy. The 'carrot' as dangled by George Ryder was a sum in excess of \$600,000 provided by the STC to facilitate the relocation of a major racing facility in the Upper Hunter. It was later revealed that this concept did not have the unqualified support of the STC directors!

The Scone Race Club Committee deliberated on this proposition and submitted as one possible solution the pooling of resources of the Scone Race Club and the Upper Hunter Race Club to establish a single large modern racing facility financed in part by the STC as well as other funds. (TAB, sale of Skellatar Park etc.). This was interpreted by the racing fraternity in the district as meaning one thing only – amalgamation!

A furious and heated debate ensued culminating in a very public and well attended meeting at the Scone Bowling Club chaired by the author when the Scone Race Club Membership totally rejected by a very large majority any consideration of relocation or 'amalgamation' of the Club's racing facility. The committee (other than a few 'populist defections') nonetheless maintained the position that to remain on White Park without major structural change would ultimately and inevitably lead to the demise of the Scone Race Club as a separate identifiable entity in the medium to long term. This was truly 'grasping the nettle' a very vital and compelling decision that was to significantly influence subsequent events as they unfolded. Sir Humphrey of 'Yes, Minister' fame would have labeled this as politically inexpedient and naive but 'courageous'! It would come as no surprise that total membership of the Scone Race Club attained its historic zenith at this time! Chronologically it was imperative to hold this debate and to address the very real issue of the progress and future of racing in Scone. To have hesitated or procrastinated on this issue could justifiably have loaded ammunition for future generations to aim at the administration of the time. The author with others was determined that accusations of ineptitude or apathy could never be levelled at the committee of the day!

It was from this standpoint that FWR, with single-minded purpose vigorously pursued his vision and goal of the purchasing and development of a site selected by him at 'Tarrangower', Satur. That he was able to achieve this is testimony to his bullish determination part of the motivation coming from the challenge of not the principle but the feasibility of the objective. The procedure and process was largely withheld from the committee in general other than a select few. This was regrettable although in hindsight probably necessary in order to achieve fruition. It inevitably led to some dented pride, bruised egos and a somewhat divided committee but if the ends justify the means then totally sustainable. The author lived at 'Tarrangower' when first married in April 1975. 'Best man' at the wedding Bill Rose first conceived the idea: "What a great amphitheatre for a racetrack"!

The subsequent purchase and ability to raise the significant funds for the total project brought into play a remarkable and providential series of people and organisations, co-incidentally and fortuitously 'in the right place at the right time'!

The vehicle for fund raising was to be the Hunter Valley Equine Research Foundation the brainchild of the author and Brian Agnew of Wakefield Stud from his perspective as energetic and popularly elected President of the HVBHBA. This is a registered charitable trust set up by the HVBHBA to raise funds for local equine research projects and to which donations were exempt from taxation. The HVERF was to become the 'landlord' of the Satur facility and to purchase the property from FWR and grant the Scone Race Club a portion for the new racetrack on a long-term 'peppercorn rent'.

Purchase of 'Tarrangower' was for an amount in excess of \$1 million which had to be locally raised. That this was readily achieved is testimony to the ability of all concerned and again attributable in part to some extraordinary circumstances.

This period of time (mid to late 1980's) was arguably the most inflationary and 'bullish' market in the history of thoroughbred racing and breeding in Australia. The donation of very high stallion service fees was a major activity in fund raising. Also the entrepreneurial flair and genius of Tony Bott recently established as Studmaster at Segenhoe could be harnessed to organise some very high profile and vastly successful activities at Segenhoe and the Sebel Town House, Sydney (at Easter). The auction of donated goods and chattels at these events realised significant sums of money towards the project as well as donations to charity (>\$100,000 NBN Telethon appeal).

That the funds were raised and the purchase completed is testimony to the singular purpose and dedication of a number of protagonists and a few in particular. Having secured the title to a suitable property, the Scone Race Club was then in a strong position to approach the TAB - RDF (as previously advised) to provide funding to complete the total concept. The procedure of development and fruition has been very successfully guided and negotiated, not without considerable personal sacrifice, by the incumbent Race Club President, David Bath of Bhima Stud. The reality of the complex as it approaches its genesis is a tribute to David's persistence, patience and zeal.



Opening of the new Scone Race Track

November 1994

The challenge facing the administration of the Race Club will be to transport and/or re-create the special ambience that was such a very special feature of racing at White Park, universally acknowledged by successive generations of patrons.



‘Atmosphere’ at Scone Races



‘Ambience’ at Scone Races

The committee might very well consider the aspirations of Hal Price Headley, on the day before Keeneland opened its 1937 spring meeting, who stated:

‘We want a place where those who love horses can come and picnic with us and thrill to the sport of the (Bluegrass). We are not running a race plant to hear the click of the mutuel machines. We don’t care whether the people who come here bet or not. If they want to bet there is a place for them to do it. But we want them to come out here to enjoy God’s sunshine, the fresh air, and to watch horses race’.

Clearly, in today’s climate, some of that logic is questionable. However, the ideals and principles are highly commendable.

