

Testimonial Tributes

There are a few non-veterinarians absolutely pivotal to the egress of veterinary practice in Scone who I feel are worthy of special mention and praise. This section is dedicated to them.

Administration Apogee



It didn't come any better than this!

Lorraine Skinner is on the far right with Jackie Druery to her immediate right.

The very first practice secretary was Mrs. Everingham whom Paul Williams remembers with glasses and very straight hair. Enid Garland was a lady in every respect but tended to sacrifice efficiency on the altar of verbal but not written communication. Marj Gillett inclined to be the reverse but could be unwittingly brusque. Kay McGregor shared her duties between the practice and 'Grazcos' and did not subscribe to the 'customer is always right' philosophy. She gave one "whingeing grazier" very short shrift one day which evoked a complaint to head office! Kay later earned fame as the Australian Power Boat Champion when domiciled with butcher husband Mick Marshall on the Gold Coast.

The demise of Kay heralded the entry of Lorraine Bateman. Lorraine was to emerge as indubitably the icon of administration and the benchmark for excellence in this field. She was extremely intelligent and possessed a computerised steel trap mind well before their

invention. Hilton Cope swore blind that when he telephoned she picked up the 'phone and said "Yes Hilton" before he had even uttered a word! "How did she know it was me?" he asked! "Was it mental telepathy?" Australian business tycoon and leviathan entrepreneur Robert Holmes a Court was perplexed when Lorraine fielded his inquiries from Heytesbury Stud WA by saying "Yes Mr. Holmes a Court" even before he had time to introduce himself! She recognized his argot! Lorraine was at the helm as de facto practice manager and she (and we) enjoyed great support from Jackie, Jan and Robyn. This was possibly the apogee of administration excellence.



Robyn, Jackie, Lorraine, Jan enjoying sunshine and ice cream! These were indeed "days in the sun"!

Lorraine possessed a very strong mind – and will – and she was able to guide us all through the egregious miasma of early computerisation! When Lorraine resigned (for very good family reasons) after 18 years of devoted service she left an enormous gap which it was impossible to fill immediately. No one person could cope with the work load she had carried and endured. I am eternally in debt to Lorraine because in addition to all her other duties she was lumbered one year as acting Honorary Secretary of Scone Race Club. I was President and the incumbent had resigned her position a mere three weeks before the Annual Cup Meeting in May. This was a very busy time but "when the going gets tough the tough get going"! Thanks to Lorraine's incredible memory and innate ability the Cup Meeting went off without a hitch that year! She was able to handle the entirely new administrative work load with consummate skill. The practice office handled all the nominations and acceptances as well as all the myriad arcane enquiries, demands and requests from the not too discerning or polite racing fraternity. Thank you Lorraine from the bottom of my heart!



Lorraine.

Likewise I am equally in debt to Jackie! Jackie was and is an exquisite typist. I am a shocking writer! Guess who came to my rescue! Much of the content appearing in this tome would not have done so were it not for Jackie who was never fully compensated or recognised for her efforts!

Our eventual solution was to reinvent administration and drag it kicking and screaming into the 21st century. I think the practice was the very first professional organisation in the town to appoint a full time business and administration manager. John Spillane joined the team from the then recently defunct State Bank. Today the administration machine has evolved into a chimera of sorts! The paper work associated with modern veterinary practice and compliance with various legislative requirements has exploded exponentially! Consequently in a team the size of that assembled at Scone Veterinary Hospital there is a huge demand for a very smooth machine. Kim Budden now heads a very professional assortment of specialist positions within the administration structure.



‘Siegfried’ with Lorraine
JRGM and Lorraine enjoyed internecine “mind battles”.

If Lorraine Skinner was the shining star at Morgan/Howey/Fraser she was matched at Frank Williams and Partners by Beverley Pittman. When the two practices merged again in 1978 ‘Bev’ elected to take a well deserved exit from the exigencies of private practice. She would have been welcome across the road at 106 Liverpool Street!

Almost all the people in administration possessed an acute sense of humour! We had our lighter moments! Sometimes it was based on delightful *naiveté*!

