

The Infinite History of Veterinary Practice in Scone



Andrew Murray Bain

By

W. P. Howey

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this book in infinite perpetuity to:

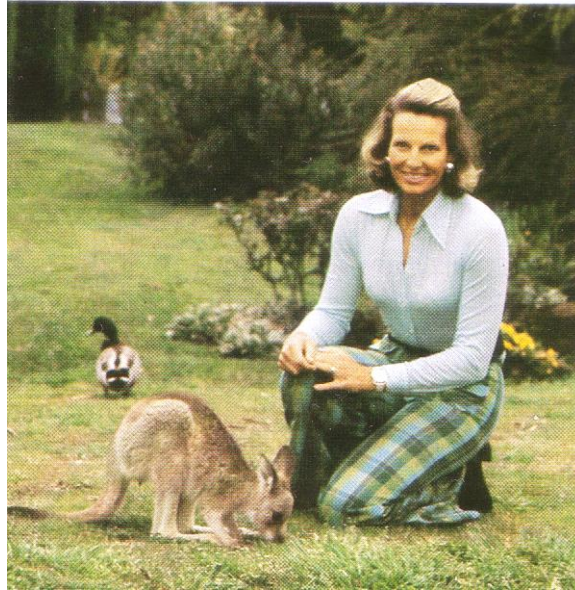
Morag and Fiona

And their families

W. P. Howey
Author

Foreword

Judy White



Photograph by Max Easton courtesy of Judy White

The district of Scone is situated in the Upper Hunter Valley of northern New South Wales. For over fifty years the region has prided itself for having congenial relationship between the medical practice (for humans) and the veterinary clinic (for animals). The doctors in the medical practice and the scientists in the veterinary clinic have, over the five decades, worked on friendly terms. However, in the early 1960s Dr. Walter Pye took me to one side, and, confidentially, expressed his concern and said: “I hear there has been some fluttering of feathers in the veterinary dovecote!” He was referring to the split in the veterinary partnership between the resident Frank Williams and the new Scot, Murray Bain.

In 1965 Bill Howey, the author of this book, was in his final year at the University of Edinburgh when he heard Murray Bain deliver a paper. He sat spell-bound throughout the presentation, did not meet Murray, but decided to migrate to Australia and join the Scone practice. Bill is, therefore, the perfect researcher to compile the history of the Scone Veterinary Practice from 1949 until the present day. He has naturally given a biographical detail of his hero and progenitor, Murray Bain. In the early 1960s Bain led the world in his knowledge and experience of infertility in thoroughbred brood-mares. Bain’s wife, Mace, meticulously kept all the records of his research in the equine field and, these archives, later proved to be invaluable when Murray died, at an early age, in 1974.

Howey has cleverly combined the academic achievements of the veterinary scientists practicing in Scone with many anecdotal asides. This is a history of individuals and their contribution mainly to the equine industry. Murray Bain was a colourful character. He loved to dance and was usually the first on the dance floor and the last to go home. New Years Eve was a ritual at Tinagroo when the haggis was piped in and Murray would get his dirk out of his sock and recite Robbie Burns' "Ode to a Haggis". He also loved the local environment and was responsible for much of the tree-planting along the roads.

The lay-out of this book *The Infinite History of Veterinary Practice in Scone* is perhaps unique. One has to really divulge the 'Testimonial Tributes', the 'Anecdotal Reflections' and, as Howey confesses, the 'Unreliable Anecdotes'! But it is also a scholarly exercise with meticulous research combine with much photographic material, which richly enhances this book.

It is this type of information into the action behind the scenes and the personalities involved in equine research and the veterinary practice that helps to justify Scone as being the Horse Capital of Australia. I congratulate the author. The history of the horse industry in the Hunter Valley is a particular interest of mine and I have been sincerely honoured to have been invited to write this foreword.

Judy White

Judy White AM PhD
Belltrees

Acknowledgements

It's been a long time coming – and even longer in the making!

The concept for this 'history' has been multi-factorial and eventually it's happened. I am indebted to Judy White for writing the foreword and also for providing some of the impetus and acting as a catalyst for its production. As Judy well knows writing is no easy task! However Judy is ideally suited to provide objective commentary on the unfolding scenario having lived the era and known its original protagonists. Additionally she has an almost incestuous if not nepotistic relationship to the profession with a son-in-law as a member of the cadre.

There are hundreds if not thousands of people I would like to or should thank for assisting me in this 'Herculean' task! Does that sound like hyperbole? Well, hype at least! Perhaps I should 'begin at the beginning' which is a good place to start something and work forward while hoping and praying not to miss anyone! This is of course impossible and I offer my profound, sincere and abject apology if any person has been inadvertently slighted in any way! I assure you it is by error rather than by design. Then of course there might be some who would rather not have been included in the pantheon and might have chosen omission if given the choice and then there are those who would be greatly relieved by exclusion!