The primary purposes of Keeneland also bear repetition and contemplation in this context:

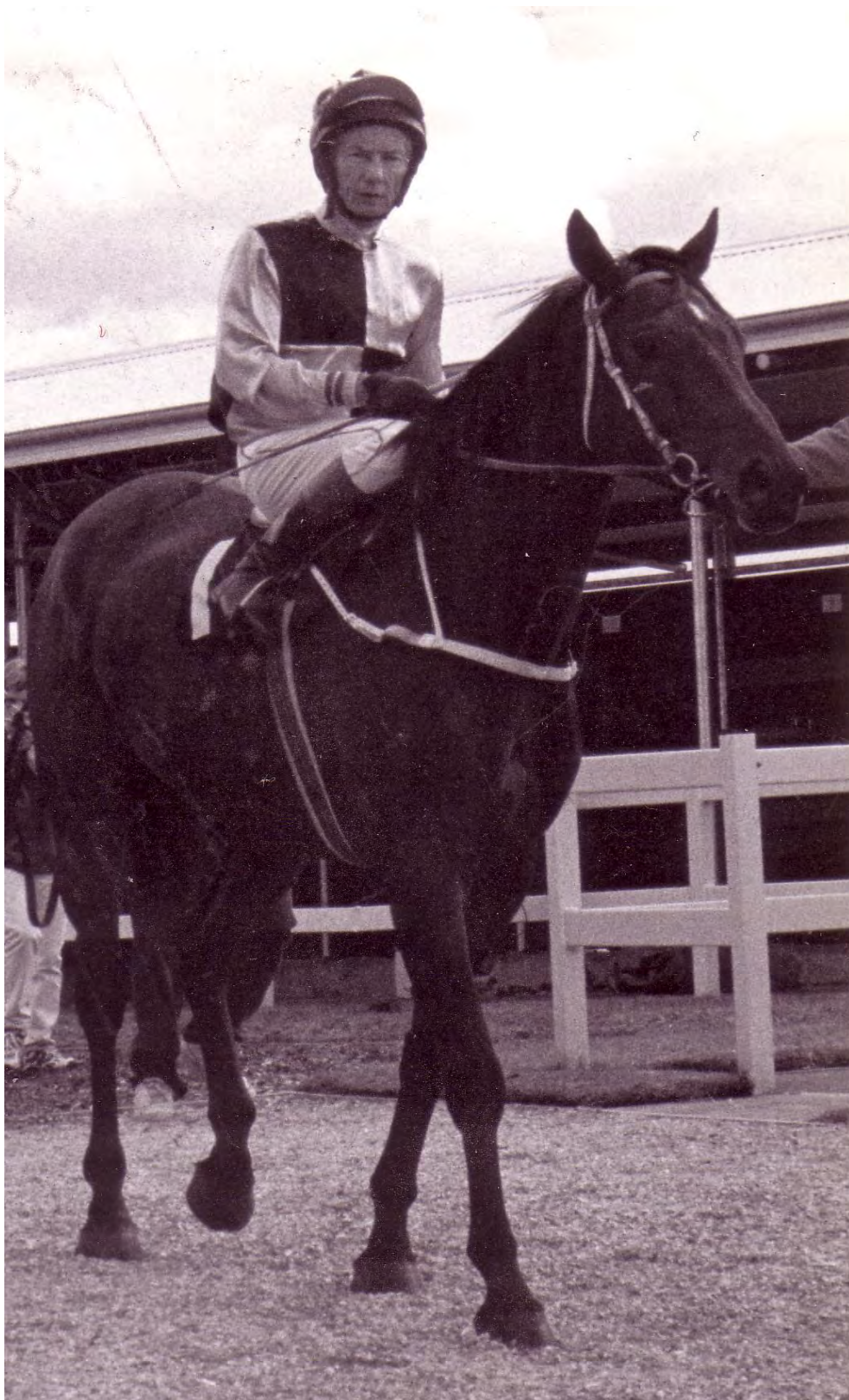
1. Preservation of the finest tradition of the sport of racing
2. Conduct of the world’s most important Thoroughbred sales, and
3. Participation as an active “citizen” in the community and state.

The concept that ‘dreams can be realised’ with sufficient motivation and purpose is to some extent fuelled by the emotions as expressed and quoted in Daniel Morgan’s treatise on ‘The Reality of the Turf ‘ viz:

‘The passion for horses may be ridiculed by persons of narrow mindedness and sedentary lives; but the feeling has ever been characteristic of the most intellectual and powerful races of mankind, and the highest order of literature and art has been inspired by the contemplation of this admirable gift of the creator.’

(Sydney Morning Herald. October 3, 1857)

W.P.Howey. Scone. October 1994



Legendary Lester Pigott on 'Lord Windeyer' 07/04/95



The Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre



August 15 1996 - Construction of the new TAFE

Bill Howey, Bill Rose, Peter Morris MP, Barry Rose and Mike Thew

There were some common themes and personalities in the new development

Murray Bain Service to Industry Award

The Hunter Valley Blood Horse Breeders Association [HVBBA] as it was then known instituted the 'Murray Bain Service to Industry Award' in 1985 at my suggestion and request. This was the beginning of the Brian Agnew era. Darcy Walden was the first recipient in 1985. This was a most memorable occasion at the Scone Bowling Club. Babe Singleton was next in 1986. The major premise was that Murray was a great exponent of the 'working stud groom' and championed their cause. He always impressed on me that: "given the choice of a good stud groom and a good stud vet you take the good stud groom every time"! That put me firmly in my place! Many of his close friends subsequently received the award including Ron Jeffries, Cliff Ellis, George Bowman and Jim Gibson. I think Murray would have approved!