Cars and Campbells Garage

Max Bell was the hero at Campbell’s Garage. Iconic GMH Holdens were the ‘official’ mode of transport. They were frequently exposed to the most bizarre tests of fortitude and survival! This included anything from a car being written-off to temporarily indisposed. There was always a transitory replacement vehicle available. John Morgan remembers being towed back after his first trip to Baramul. He had collected a black Aberdeen Angus heifer belonging to A. O. Ellison who was indubitably “not amused”! Max Bell recalls Tony Parker held the record for tow-ins and lendings – 11 cars in one year! Bill Howey didn’t have far to walk when he ‘rung bark’ a tree in Guernsey Street with his trusty Kingswood. Should have used an axe Bill! Keith Mason frightened the ‘bejasus’ out of Max one day when a bottle of carbon disulphide exploded in his Torana!

Man Friday (aka Salvation John)



“Man Friday”.

He was our salvation! The practice now known as Morgan Howey Fraser & Partners moved to 106 Liverpool Street from ‘Grazcos’ Kelly Street in 1977. There was a lot of work to do! JRGM came up with a big winner! Not all his ideas came to fully ripe fruition but this was the ‘Ace of Spades’.

John Flaherty was well known to and by the practice. For two decades he had toiled laboriously at Brooklyn Lodge for Carl Powell. With ‘Cribby’ he formed a formidable duo and survived to tell the tale. As Carl elected to move his whole operation lock stock and carriage to Victoria ‘Flaht’ was at a loose end and amenable to offers. I confess the decision was not mutually unanimous but a strong majority swung behind ‘Flaht’ who commenced as general hand at about this time. How fortuitous! The time and timing were brilliant!

Initially a prospective jockey from the Far North Coast John Flaherty had acquired a prodigious range of skills in the horse, building trade and related industries. He was a consummate farrier, expert horseman and esoteric horse educator (breaker) as well as competent builder, electrician, plumber and welder. In his spare time he constructed all the metal goals posts used by Junior Soccer to this day. I provided the resources and he delivered the expertise and labour. It was no more than his due to be made a Life Member of the Junior Soccer Association for his voluntary efforts.

Thanks to John the construction of the Equine Surgery at the rear of 106 Liverpool Street was able to proceed and be completed on time and within budget. Similarly, the Intensive Foal Care Unit at Clovelly was constructed under the aegis of his expertise. The great

thing about 'Flaht' was that no task was ever too big or too difficult. He could always stand back, take an objective look and make a value judgement on how to proceed. 'No' or 'impossible' were not in his lexicon. I never ever remember talking about 'hours' or 'days off'. It was immensely satisfying when John Flaherty was selected for the prestigious Murray Bain Service to Industry Award by the Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Breeder's Association in 1996. There was no more deserving cause! Murray would have been very proud. The award was instituted in his name specifically to acknowledge such achievement. 'Man Friday'? Make that every day of the week and nights as well!



John Flaherty and Jeannie Harris (nee Crawford) plan Clovelly Stables.

Angels of Mercy – Wives



‘Petticoat Conspiracy’ - Amanda Campbell, Sarah Howey, Shona Murphy
“*Did you ever contemplate divorce?*” “*No. Never – but murder constantly!*”
(Her Grace, the spouse of the Archbishop of Canterbury).

The wives had to put up with a lot and never complain! After hours telephone answering at nights, week ends and public holidays was the absolute nadir! It didn't matter that there were children and babies and washing and cleaning and shopping and cooking. The telephone was fundamental and had to be answered 24/7 x 365 in modern day idiom. Telephone technology was anachronistic. There were no extensions, cordless telephones, answering machines or mobiles. The wife (there were no female veterinarians) had to be all things to all people at all times. The little Scot's lady at Arden House in *Dr. Finlay's Case Book* (BBC TV) was barely a suitable role model. The veterinary spouse had to combine all aspects of availability, reliability, diplomacy, tact, discipline, patience, communication and recording skill, time management, spouse management, conflict resolution, forced restriction and simply good manners. Nor did the situation carry quite the same social cachet as the physician's wife.