The inspiration came initially from my professional association with the two major pioneer protagonists Andrew Murray Bain and Frank Leslie Williams. Judy White provided impetus by requesting a contribution to what would have been a 'Bicentennial Book' in 1988! It's only taken twenty years approximately Judy! John Reginald George Morgan and Richard Nairn Fraser may never have consciously perceived themselves in 'inspiring mode' but they both did well to stay alive during 'construction'. Jackie Druery painstakingly typed the original hand written manuscript of my interview with Frank Williams in 1986 which provided the background to the discourse. I gratefully acknowledge her superlative hieroglyphic deciphering dexterity as well as her immaculate typing skills. Jeannie Crawford and Carolind Pike/Strong were both willingly forthcoming when asked for information and are themselves 'pioneers' in their field. I am greatly indebted to close friends and racing journalists in the late Bert Lillye and extant Brian Russell for their writings on Murray in particular by the former and myself by the latter! I promise this was not the journalistic equivalent of 'cash for comment'! Where I have 'plagiarized, plundered or purloined' from other usually more erudite sources this is duly acknowledged. Some of the views expressed are 'subjective' but I accept total responsibility for anything and everything printed and/or published. I wish to thank and acknowledge Cathy and 'The Scone Advocate' for their combined contribution.

The following people are also included in no particular chronology, clandestine pecking order or value ranking: Ross and Paul Williams, Mace, Morag and Fiona Bain, John Morgan, Julie Rose, David Warden, Anne Quain/Fawcett, Shona Murphy, Ron Jeffries, Harley Walden, Cliff Ellis, Archie and Betty Shepherd, Bev Adams, Don Scott, John and Doug Bryden, Pat and Frank Farrell, Tim Henderson, Jim and Shirley Gibson,

Cathy Finlayson, George Bowman, Lorraine Skinner, David Bath, Alan Simson, Mark Wylie, Jamie Barnes, the late 'Bim' Thompson, Tom and Audrey Payne, Nan Tooth, John Paradice, Alan Anderson, Chris Winter, Rita Newman, Helen Sinclair, Treve Williams, Tom Hungerford, Hilton Cope, 'Carrot' Bowen, 'Blue' Brotherton, Trish Searle, The Scone Advocate, The Thoroughbred Press and, The Australian Bloodhorse Review. Lastly I owe an unencumbered debt of gratitude to my lovely wife of over 30 years Sarah who has not only endured my irascibility for that long but also the internecine vicissitudes of this prolonged production!

Inevitably there are rudiments of autobiographical subjectivity, solipsism and sophistry but I have tried to limit 'talking about self' and describe the 'bigger picture'.

W. P. Howey 01/01/06

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Summary

History of Veterinary Practice in Scone

Established veterinary practice in Scone embraces a period of over 50 years beginning in 1949/1950. Prior to that time there had been a number of visiting veterinarians who travelled from Sydney and serviced the needs of a few established thoroughbred studs, notably Kia Ora and Widden. One of these early peripatetic pioneers was Major Norman Larkin from Bondi Junction, who originally came to Widden after graduation in the mid 1930s. After war service he recommenced his journeys to the Upper Hunter and with admirable prescience recognised an emerging window of opportunity to provide a local service in the area. In 1949 he appointed army colleague Frank Williams as the inaugural incipient veterinarian located in Scone. NZ based Scots graduate Murray Bain had delivered a scientific paper at the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) conference in Sydney in 1948 and also came to the area. He returned in 1950 to join Norman Larkin and Frank Williams in partnership. For geographic and other reasons this tenuous union did not last and Murray and Frank struck out on their own account soon to be joined by recent Kiwi Sydney Graduate Jack Francis. Jack was initially employed as private veterinarian at Sledmere Stud. The Bain, Williams and Francis era was to endure and dominate for almost 25 years although not as a single entity or with a unique identity. The second era may be loosely defined as the Morgan/Howey/Fraser entity of the last quarter of the century.

In the early 1960s John Bryden and Treve Williams (later Australian Jockey Club (AJC) Chairman) joined the team subsequently to sequestre into two units: Bain and Partners and Williams and Francis. The former concentrated on thoroughbred stud and cattle work while the latter dealt primarily with dairy and beef cattle as well as stud and other horses. For a brief period in the mid 1960's Murray Bain and Percy Sykes of Randwick formed a union as Sykes, Bain and Partners in an attempt to marry thoroughbred stud and stable practice. The union was short lived and a somewhat acrimonious divorce ensued! Murray found himself as divorcee 'in limbo' when John and Treve elected to join Percy in Sydney. Peter Beiers was with Murray from 1965 – 1967 before pursuing other veterinary interests and later a career in medicine. With commendable foresight and brilliant strategic planning Murray established the first private rural veterinary diagnostic laboratory in Australia in Scone in 1965. Shona Murphy arrived from NZ via Camden to fill the new position at the clinical pathology facility. Male domination of the varying facets of veterinary practice was to be progressively challenged from this time ultimately culminating in the reverse situation extant today! Until this time veterinary practice in all its facets other than administration was almost 100% male dominated. The pendulum has swung in the inchoate 21st century to an approximate 80% female majority.