The back ground of the **Perpetual Trophy** relates to the letter from Mace to me and my subsequent response. Channel 10 had used Murray's old original 16mm film 'The Veterinarian on the Stud Farm' [c. 1964/1965] for footage to make the Star Kingdom Video. They offered the munificent sum of \$500:00 as payment of royalties to Mace! We had just formed the Hunter Valley Equine Research Foundation [HVERF] and Mace suggested the money be invested there. I made a 'unilateral executive decision' to put it into something more tangible and telephoned Mace [13/10/88] to request a 'perpetual trophy in honour of Murray'. She agreed. A copy of the original letter from Mace to me is included below with my 'annotations' relating to debate on the 'fate' or ultimate destiny of the \$500:00.

I purchased the trophy for c. \$760:00 and 'made up the differenced myself'. This is the trophy presented each year at the Annual Dinner. The underlying and deeply entrenched principle is the award should be made to a "richly deserving person actively working with 'hands on' in the industry" and not at a safe distance. The President's Award was instituted for other purposes in 1990.

Winners of the Murray Bain Service to Industry Award

1985	Darcy Walden	1994	Reub Cochrane
1986	Babe Singleton	1995	Jack Johnston
1987	Cliff Ellis	1996	John Flaherty
1988	Ron Jeffries	1997	Shona Murphy
1989	Jim Gibson	1998	Billy Neville
1990	Alec Herbert	1999	John Vincent
1991	John Morgan	2000	Angus Campbell
1992	George Bowman	2001	Senga Bissett
1993	Syd Anderson	2002	

The Centurians

I have just returned from my annual vicarious nostalgic and highly emotional 'cricket fix' at the SCG Test early in the New Year. It never ceases to thrill to relive my earliest misty recollections of the SCG and its traditional much fabled 'Yabba's Hill'. As a tiny boy over 50 years ago in far distant rural Northumbria my father regaled me while checking the sheep about the legendary Bradman and the infamous bodyline series with its threat to destroy the Empire. Little did I think then it would be my 'ultimate privilege' to share the experience of an Ashes Test at this iconic halcyon 'whitefella' sacred site! I know this epithet is politically inexpedient but it is part of our white Anglo-Celtic culture: a status also shared (in my lexicon) by Randwick Race Course and the Royal Easter Showgrounds!

I wistfully wander along the remarkable 'walk of fame' suffused by 'whimsical ephemera' to eventually wind my way into the legendary 'long bar' deep in the bosom of the Members Stand between the two team 'dream time' dressing rooms. Here I peruse the massive smoke sullied score boards recording for posterity in minute detail the outcome(s) of the earliest encounters of the 'Inter Colonial' matches between NSW and Victoria. I note with reverence the contribution(s) of one H.J.H ('Tup') Scott for Victoria in the 1870's and 1880's. Dr. Scott was destined to captain the second Ashes touring team to England where he earned the sobriquet for his penchant of riding on London's 'double deckers' for the princely sum of 'tuppence'. A more prurient interpretation is that 'Tup' has long been the local bucolic vernacular for 'Ram' portentous of a rather more 'zesty' proclivity!

Dr. Scott was a native of Toorak but later made his home in Scone NSW. He became a much loved and revered 'GP' unfortunately passing away at the early age of 52 in 1912 due to the ravages of typhus. His memory is honourably enshrined in history with the local hospital bearing his name in perpetuity. His majestic home now functioning as a premier motel is a further totem to his stature. My own 'stately' abode was the home of the other famous resident 'medico' of the time – Dr. Oswald 'Toby' Barton the son of Sir Edmund 'Tosspot Toby' Barton our first Prime Minister.

Of course I was there – when Steve Waugh scored 87 of his 102 runs on the second day! I will be forced to lie forever to my still non-extant grandchildren! I surmised erroneously that with only 6 overs remaining of the day's play he would not score his century tonight! 'I'll be there in the morning' I said! If you leave the SCG slightly earlier than 'stumps drawn' you have a slim chance of exiting the Member's Car Park at Moore Park within 1 hour! I opted for the latter and only just in time to witness the ultimate magic moment on my TV in my sanctuary at the Australian Club in Macquarie Street where 'Invincible' Arthur Morris holds court every evening during the Test! I was in good company! Even twin brother Mark had arrived at the same decision and made his way to Harold Park trots to keep an important punting engagement in company with his Essex (UK) team mate Ronnie Irani!

Undeterred and un-phased by such a 'Nasser-like' equally reckless and disastrous decision I faithfully returned the next day – to witness the dismissal without addition to his overnight score! You can't be right all the time! Although I missed the piquant pinnacle it was still magic to be part of the full-on non-stop electric action at the SCG! Dream-like I sit and blissfully absorb the extra special ambience.

Vicariously I muse as fellow veterinarian Matthew Hoggard trundles in rather raggedly from the Paddington Hill end with a fully fuelled 'barmy army' vociferously cajoling his most sterling efforts. Michael Vaughan also performs exceptionally well.

How come secondary education in Yorkshire County did not produce a similar response in yours truly? Why is it so that one G. Boycott made all the runs of that era? Could it have anything to do with innate ability or am I just another 'cricket tragic' statistic perennially confined to the scrap heap? (You don't have to answer that!) The Prime Minister and I are on equal terms there! I actually met him at a Sydney GPS cricket match when my son was valiantly doing his level best to rescue and restore the dented cricket reputation of the faded and jaded Howey clan!

What has all this to do with the AEVA I hear you ask? What is the sanctimonious 'old flatulent' on about now? Well, there is a somewhat tenuous link! The eclectic Audrey Best was the very first full time paid Executive (Administrative) Officer of the AEVA. Early President Professor Dave Hutchins presciently predicted the AEVA would not progress without our establishing such a position. We picked a big winner in Audrey! I confidently prophesy the present inchoate incumbent Nicola Rose will not only equal but swiftly surpass Audrey in overall excellence! However I digress!