Are they too good to be true? Many were superb and then some are more equal than others! If there were lots of singles (bachelors) this created extra tension for the one or few married veterinary wives. Assistant management was added to the job description. Sally Morgan could attest to this dilemma! Sometimes the tension could be unbearable and reach titanic proportions! Sarah and I almost lost it one Sunday in October when I drove over 780 km doing 15 calls and then straight back to 'work'! There was the famous (infamous!) incident when Beth Williams gave Rae Israel a severe tongue lashing for inadvertent criticism! Even Murray Bain enjoyed that one! He told me about it at least 100 times! I offer this small belated testimonial tribute to the heroic pioneer veterinary wives! Did I mention pay? What pay?

Angels of Mercy - Veterinary Nurses



Jeannie Crawford – Pioneer.

Veterinary nurses? Never heard of them! Well, that's exactly how it was in 1967! We used to rely on struggling administration volunteers to restrain whatever was necessary often at ungodly hours and with strictly limited resources. Marge, Lorraine, Jan and Jackie were highly competent and always willing but it was not what they were trained to do! Occasionally an unwitting itinerant student or ubiquitous spouse was cajoled or coerced into the unfamiliar role! How things have changed and so very much for the better!

Vicki Clifton was first cab off the rank but it was really Jeannie Crawford who first firmly established what was to become the benchmark for a long line of excellence in the field sustained to this day. Each and every year the team is encouraged, enlarged, enriched, enhanced and embellished. In the inchoate 21st century it is inconceivable to imagine a situation in practice without the expert assistance of highly trained and exquisitely skilled veterinary nurses. Motivation always accompanies the package and is never a problem! At the time of writing the veterinary nurse category of employment has emerged and evolved into an honoured para-professional group indispensable to modern day veterinary practice. Scone Veterinary Hospital has been in the vanguard of this development since inception and today is an industry leader especially in the area of intensive foal care and nursing. The unit at Clovelly Stables is the largest in the Southern Hemisphere and a high benchmark for excellence in its field. It is undiminished by comparison to its competitors in Northern climes.

Jeannie Crawford was the willing pioneer ingénue in the field – literally as well as metaphorically! I think Jeannie's career development as our inaugural initiate is worthy

of recording in some personal detail. Jeannie was the very first of our 'shuttle' veterinary nurses who chose to expand and enhance their careers with experience gained in the Northern Hemisphere. To a very large extent this reflects the history and evolution of the category we now know as veterinary nurses. It also details the development of foal care and nursing and the implementation of intensive foal care at Clovelly Stables. Jeannie has written the following as a voluntary contribution to this tome.

In 1974 I commenced my employment at the Scone Veterinary Hospital (then known as Morgan, Howey & Fraser). I was 12 years old and was principally employed to assist Shona [Murphy] in the laboratory after school from 4 – 5 pm. This led to work on Saturday mornings from 9 – 12 pm when I would make up worming drenches for mares and foals and numerous concoctions of cough medicines, wart ointments, wound dressings, tonics for racehorses, ringworm lotions etc. all from a recipe book that various vets contributed to (mostly from Newmarket I think). It's something that is not used today with all the commercial drugs that are on the market. There doesn't seem the interest in using the old remedies of mixtures. In 1978 I left school and worked for Major and Mrs. Mitchell at Yarraman Park.

It wasn't until I returned from working in New Zealand in 1981 that John Morgan asked me if I was interested in working full time at the practice as a veterinary nurse. Vicki Clifton had been working this position when she left school assisting Patricia Carney (nee Wilkinson) in small animals. I jumped at the chance to do this as I just loved the time I'd spent there before. I enjoyed working with Trish and she taught me a lot – there was no large animal surgery (except for the odd surgery performed out the back shed or in the grass yard). I think in those days horse requiring elective surgery traveled to Camden University and it was only emergency situations or minor procedures that were carried out at the clinic. Nowadays the nurses do a lot to assist the vets on their outcalls like taking bloods off weanlings for blood typing while the vet draws the description, or assisting with the taking of radiographs carried out on the stud farms.