While all this was happening to Murray, Frank and Jack attracted first EFA and 1964 Tokyo Olympic veterinarian Norman Judge and 'new' graduate Angus Cunningham to their 'opposition' team. Norman left for the USA from 1968 – 1970 and Geoff Adams arrived from the Riverina as his replacement. Dr. John Egloff from the USA provided seasonal assistance while resident at Widden. Jack Francis returned to Sydney essentially to secure better secondary education for his young family. Angus also set off for greener pastures initially in Armidale and later rural Victoria. Marshall Thornton was employed as 'ingénue' veterinarian by Frank and Geoff to fill the gap left by their departing professional colleagues.

With strong nepotistic family connections David Parry-Okeden arrived soon after graduation as resident veterinarian at Widden while also fulfilling his obligations as a conscripted national serviceman in Papua New Guinea. The Widden Valley always features very prominently in any discussion involving veterinary practice in Scone although the practice headquarters shifted within town from Liverpool/Main Street to Chivers, Main Street, Kelly Street, 'The Top Block' and back to Liverpool Street (two locations).

Meanwhile Murray was pursuing a new strategy of employing imported ('shuttle') veterinarians from the UK mainly from his *alma mater* the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College of the University of Edinburgh. Beginning with Murray and for over 50 years veterinary graduates from this venerable academic institution have been working continuously in Scone. There have been as many as four at once at varying times. James Crouch from Newmarket spent the 1967 spring breeding season in Scone supported by a Horse Race Betting Levy Board Scholarship (UK). Bill Howey and Richard Greenwood also arrived at this time. Bill was to stay while Richard subsequently returned to a stellar career in Newmarket, UK. John Morgan 'shuttled' from that location in 1968 and emigrated permanently with his family in 1969. First Tony Parker and then Nairn Fraser with Warren McLaren made up the 'Bain Team'. The first female employees were Wendy Paul/Miller/Lapointe (locum 1971) and then Sue McCubbery (Assistant 1973). Angus Campbell also joined the fray at this time. Current Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science (PGFVS) Director Michele Cotton was the initial female undergraduate student. Murray had a distinct proclivity for young, nubile, attractive and alluring lascivious females! Murray's untimely and tragic early death in March 1974 heralded the next significant era of veterinary practice during the ultimate quarter of the twentieth century.

The Morgan/Howey/Fraser partnership endured from 1974 for most of the remainder of the dwindling century. Recognising the folly of prolonged vituperation Frank Williams was invited to rejoin the 'new union' and rapprochement followed although Geoff Adams remained independent. Many outstanding veterinarians including Bill Stewart, Jamie Barnes, Alan Simson, Paul Adams, Nigel Scott, Mark Wylie and Jim Rodger enlarged, enriched and enhanced the team from this time. Many of these were also 'reverse shuttle' veterinarians who returned or recycled to the Northern Hemisphere and were in great demand in practices and studs in Ireland, England, France and the USA notably Lexington, Kentucky. At about this time the practice reached its geographical zenith with regular services being provided from the Horton Valley, Barraba in the north to Kulnura, Central Coast in the south. This is about equivalent to the full geographical extent of England. The western extremity began to contract from Mudgee and Coolah as veterinary services became available from these locations. In the late 1980's, when the number of brood mares in the Australian Stud Book (ASB) peaked at about 48,000, the Morgan/Howey/Fraser partnership had on its books more thoroughbred mares than there were in England and Ireland combined at about 10,000. The practice also supplied services to Lawn Hill Station (owned by the Mackay family) in the Gulf Country when the BTEC scheme was operational. Sue McCubbery spent a hectic winter in the north in 1974. International contributions (Nigel Scott) were made in Papua New Guinea on behalf of the 'Rosemount' interests of Bob Oatley. Jim Rodger also worked as a locum in PNG.

One other by-product of this period of growth was to help in repelling the very real possibility that Mudgee would evolve as the acknowledged centre of thoroughbred breeding in NSW and Australia. This situation was very much in the balance with the egress of some major national and international breeding establishments in the Mudgee/Gulgong area. One impediment to the universal acceptance of this development was the relative 'minority' of veterinary services close to the action around Mudgee. The other 'portent of doom' successfully resisted was the assumption that private (on stud) veterinarians would prevail. While most major thoroughbred breeding operations retain one or more employed veterinarians there is still the great need - and demand - for specialist services provided only by large cooperative practices. This situation is equivalent to that found in the other major thoroughbred breeding regions throughout the globe and one suspects it is here to stay.