Audrey Best was a native of Nottingham in England. This is the same County which produced the opening bowling pair of the 'bodyline' series in Harold Larwood and Bill Voce. History has recorded how Harold Larwood was later 'ostracised' by the MCC and he subsequently emigrated with his family to live in Australia where he was warmly welcomed by Jack Fingleton and Prime Minister Ben Chifley. John Major saw fit to redress and partly remedy the shameful situation by awarding him the OBE. "Well bowled Harold – at last" screamed the headline in the SMH when Australian Governor Admiral Peter Sinclair presented him with the richly deserved reward! As a mark of respect Audrey and I composed a letter to congratulate him. "The people of Nottingham are very pleased you have been acknowledged" wrote Audrey. When Audrey Best retired I was thrilled to be invited to deliver the address at her valedictory dinner in Sydney. This was the celebrated occasion when many past and present AEVA Presidents seemed to somehow slowly disintegrate and gently disappear by slipping under the table of the excellent Surry Hills host restaurant! The same crew were later to assemble on the balcony of the eatery for a loud raucous rendition of 'For She's A Jolly Good Fellow' as Audrey left by taxi!

I was reminded of all of this when I came across the magnificent 'Larwood' memorabilia tastefully assembled in the striking cricket museum at the SCG. There was the mounted ball presented to Harold by his much maligned 'grateful skipper' Douglas Jardine. With it were his pristine Nottingham County Cricket Blazer and Cap as well as copper plate hand written letters sent by him from Australia to family and friends in England in 1932. Also present were a collage of poignant old daguerreotype photographs redolent of the era including Harold returning to the SCG pavilion having scored a most courageous and ultimately match winning 98 batting at Number 9 in the Sydney Test.



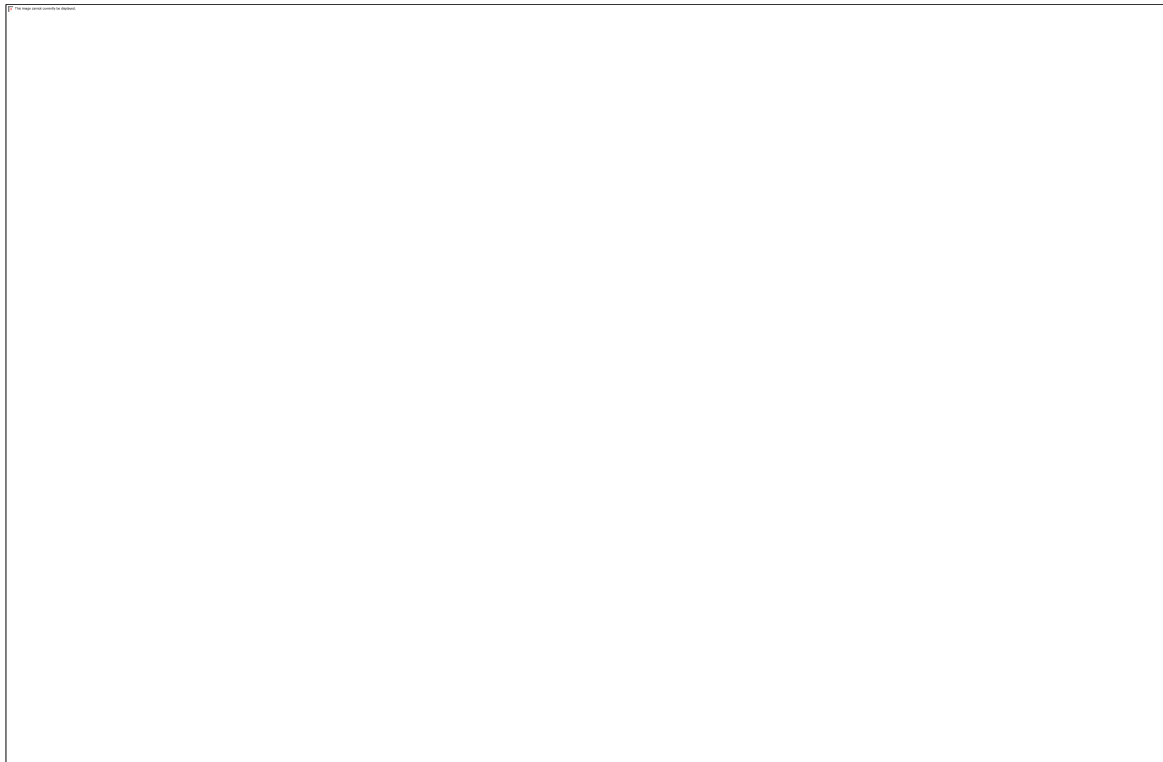
Harold Larwood Nottinghamshire & England



Harold Larwood in action

Bankrupt for inspiration of what to say about Audrey I decided to telephone Harold Larwood at his home in Kingsford easily identified as the only 'Larwood' surname in the Sydney Telephone Directory! After slight initial guarded reluctance from a rightly protective female family member I was able to have a long conversation with the legendary fast bowler! It has been one of the most defining and gratifying moments in my life's experience. I explained my purpose with the hair on the back of my neck standing on end. His accent you could cut with a knife.