Scone Veterinary Hospital was to emerge from this period of unprecedented growth in the thoroughbred breeding industry as the largest veterinary practice in Australia (and indeed one of the biggest in the world) and one of the elite of its type on an international scale. While a 'break away' practice evolved at Satur, Scone Veterinary Hospital consolidated its global position providing expert services in surgery, imaging diagnostics, intensive foal care as well as all other facets of rural veterinary practice. Concomitant with the embellishment of veterinary services has been the emergence of astral careers in equine veterinary nursing. Beginning with pioneer Jeannie Crawford there has been a long succession of outstanding nursing practitioners with eclectic skills. Again the established principle of 'dual hemisphere shuttle' has accelerated the development of these 'new age' professionals including Carolind Strong (*nee* Pike) and Sascha McWilliam. Administration, management and supervision also endured the pangs of drastic expansion, revision and technology overhaul. Lorraine Skinner, Marge Gillett, Jackie Druery and Jan Brabant were solid foundation rocks on which the administration governance edifice was constructed. John Flaherty's unique combination of skills enabled the gradual evolution of the bricks and mortar construction component to flourish under his expert tutelage. The companion animal specialist area demanded more detailed attention from the time visiting shuttle veterinarian spouse Helen Eaton-Evans developed this sector in the 'Jubilee Clap' season of 1977. Her successors have been Patricia Wilkinson/Carney and notably Jenny Jenkins. Facilities for companion animal care have evolved in 25 years from non-existent (ridiculous) to superlative (sublime).

The final decile of the 20th Century heralded the era of increasing specialisation. Equine surgery was the great growth spectacular where there are now several specialist equine surgeons operating in pristine facilities. There used to be none. The largest neonatal intensive foal care unit in the Southern Hemisphere evolved at Clovelly Stables with Karon Hoffmann the initial driving force. Catherine Chicken and latterly Jane Axon have nurtured the 'baby giant' into its current pre-eminent position. This spectacular growth could not have happened without a concomitant rise in the evolution of specialist veterinary nurses and/or foal care attendants. At all times the unit at Clovelly has been supported by an annual influx of equally dedicated professionals from northern climes mainly the USA, Ireland and the UK.

At the time of writing (January 2006) there have been approximately 180 veterinarians operating short or long-term in Scone over a 50+year period from 1950. At present there are some 30+ veterinarians employed at various locations under the Scone Veterinary Hospital banner, including Denman. Many are specialists in their field. This figure does not include those engaged in private practice at Satur Veterinary Clinic or individuals employed on local studs. The cohort today is vastly different to the hard working, fast driving, hard playing, fast living and hard drinking good old 'rugger buggers' of yesteryear! The gender, generic and genetic core has endured a paradigm shift from the 'good old boys'. In a report I wrote for the 20th anniversary of the Scone Rugby Union Club in 1986 I counted as many as 20 veterinarians who had represented the club as players many of whom excelled such as Bill Stewart who captained the zone. In 2005 I doubt if there was one sole player but I may be wrong? Neil McRea says the last veterinarian to represent Scone was Don Crosby in about 1990.



Scone Rugby Club Premiers 1975

The three veterinarians are Angus Campbell, Coach (front left), Bill Stewart (back, with bow tie and 'mo') and Jamie Barnes (front, third from left).

There is no doubt veterinary practice and veterinarians in Scone have had enormous social, scientific, sporting, economic and cultural impact on the community, town and district as a whole. It is not inconceivable that over a fifty-year period veterinary practice has contributed in excess of \$120 million to local coffers and this figure is rising exponentially. This has come from income generated via thoroughbred clientele resident intrastate, interstate and internationally. Because so many veterinarians have come from so far they have imported with them rich diversity with lasting edifying and intellectual legacies for posterity. These will endure for as long as their superlative skills and expert services are required. The veterinary industry has emerged as one of the major businesses in the town and district and a 'jewel in the crown'. I think it is fair to claim that health services available for animals in 2005 might even challenge or rival those offered in human care. This could not have been claimed in 1950! Having outgrown its present premises the vast new expansion heralded for Scone Veterinary Hospital in 2006-2007 is the harbinger of the next great era!

While at all times (hopefully) portraying the real picture in this treatise I have attempted as far as possible to separate the substance from the semblance, the esoteric from the exoteric, the exquisite from the egregious and the meritorious from the meretricious.



Scone Rugby Club Premiers 1976

Captain/Coach Bill Stewart (middle front) and Jamie Barnes on his left
Perennial student and eventual veterinarian George Dellar is second from the right in the
back row. Angus Campbell is third from left in the middle row.



Sydney University First Grade Premiers 1937

Bill Stewart's veterinarian father Jack, from New Zealand, (seated, far right) represented Sydney University First XV in its halcyon premiership winning teams in the late 1930's.

He was one of very many Kiwi veterinary students (four in this team) to do so before Massey. Is this Rugby dynasty era gone forever?