Harold was immensely proud of his success in the application of 'leg side theory' (his words) under direction during the Ashes Tour. With 32 wickets at a fraction over 17 runs per wicket was he just far too good? He was equally thrilled with the award made to him by his grateful haughty patrician captain. Everything he remembered had positive reflections! In his rich Nottingham burr undiminished after 50 years expatriation he told me with great dignity (as tears welled in my eyes) of receiving a standing ovation in a tour match at the SCG. The ground was packed to capacity. Initially he thought the crowd were gloatingly celebrating his dismissal. Then it dawned on him the deafening applause was all for him and his heroic efforts! The mob on the hill liked the working class miner from the English midlands and greatly admired his skill. They related to him if not his aristocratic captain. His message for Audrey was to form the nexus of my speech: ***"Tell tha' lass a'll get a 'undred for her next time lad"!*** It was as if that other erudite co-contemporary product of Nottingham D. E. Lawrence had written the script and Paul Morel was uttering the words! He couldn't see it, but the tears really did begin to flow and filter down onto my telephone hand set!



Harold Larwood
Kingsford Sydney

W. P. Howey

Tuesday Boozers Club

The Tuesday Boozers Club (TBC) at the Belmore Hotel was an iconic totem of a bygone era celebrated by a unique cadre of bucolic individuals!



The Belmore Hotel Scone - Spiritual home of the TBC!

For eons of time the weekly Fat Stock Cattle Sale has been held at the various Scone Sale Yard locations every Tuesday of the year barring major public holiday clashes. This became the pilgrimage destination for many outlying farmers and graziers seeking business transactions allied to social interaction with their agents and associates. For some this included well lubricated sessions of discourse in the select bar of the Belmore Hotel with mine hosts Jim and Audrey Cotton at the helm. There were variable sessions of condolence, congratulation, consideration and commiseration. Wives, girlfriends and *de facto*'s were expected to visit and meet with relatives and friends or engage in other social, civic and sporting pursuits for the duration of the sale and aftermath. They could collect their bread winner at the appointed hour for the return journey.

Every Christmas a special dinner was held to cement the year's activities and seal friendships not excluding the long suffering spouses! This was funded in part by contributions to a swear box at 20 cents per expletive! The swear box was Audrey's valiant although not too serious attempt to improve the standard of conversation at the TBC. One day Johnny Del was so exasperated at his inability to adequately express his disgust over a matter of epic proportion he placed \$1 on the bar. "Mrs. Cotton [always a gentleman!]! Here is one dollar in advance: 'F—k, F—k, F—k, F—k, F—k,'"! At 5 x 20 cents Johnny's gremlins were suddenly exorcised in rapid quick fire succession! Coming from a background of Mediterranean ethnicity, Johnny occasionally had trouble with the local vernacular – but not on this occasion!

Reg Watt's niece Rita used to do a wonderful job looking after her precious Uncle. She told me the post-TBC dinners she prepared for him were always special and every one unique! The actual time and timing was negotiable and the guest list uncertain! It could include fellow TBC members and great mates Fred R. from Ardglen or Ray B. from Aberdeen at very short – make that no notice! All were equally welcome and lavishly entertained! True gentleman Fred was always effusive in his apologies to his favourite sobriquet 'Sis' for turning up – yet again – unannounced! Those were indeed the days!

The TBC cabal was an eclectic selection of high mountain men from east of Moonan, the Timor cabal, the Rouchel contingent, the Kars Springs cadre and the Bunnan brigade. "Inside men" including local farmers, business men and most of the agents made up the total cache. Following a suitable "quarantine" incubation period a few "outsiders" were occasionally permitted to join the TBC ranks! The author was one in this category! There was Norm, Roy Mac and the 'Little White Bull'. Tiger, Tom, Tim, Regis, Paul and Bill were there most days and old George from the sale yards. Tom and Paul *et al.* from Dalgety's contributed a regular contingent being closely adjacent to the choice watering hole. Don's garage was a convenient excuse for some to drop by and pretend to be otherwise engaged at Don's party. The 'Galloping Major' (Imp.) added an exotic dimension in the TBC's declining years. English bar maid Sheila's very self-evident exquisite lactation potential might have formed part of the attraction there! There was a subliminal aura of general convivial appreciation of the female pectoral area pervading the TBC! There were a few dairy farmers. They had a very good eye and knew their selection criteria! 'Gentleman Jim' was definitely not on his 'Pat Malone'!



TBC 'Grandmaster' Reg Watts in action on Norm at Rouchel, 1947.

Reg Watts was a renowned lay castrator of colts in the pre-veterinary days of Scone.

No conversation subject was taboo for the group and erudite philosophical discussion expanded in exponential proportion to the lubricant consumed! Ken from Timor was perhaps the TBC's most articulate and eloquent exponent. One day after much tub thumping, breast beating and derisory diatribe about the then egregious state of the pork industry in Australia Ken from Timor made his perennially famous consummation pronouncement! "Gentlemen, there you have it, a carefully considered opinion from a genuine team of experts: Pigs is f----d!" 'PIF' became a catch cry for some TBC members for many years to come! Ken always played a straight bat and portrayed an even straighter face closely allied to a very dry droll laconic humour!

It would not be stretching the truth too far – although veracity had an elastic quality at the TBC – to claim the Australian Stock Horse Society had its genesis if not its nexus at the TBC. Many of the 'good ol' boys' like Wattsy, Tiger, Bert and even honorary blow in Joe Burr from Nundle were very mindful of the impact of the introduction of the American Quarter Horse. They were especially enamoured if not threatened by the slickness of the publicity and marketing machine of the well-oiled importation proponents. They knew they had an equal if not superior product and there was much erudite debate. The outcome was the 'acorn' of an idea to form a local horse society dedicated to the 'Waler'. The Australian Stock Horse Society became the 'great oak tree' and history dictates it emanated from meetings at the RAS Royal Easter Show and in Tamworth. I say it started at the TBC in the Belmore! You don't believe me? Just ask me – and also Tiger, Wattsy, Bert and Joe - if you can find them! I was there. How come I've been the honorary veterinarian since inception?

TBC members expatiated at length on much esoteric and some unique philosophy. The timing of departure was a matter of profound debate and each individual reached his own conclusion, usually allied to perceived meteorology and geography gremlins pertaining to the return journey. Pete from Bunnan adduced it was dangerous to drive into the setting western sun. It was therefore necessary to delay leaving until safe to do so! Naturally the time vacuum could not be adequately filled without further consumption of seven ounces and rum chasers. Time was a precious commodity at the TBC and not to be trifled with or wasted! Brock from Rouchel had a different problem but equal, opposite and apposite solution. He had to be home before the sun rose over the Barrington Tops to the east on Wednesday morning! It was all a matter of good timing and very sound logic at the TBC!

Some Patrician Reflections

I have decided to include the following. It was included in an email I wrote to Kate Mailer, Solicitor as Vice-Chairperson of the Strathearn Village Board. At that stage I was still on the board myself. I hesitated because I mention names. However I think it also portrays how things can go awry in a hurry? I was prescient in my prediction. I resigned from the board in February 2015 anticipating an implosion but unable to influence opinion. I was on my own in thinking this at the time. There was a massive 'blow out' in the project resulting in a hand over to Hammond Care in late spring 2016. Strathearn Village is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Hammond Care. It was formerly community owned. There were fundamental errors in governance especially in financial risk assessment and management.

Email sent: Tue 30/04/2013 2:26 PM

Dear Kate

I wish to augment our brief discussion this morning 22/02/2013 in relation to the Race Club?

I concede it is true the current reception venue is spectacular – but at what cost? I think it is only partly true to hold it up as an example of the 'end justifies the means'? As you are no doubt aware the TB industry thrives on 'meretricious glitz and glamour' where things may be 'visually splendid but functionally deficient'. It's the semblance versus substance debate all over again.

It was during my term of office as Chairman (1978 – 1984) that the Scone Race Club elected to move from White Park. If we did not we could not compete and would eventually immolate. I still believe this was the right decision although I in particular 'copped a lot of flack' at the time.

The evolution of the new race track and public viewing facility is an interesting one to say the least! There were a number of entrepreneurial characters involved. We had just established the Hunter Valley Research Foundation – a DGR/NFP registered charitable trust ostensibly to promote Equine Research. It was based on the original Australian Equine Research Foundation (AERF) with which I was also involved. The money to purchase and develop the Race Track was channelled through the HVERF as the 'owner of the property'. Some very high profile fund raising auctions were held at Black Tie Dinner events in Scone and at the Sebel Town House Hotel in Sydney. They were extremely successful although not without 'taint'! Two small examples are the following. I purchased a Brooks Brothers Mare Crush (now at Clovelly) on behalf of Morgan Howey & Fraser for \$6,000:00. John Brooks had agreed to provide it at cost (c. \$3,000:00) and the HVERF could retain the profit. John is still waiting and was told 'he could easily afford the amount'? John Brooks donated towards Strathearn and he and Betty were there on Sunday (I support his Legacy Widows charity). I also purchased \$1000:00 for a load of hay donated by Lloyd Rossington – I am still waiting for delivery! There was a lot of this sort of 'wheeler dealing by wheeler dealers'!

The considerable sums of money (\$1 million initially to buy the land from Keith Trevan) were paid into a separate account called the HVERF (Segenhoe) Account at Westpac Scone. I was inaugural honorary secretary/treasurer of the HVERF but was not a signatory of this account. Twice I had to answer to the Australian Securities Commission (ASC then) about matters over which I had no knowledge or control. I still have the letters of enquiry.

The auditors seemed to say OK but I do not agree – I still maintain to this day that the transactions were strictly illegal. The signatories included Brian Agnew (Lawyer), David Bath, Tony Bott and Bill Rose. There may have been others?

I never actually saw the statements of this account. Significantly three of these protagonists are no longer in the Valley and only Corporate Lawyer Brian Agnew has thrived and invested very well in the wine industry at Pokolbin. He basically failed in the TB industry. David is sadly living in a rented one bedroom unit in Rose Bay. Tony is 'managing' a rather dubious foreign owned TB establishment at Raymond Terrace.

The land for the race track was 'given' to the Race Club by the HVRF (NFP charitable trust remember!) at a 'peppercorn rent of \$1 per annum for 99 years renewable after that time'. The land has now been signed over lock, stock and barrel to the Scone Race Club.

The construction of the 'Public Viewing Facility' (the NSW TAB did not support the construction of grand stands) was the subject of a massive funding overrun. In round figures we had \$1 million allocated to build a building. Two models were presented one of which was submitted by Steve Tilse. The other is the one we have – at a cost of c. \$4.5 million! I actually asked the question at the time and was assured that the Scone Race Club was a progressive club and we would have the Tony Bott model 'which could be built for \$1 million'. They were the same design and construct team who had built the new buildings at Segenhoe Stud – now Vinery! It was then owned by Tony Bott – maybe? There are many rumours! All sorts of loans and deals were enacted to enable the project to be completed. The end result was a crippling debt to the Race Club for over 20 years which was only recently liquidated. These loans came from the TAB and were very similar although not identical to our ZRIL. As farmers well know all debts have to be repaid. Helen Sinclair and Noel Leckie deserve a lot of the credit for the rescue which has been possible thanks to the proceeds of the massive 'charity' auctions of donated goods and services in the main marquee on Cup Day. Other Committee men mostly associated with the Studs have also done well.