The Definitive History of Veterinary Practice in Scone and the Upper Hunter

‘Nomius Nexus’ and/or ‘Hippomedon Hyperbole’

(Gr. Mythology: Nomius = ‘Guardian of the Flocks’. Hippomedon = ‘Lord of Horses’)

Having deliberated on the name I have decided on ‘The Infinitive History of Veterinary Practice in Scone’. In this context I invoke and adduce ‘infinitive’ as an adjective (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English) and pertaining to ‘boundless, endless or very great’ because it is only the beginning! The ‘definitive’ content is based largely on the memory of the late Frank Williams (and others) and I trust is factually accurate. I had toyed with the idea of ‘Nomius Nexus’ where ‘Nomius’ is ‘guardian of the flocks’ in profound Greek mythology and ‘nexus’ is a ‘bond, link or connection’. I also toyed with ‘Hippomedon Hyperbole’ where ‘Hippomedon’ is ‘lord of horses’ and ‘hyperbole’ is just that – exaggerated! There are elements of both. I felt the former related more to Frank Williams and the latter to Murray Bain! There are elements of ‘hagiography’ especially in favour of Murray.

This is the accurate chronology of the history of veterinary practice in Scone as resourced from the various interviews, letters, press cuttings and reflections. I vouchsafe for its purity and occasionally equivocate about its veritable veracity! I think it is pretty well right! I have called it ‘definitive’ in that it defines the people, the time and the places. The rich tapestry surrounding the bigger picture is encapsulated elsewhere within the ‘infinitive’ boundaries. (Tautology? Oxymoron?)

Background

Fortuitously and perhaps presciently I recorded the following interview with then extant colleague Frank Williams on February 26, 1987. I had conceived the idea of recording for posterity a history of veterinary service in the Scone area and this was further promulgated by Judy White’s suggestion for a ‘Bicentenary Book’ to be published in time for celebrations in 1988. It has been a very long incubation period and prolonged confinement! Let’s hope the eventual ‘birth’ and delivery makes it all worthwhile! It was painfully evident that Frank’s good health was waning at this time and this fact expedited the importance of recording in some form the anecdotal reflections of someone who had seen it all and ‘lived the life’. Frank was just the person and I dedicate this portion to the memory of this fine man and his family. His great personal contribution and sacrifice is acknowledged elsewhere.

I did not use a tape recorder and wrote down in hurried barely legible long hand the essential elements of our conversation. I turned for assistance not for the first time to exquisite typist Jackie Druery who laboriously and painstakingly deciphered the mass of barely intelligible hieroglyphics. Frank was invited to edit the product and did so also making further additions, subtractions and adding some embellishments. I supplied this ‘concatenated’ document to one time employee Cathy Finlayson when she worked as a journalist. The content formed the background for Cathy’s article which appeared as a

supplement to 'The Scone Advocate' and published on Thursday, August 29, 1996. Cathy's title was: 'A History of Care for All Creatures Great and Small' which has a nice heroic 'James Herriott' ring to it. It encompassed the history and also a detailed descriptor of Scone Veterinary Hospital at that time.

The adaptation appearing here uses unedited comments originally related by Frank but 'retrieved' by him or me on further deliberation and perusal. Enough time has passed and Frank is no longer with us. I think the warts-and-all version presents a more valid account unencumbered by fragile political sensitivities.

The intention is 'to tell it as it really was' and I think it is now safe and expedient to do so! Later the dialogue crosses over to the author's soliloquy and more recent version of events.

Pre-Second World War [<1939]

Mr. Viv Davis of Sydney had established a liaison with Mr. Bert Riddle who was Manager of Kia Ora Stud. This association dated back to their trotting days in Newcastle. As a result Mr. Davis used to visit Kia Ora periodically.

At this time in the late 1920's or early 1930's a recent graduate Mr. E. N. Larkin had been employed 'on a pittance' by Mr. John Stewart of J. R. Stewart and Sons of Randwick. Mr. Stewart had an association with Mr. A. H. Thompson of Widden following which he made infrequent visits to Widden Stud with his young assistant. Apparently he always insisted on opening the gates. Unsubstantiated rumour has it he liked a 'small swig' from his hip flask especially on cold winter mornings! The 36 gates between Scone and Widden must have proved some marathon of endurance as well as in maintaining sobriety! Possibly because of the arduous nature of these journeys and potential injury to health. Mr. E. N. Larkin was established as resident veterinarian at Widden for a few years in the early 1930's. It was at this time that Mr. Larkin developed a very strong affinity with the late Mr. Frank Thompson who was a schoolboy then.

Post WWII [>1945]

Mr. Joe Berryman (later to be Queensland Turf Club (QTC) veterinarian in Brisbane) had been employed as Veterinary Stock Inspector with the Pastures Protection Board. However he had little contact with horse studs and left soon after cessation of the war. A non-graduate Registered Veterinarian Mr. Brown had been previously practicing in Scone. According to the late Mr. Walter Singleton he had a unique method of anaesthesia which may or may not have included a stout piece of 4" x 3". A bitch was presented with advanced mammary tumours and 'anaesthesia' applied. On enquiry it was revealed the operation was wholly successful but "the bitch failed to recover from the anaesthetic". Accidents still do occur but techniques have certainly improved!