I further concede that all this would never have been brought to fruition without the significant input of 'colourful racing identities! To some extent that still applies today. They share one trait in common – they are very cavalier with other people's money! It's the gambling instinct. Enough said! I still have the plans for the Steve Tilse design which is based on a pavilion which I much preferred. Today it would cost c. \$2 million and was at the time well within the allocated \$1 million.

Brain 'ego' Agnew was also responsible for the massive cost overrun in building the Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre building. It took us almost 20 years to dispel this debt thanks mainly to some 'charity' from Geoff White and sale of land to Inglis, TAFE etc. The five original subscribers (\$25,000:00 guarantor each) were Brain Agnew, David Bath, Tony Bott, Bill Howey and Bill Rose. The Race Club was very similar though not identical.

Message

Kate you will see I am a bit jittery and nervous of doing the right thing with Public Funds and DGR/NFP registered charitable trusts! I am also very wary of unforeseen or unanticipated cost overruns? I think we have the potential for two on Gundy Road – the double story RACF and access road works!

Although I agree the new Race Club Facility looks and feels very nice it only provides for a very small niche market and is arguably money not well spent for the general good? Much of this was money from the public purse – though not all by any means. I think my message to you is don't be deceived by all you see – especially in the TB industry! I hope you will take this on board in good faith and in the spirit intended? I am one of only very few people still around who has lived through these various scenarios.

Kind regards

Pious Bill

Climate Change and the Australian Thoroughbred Industry*

OK I freely admit this is totally plagiarised (see reference below) but I think it is highly relevant to the UHSC and our unique marquee industry. I write it because of my special interest and lifelong but fading professional commitment to this area and its traditional production base. It may be a bit 'technical' and sound like I am spinning the same old fine vinyl gramophone record? Rest assured all the following are taken into consideration by your UHSC before arriving at any recommendation or decision? They are certainly of concern. It is the majority prescient view of our region and its totem industry in particular. The world's climate is changing – anthropogenic or not. Global atmospheric change, alterations in regional weather patterns and increased frequency of severe weather events combined with an expanding and demanding human population are threatening the sustainability of various animal industries, including the numerous equine industry branches. Limitations on land, water, feed and the ecological changes that result from climatic change will force governments and industries to take proactive or reactive measures to enable adaptation and mitigation for the good of industries and the communities at large into the 21st century. As the Australian Horse Breeding and Racing Industry is not immune to the potential deleterious effects of climate change, proactive measures need to be instigated in order to protect and maintain it in the face of the challenge.

The initial steps in designing mitigation and adaptation strategies are to assess the specific vulnerability of the industry to climate change. Climate change threats include changes in infectious and non-infectious disease patterns. Specific threats include the likely increase in insect-borne diseases in Southern Australia, an increased likelihood of wildlife-borne diseases as a result of environmental encroachment, and increases in respiratory diseases and potentially orthopaedic and developmental diseases as land becomes barren and nutrient deficient. Increased risks of weather extremes and limitations on available land and water usage may negatively impact upon the industry through losses in training days, heat stress and suboptimal track maintenance, all factors that may deleteriously impact upon the athletic performance of the horse and the viability of race meetings. Seasonal changes may also impact upon breeding and fertility; although warmer condition should enhance fertility this may be counteracted by extreme weather stressors and potential limitations on feed and water. The impact upon breeding may be further compounded in the Thoroughbred industry by the tightly regulated breeding seasons.

In light of government driven climate change mitigation strategies aimed at minimising carbon emission through carbon trading and tax schemes, it's important that the racing industries carbon footprint is evaluated promptly. The emissions related to stud farms, racing stables and race meetings need to be evaluated by the industry. Activities such as international horse travel by air for both breeding and racing purposes may be contributing significantly to the industry's carbon emission and may attract attention from government and public climate change lobbyists, given that modifications may result in immediate climate change mitigation benefits. The industry needs to be prepared to tackle, modify or justify activities which may be seen as significantly contributors to carbon emission. Evaluating the industry's carbon footprint and the activities within that contribute to it is an important step in facilitating industry justified rather than public preserved climate change mitigation strategies.

Ultimately, the Australian Horse racing industry will be forced to adapt to climate change or mitigate its activities for the public good. This will occur either as a result of internal educated decisions based on scientific and economic evaluation of activities and vulnerabilities with the desired outcomes benefiting both our racing horses and the community, or in response to external government and public forces. The industry needs to decide whether its response is proactive or reactive, with a proactive response starting with industry participants acknowledging an awareness of climate change and the need to tackle climate change issues as an integral component of a sustainable and prosperous Australian racing industry into the 22nd century. I feel we at the UHSC are apprised and fully aware of the purported risks and have already moved proactively in assessing the impacts of extractive industries and new renewable energy technologies in our LGA region. It begs the fundamental question: 'What is the carbon hoof print of our celebrated industry'?

Reference*: *G. Muscatello (Faculty of Veterinary Science) and P. K. Knight (School of Medical Science), University of Sydney, NSW 2006*

I thought this is enough about 'Reflections'; so I added another chapter. I called Chapter XIII 'Potpourri'. I think it fits?

Ageing in Place

OK I'll try to be more specific! Remember my core promise? I'd like to bring you up to speed on the next generation Strathearn Village formerly known as the Upper Hunter Village Association. During the second half of last century there was at least one celebrated citizen of exceptional merit in our community. There would be universal agreement about the late lamented Dr. Walter Osmond Pye. He was a genuine visionary well before his time. He presciently recognized the rapidly emerging need for extensive and advanced aged care health services. His underpinning philosophy included the following medical and social aphorisms:

"People should be able to remain amongst their friends and their workmates, hopefully close to their family, their doctor, their clubs, their pub, friendly trades-people and neighbours where they are known".

"People living far out of country towns would need to be cared for in the towns (hostel or villa) where the auxiliary services are available".

"Remember the height of any civilization can be judged by the manner in which they care for their aged. This community must rank high".

"In retrospect it would seem that the greatest and kindest care would be the ability to enable people to be able to die peacefully and quietly in their own home and to supply the comfort and care required to do so".

We at Strathearn are committed to the enhancement, enrichment and embellishment of Dr. Pye's original grand vision. Our mission is to provide housing, care and support options enabling aging individuals to lead the lifestyle of their choice. As custodians of well 'past-their-used-by' date mature stock, Government regulations and accreditation requirements have impressed upon us the need for major upgrade of facilities appropriate for the needs of discerning residents of the 21st century. We aim to provide a superb new Residential Aged Care Facility on our own 'greenfield' site yet to be secured with up to 44 Independent Living Units constructed in a series of four developments in close proximity. We offer you a choice: graciously aging in your own pristine space or maturing disgracefully in the place of your choosing!

This is your organisation! We are a community owned not-for-profit charity. Our decision to relocate means we have claimed our own territory for posterity where formerly we were tenants of the Hunter New England Area Health Service (State Government). I unreservedly commend your Board and senior staff headed by new CEO Matt Downie who have toiled unceasingly to bring this about from a quite precarious base a few short years ago. Very soon we will launch our Fund Raising Campaign. This is a \$25 million project which will maintain current and create new employment in trying times. It is a massive undertaking not entered into lightly! We are supremely confident we have done our homework thoroughly and obtained the very best professional advice? We are the Trustees of the **Strathearn Village Public Fund** which means that any donations are tax deductible and your money stays in the Upper Hunter! You will hear much more of all this later as events unfurl.

W. P. H. 02/08/09

Courage Under Fire

(aka Leadership)

(With acknowledgements to Mr. Stuart Guihot - aged 11 at the time)

I did say I'd pontificate on leadership? By the time you see this you will have passed judgment on your latest representatives in the corridors of power at 106 Liverpool Street? I will be in Africa with the other 'wildlife'! Late last year I was placed under the microscope! A young gentleman aspiring to a leadership role in forthcoming Year 6 at his primary school asked me for an interview on the subject. 'Aspirational leadership' sounds a bit like John Winston Howard – but I think we'll leave it there! I was staggered but recovered sufficiently and just in time to purview the issue. It was just before a major national election when in his words 'eligible people vote for a leader of their community and our country'. The young man sought guidance on what might be some of the qualities that the people will be looking for in the leader that they choose? I tried 'not to be chicken and play possum' and we discussed the premise. We arrived at the following case scenario.

Leadership is many things and is described in many different ways. It can be a very difficult, complex but meaningful thing to understand. We identified a number of qualities of a good leader including: Strength to stand up for what you believe in and not necessarily trying to be the most popular one: Leading by example - be prepared to **do** what you suggest for the community: But of greatest importance and value is honesty – honesty at all times in everything you do.

We considered three people whom we admired as good leaders; Captain James Cook, our first Prime Minister Sir Edmund Barton and Sir Donald Bradman. In these inspiring leaders we felt they all possessed similar qualities: Fairness: Determination: They all came from humble backgrounds (although this was not necessarily why they were great leaders but perhaps they had a better experience of the real world): They were honest: They were passionate about what they believed in: They all had vision - they wanted to leave the world a better place for future generations. After discussion we agreed that we can feel overwhelmed by the fact that being a leader isn't necessarily as easy as people think?

"I went on a search to become a leader. I searched high and low. I spoke with authority, people listened. But at last there was one who was wiser than I and they followed him. I sought to inspire confidence but the crowd responded, "Why should we trust you?" I postured and I assumed the look of leadership with a countenance that glowed with confidence and pride. But the crowd passed by and never noticed my air of elegance. I ran ahead of the others pointing new ways to new heights. I demonstrated that I knew the route to greatness. And then I looked back and I was alone. "What shall I do?" I queried. "I've tried hard and used all that I know." And then I listened to the voices around me. And I heard what the group was trying to accomplish. I rolled up my sleeves and joined in the work. As we worked I asked, "Are we all together in what we want to do, and how we'll get the job done?" And we thought together and we struggled towards our goal. I found myself encouraging the faint hearted. I sought the ideas of those too shy to speak out. I taught those who knew little at all. I praised those who worked hard. When our task was completed, one of the group members turned to me and said, "This would not have been done but for your leadership." At first I said, "I did not lead, I just worked with the rest." And then I understood – leadership isn't a goal. I lead best when I forget about myself as a leader and focus on my group, their needs and their goals. To lead is to serve, to give, to achieve together. (Author Unknown; Gold Nuggets. 1990)

Thank you Stuart! I have one more question for you. Do good leaders encourage leadership to flourish? The late Mayor Barry Rose was an ardent devotee of Harness Racing. He would have been very familiar with the great NZ pacer 'Courage Under Fire'? The name, the performance and the horse just say it all! He embraced all the admirable qualities to which we would aspire. Barry would have approved. Mind you he was a gelding – the horse not Barry!

Cr. W. P.Howey