In about 1947 – 1948 Mr. Rex Hartwell arrived in Scone as a veterinary trainee to the NSW Department of Agriculture. He was bonded for £500 (\$1000) to the Department.

Rumour has it that the late Mr. W. J. ('Knockout') Smith of St. Aubins bought out his bond and installed him as resident veterinarian at St. Aubins Stud. For a short period he also operated a part time veterinary practice with messages to be taken by the Chemist. Rex Hartwell was the first *graduate* veterinarian to practice in Scone.

From about 1945 the now Major E. N. Larkin had established himself as a thoroughbred breeder. He further developed his association with Frank Thompson and other Committee Members of the NSW Thoroughbred Breeders Association. He began to provide a service to studs in the Upper Hunter on a Tuesday to Friday basis from his home base at Bondi Junction.

These studs included Widden, Tinagroo, Oak Range, Kia Ora, Sledmere, Alabama, Segenhoe, Baramul, Carrington, Holbrook, Oakleigh and Woodlands. On Monday nights Major Larkin conducted the unofficial jockey's apprentice school at Randwick. On Saturdays he had to be back in Sydney for the races although still in an unofficial capacity.

Major Larkin then traveled to the UK at the behest of the NSW Thoroughbred Breeders Association to learn and develop new techniques. These methods had been 'discovered' by Mr. Frank Thompson on a visit to the USA where he met the famous veterinarian Dr. Dimock in Kentucky. Major Larkin met up with Mr. Fred Day in Newmarket and Dr. John Burkhardt of the Animal Health Trust. These two people respectively developed manual pregnancy testing of brood mares and hormone therapy in sub-fertile animals. Major Larkin also used his time to purchase stallions on behalf of clients notably Mr. George Christmas (Oak Range) and Mr. Syd White (Carrington).

As a result of Major Larkin's expeditions it was decided to employ a competent graduate veterinarian based in Scone to provide a local service to Hunter Valley horse studs. Mr. Frank Williams who had met Major Larkin in army service was appointed to the position. Frank Williams moved to Scone with spouse Beth and small sons Ross and Paul in 1949.

At about this time some NSW Thoroughbred Breeders had visited New Zealand where Mr. Seton Otway of the famous Trelawney Stud at Cambridge was the major force. Amongst others Trelawney stood Foxbridge who was the Sir Tristram of his day. Mr. Otway recommended a young Scottish veterinarian Andrew Murray Bain who was then employed at Sir James Fletcher's Alton Lodge Stud.

After graduation in Edinburgh in 1937, Murray Bain practiced in Hereford UK for two years and then joined the army. He spent six years with the cavalry regiment in the Middle East and Italy. During this time he developed close friendships with several UK horse identities. After demobilization, ex-Major Bain spent nine months at Claiborne Stud, Lexington, Kentucky, USA with Mr. A. B. 'Bull' Hancock and Dr. Sager who was resident veterinarian. Claiborne was where the late Dr. E. A. Caslick did much of his work and his brother Dr. W. Caslick was also resident in 1948. The following three years were spent at Alton Lodge, New Zealand.

In 1948 Murray was special guest speaker at an ordinary general meeting of the NSW Division of the Australian Veterinary Association. This meeting was held at the Veterinary School of the University of Sydney on Tuesday 6th April 1948. It was attended by 27 members, two student members and five visitors. The President was Mr. D. F. Stewart of Randwick and several eminent veterinarians were present including Norman Larkin, Professor Stewart, Doug Blood, Professor Len Larsen and Bill Monk who was later STC veterinarian. The title of Murray's talk was 'Problems Associated with Infertility in the Brood Mare'. He adduced his experiences in Kentucky and New Zealand, cited Fred Day of Newmarket and dealt with oestrus detection, teasing, optimum time of mating, speculum examinations, variations in the oestrus cycle, infections of the genital tract and breeding hygiene.

The content of the talk was riveting and surely prescient knowledge which still makes very good sense today. A record of the discussion period makes fascinating reading! One suspects the long internecine period of philosophical and polemic division between Norman Larkin and Murray Bain began about this time! Perhaps Murray deduced that his premier 'competition' on this side of the Tasman was 'inferior' or 'deficient'?

In 1950 Murray and new spouse Mace visited NSW and in particular the Upper Hunter Valley. They stayed at Eaton's Hotel in Muswellbrook on this trip but decided Scone was preferable. As a result of this visit Murray Bain joined Frank Williams to form the Larkin, Bain and Williams Partnership. Mr. Larkin was based in Sydney and Frank and Murray in Scone.

1950's – 1960's

Due to geographic and other factors the Larkin/Bain/Williams association was soon dissolved and Bain and Williams established practice in Scone on their own account. Mr. Reg Killock was at this time employed as resident veterinarian by Mr. Maurice 'Morrie' Point at Sledmere. Reg's father had trained the great galloper Beauford in Newcastle for W. H. Mackay of Tinagroo. Reg Killock was replaced at Sledmere by Jack Francis in about 1954.

Mr. Killock was invited to join Bain and Williams but did not stay in Scone and Jack was 'persuaded' to join Murray and Frank to form Bain, Williams and Francis in the mid 1950's. This practice was based at Chivers and proved to be a very successful union for a number of years.



Chivers in 1968 - The 'practice' operated out of facilities at the rear of the main homestead. Access was from the New England Highway via a road at the far right of the picture.

Some of the main opposition came from lay-operators with 'bush-vet' skills and were often highly competent and quasi-scientific. Notable amongst these was the late Mr. Scott Johnston of Tyrone and notoriously the late Mr. Cliff Duncombe of Kingsfield. Reg Watts was a proficient lay castrator.

Bob Titcher, a graduate veterinarian of Singleton, also practiced in the Valley and did some work for Lionel Israel at Segenhoe. Peter Dawkins established a practice in Muswellbrook as part of a mainly dairy conglomerate including Singleton and Maitland.

1960 – 1970's

Bain, Williams and Francis were joined by John Bryden in the early 1960's. Not long after the single veterinary practice was divided, not without acrimony, into two partnerships. These were Williams and Francis, and Bain and Bryden.

Williams and Partners: 1960's – 1970's.

After division Frank and Jack were joined by Norman Judge, formerly of Maitland and also EFA and Olympic veterinarian. Angus Cunningham also served as assistant. The practice was based in Main Street.



88 Main Street – Formerly the practice of Williams and Partners.

Norman Judge left to go to Texas A & M University, Austin, Texas, USA from 1968 – 1970. Geoff Adams came as replacement at that time. Other part-time or visiting veterinarians and assistants were Marshall Thornton, David Parry-Okeden and notable tobacco chewing *aficionado* Dr. John Egloff (USA) in 1968. Early in the 1970's Frank Williams' long time association with Widden Stud came temporarily to an end.



This was the home of the Frank Williams practice in the late 1970's. It was almost directly opposite 106 Liverpool Street (Morgan Howey Fraser).

Bain and Partners: 1960's – 1967

After splitting from the old partnership with Williams and Francis, Murray Bain formed an association with Percy Sykes who had made a significant reputation for himself at Randwick. This became Sykes, Bain and Partners with John Bryden and later Treve Williams in Scone with Murray Bain. For reasons very similar to the Larkin-Bain-Williams conflict division was inevitable. Sykes and Bain parted company in the mid 1960's. John Bryden and Treve Williams elected to go to Sydney with Sykes. Peter Beiers joined Murray Bain as assistant in 1965 and stayed until 1967.

Bain and Associates: 1967 – 1974

This practice was based at the GRAZCOS in Kelly Street. This later became Rose, MacCallum and MacCallum and Company (and today is MacCallum Inglis).



The 'old' Bain and Associates was housed in the building now occupied by MacCallum Inglis. It was formerly known as 'Grazcos'. The Coffee Club Inn (*aka* 'Wounded Buffalo') was in the building to the right.



The 'hole-in-the-wall' gang occupied the flats directly above the shops in Kelly Street in the 1960's and 1970's. The 'hole-in-the-wall' was the small opening (now blocked) just next to Serhan's Menswear.

James Crouch, on a Horse Race Betting Levy Board Scholarship from the UK, arrived in Scone in August 1967 for about four months. Shortly after Bill Howey and Richard Greenwood came to Scone as assistants to Murray Bain. Hank Anderson (USA) also spent 18 months with Murray between 1968 and 1969. In 1968 John Morgan was sent from Newmarket, UK as visiting assistant. John returned permanently with Sally and family in 1968. Together with John Egloff at Frank Williams this formed the harbinger for the 'shuttle' veterinary program now extant between the two hemispheres. Ray Gooley acted as locum assistant in 1970 while Bill Howey accompanied the Baramul mares to America.



Christmas drinks at Chivers 1972 - Bain and Associates

Murray, Mace and Fiona Bain with Nairn Fraser, Kieran Bredin (Ireland), Bill Howey, John and Rebecca Morgan and Angus Campbell in front. Morag took the photograph.
Kieran had not yet discovered the 'informality' of the Aussie Christmas.

Wendy Paul (later Miller & Lapointe) spent a short time as locum assistant also before pursuing an academic career. Wendy was the very first female veterinary employee, albeit for a short time only. Tony Parker ('The Sheikh') joined Murray, Bill, Richard, and John from 1970 – 1974. Nairn Fraser and Warren McLaren ('Vulgorilla') arrived in 1971, Warren for a short time only. Angus Campbell joined the practice in 1972 followed by Bill Stewart (NZ) in 1973 with Sue McCubbery. Sue was the inaugural full-time female veterinarian employed in the Valley. This was quite an event at the time and Sue was certainly pioneer material. About this time Murray became seriously ill and a partnership formed, Murray Bain and Partners including John Morgan, Bill Howey, Tony Parker and Nairn Fraser. Murray died in March 1974. This era marked the most prodigious period of growth of almost any practice anywhere at any time. The exponential expansion was more or less matched by an equivalent contraction in the other Scone practice. Tony Parker departed for Sydney in 1974.

Morgan, Howey, Fraser and Partners: 1974 – 1977

After Murray's death a new partnership was formed which had various names culminating with that above. Ray Gooley who had been a locum in Scone in 1970 returned as partner following four years as Manager of Narrung Stud, South Australia. Hugh White and Jamie Barnes arrived soon after with Jim Rodger (UK 1977), Alan Simson (1978) and Nigel Scott (1979).

Murrurundi and Merriwa

During this period Ray Biffin established a private practice in Murrurundi having worked for brother-in-law Ian Knight in Quirindi. Doug Bryden had established Quirindi as a branch of his practice in Tamworth. Rick Cheatham did the same in Merriwa as a branch of Mark Powell's Coolah practice. There was also 'territorial' encroachment from Mudgee. Essentially the geographic area once covered by the 'Scone pioneers' began to diminish. This was no bad thing because the distances traveled were extraordinary and frequently involved average annual mileages of 70,000+ much of it on unsealed roads. This represented gradual inevitable 'intrusion' into traditional 'Scone' veterinary territory from all angles. Perhaps it is timely to remember when Vic Cole set up in Dubbo in 1945 he traveled as far as Sandy Hollow! Territory! Whose territory?

Union: 1978 - 1990

During the early 1970's Frank Williams moved his premises from 88 Main Street to Liverpool Street from where Chris Winter now operates his barber's shop. In 1977 Morgan, Howey, Fraser and Partners also shifted camp to the present premises at 106 Liverpool Street. Very soon the benefits of union and rapprochement between the two practices became apparent. In early 1978 Frank, Bill, John and others agreed they should merge. Frank joined as Senior Consultant within the one large practice essentially going the full circle. Geoff Adams had in the meantime branched out on his own operating from his home base, Sans Tache Stud at Dry Creek, Parkville.



Morgan, Howey, Fraser and Partners
This later emerged as Scone Veterinary Hospital.

Patricia Wilkinson (now Carney) responded to advertisement and came to Scone as a small animal 'specialist'. Paul Adams and Bruce Young arrived in 1980 with Bruce only staying a short period. Mark Wylie (1981) and Jenny Jenkins (1983) completed the personnel at this time.



As serious as it gets!

Dual Hemisphere 'Shuttle Vets' Angus Campbell, Nigel Scott and Alan Simson.

Eminent academics and veterinarians of international calibre to have visited Scone include Professor Des Fielden (NZ), Professor John Hughes (USA), Professor Bill Pickett (USA), Professor Harold Drudge (USA), Professor Leo Jeffcott (UK), Professor W. R. 'Twink' Allen (UK), Dr. John Hughes (Ireland), Professor Peter Rosedale (UK), Professor Jim Becht (USA) and many more in recent times.



John ('Mickey') Spillane was the inaugural practice manager
This started a trend in professional and commercial businesses in Scone.

Frank Williams is actually the founder of private veterinary practice in Scone, having arrived as the first permanent resident graduate veterinarian in 1949. He was very proud of this fact and viewed subsequent developments with great satisfaction. The growth of private veterinary practice has been very closely intertwined with the expansion of the thoroughbred industry in the Upper Hunter especially in the environs of Scone and the Widden Valley. There has always been a unique association between Scone veterinarians and the Widden Valley Studs. Services provided throughout the Upper Hunter District covering the whole of the territory are now embraced within the Upper Hunter Shire boundaries. Historically this was an even greater area and included Mudgee, Coolah and the Liverpool Plains to the north.



Euan Haith (Imp. UK) was the last of the peripatetic 'Rugger Buggers'.
He was in the Champion Scone team of 1989. I rest my case!

On one day in the late 1980's John Morgan was servicing a regular client in the Upper Horton Valley near Barraba while Angus Campbell was at routine call to a Stud at Kulnura near Gosford. I estimated that this was an area approximately the length and breadth of England! In addition I have been with Murray Bain on consultations to Delungra in the New England and Booroowa in the Southern Tablelands. Nigel Scott and Jim Rodger worked as 'delegates' in Papua New Guinea while Sue McCubbery was involved in a large scale BTEC eradication program for the Mackay family at Lawn Hill Station in the Gulf Country in the mid 1970's.

In the heady halcyon days of tax evasion schemes John Morgan and Shona Murphy were also involved with a group known as 'Brighton Nominees' and provided out-of-season advice and service to selected Studs in Ireland. All these services were provided under the aegis of the Scone Veterinary Practice.