In the early days at the practice Lorraine Skinner would order the drugs for the pharmacy but eventually she handed that duty over to me as I knew what we needed from working with Trish and the other vets. Jenny Jenkins replaced Trish as small animal vet around 1983/84. It was around this time my father had completed building Portastalls at their property Clovelly at 10 Liverpool Street after moving from Tooloogan Vale where he was the farm manager for the Dr. Barnardo's Organisation. The idea Dad had then was to provide a hospital for horses as he could envisage that with the population of horses in the Hunter Valley it would be more economical for horses needing daily veterinary attention to come to town and be near the veterinary practice rather than the vet travel for miles just to see one horse and then drive the same distance in the opposite direction to treat another. With all the horses under the one roof bandage changes could be attended to frequently and wounds assessed or medical conditions could be treated more intensively.

Eventually Clovelly got started and the benefits of having horses in a hospital situation caught on to the stud owners and managers and Dad and I became very busy. It helped

that I worked at the veterinary practice as I would assist the vets with any treatments and be able to let them know if I thought the horse was deteriorating or improving just by observing them every day. At that time Dad was also busy with his clinical hypnotherapy practice and therefore it was often left to me to feed the horses and muck out their boxes before I went to work up at the Liverpool Street surgery and after work also.

After 12 months of this plus the duties I had at the practice I decided to take 12 months leave and travel overseas. I was 23 years old and it was something I always wanted to do. When I told John Morgan of my plans he backed me 100 per cent and said my job would still be there on my return. I arranged for Prue Holcombe to fill in for me and when I arrived home in 1985 she took up the vet nurse and receptionist position at the Denman Branch Clinic working for Jim Rodger. On my arrival back in Scone I was keen to start back at Morgan, Howey & Fraser. The break away had done me the world of good and I realized how much I missed the work and of course all the people I worked with. Dad was pleased to see me as Clovelly was getting a bit much for him and he discussed with me if I wanted to take over the running of the stables full-time. At that stage I didn't want that kind of responsibility so he discussed with Bill Howey and John Morgan the possibility of the practice buying Clovelly (house, land and stables).

Mum and Dad had their eye on a house at Satur they wanted to buy and with Dad's hypnotherapy practice taking off he was too busy to run the stables as well. Dad arranged installments for the partners to purchase Clovelly so they didn't need to pay for it all at once. It worked out well for me as I rented the house from the vets which meant I didn't have to move and I had a little income for myself of providing transport for horses to the surgery and Clovelly with my ute and float. John Flaherty was employed at the practice after leaving Brooklyn Lodge so he took over my duties at the stables which allowed me more time at the clinic. John Flaherty was also putting the finishing touches to the large animal surgery and X-ray department he was building at 106 Liverpool Street.

Jenny Jenkins had built up the small animal practice and it was extremely busy. On my return from overseas she asked me if I would be interested in doing a veterinary nursing course being offered at Tamworth TAFE. It was a two-year course being conducted from Peter Best's South Tamworth Animal Hospital and the first time a course of this nature had been offered. Our class of 1986 was the guinea pigs to see if the course would be popular. I completed my Veterinary Nursing Certificate in 1987. I thoroughly enjoyed it as for years I'd worked the practical side of veterinary science but had never learnt the theory. Now everything made sense.



Jenny Jenkins (JJ) and Mark Wylie - If John Flaherty was 'Man Friday' Jenny was his feminine equivalent!
Jenny was solely responsible for the historic photograph collage from which these images are derived.

I felt I was equipped to run the Large Animal Operating Theatre that was now completed. Alan Simson (one of the vets) had returned from America after viewing all the latest equipment etc. used in surgeries over there so now Morgan Howey & Fraser had a functional operating theatre. Alan Simson and fellow employee Paul Adams were the main surgeons with Jenny Jenkins the anaesthetist. Alison ('Ali') Mailer was a very bright spark for a tragically short period of time.



'Ali'.

I found being the only veterinary nurse for both small and large animals very taxing so other nurses were employed to help with the workload. Libby Henderson, Cathy Finlayson and Molly Woodford were all nurses that worked with me for a period of time. Carolind Pike (now Strong) was employed as a junior nurse when she left school and is still a valued member of the practice to this day now working in administration. In 1989 I got itchy feet again and was eager to learn more about foal nursing as it was an area I felt was lacking in the equine industry. America seemed to be so far ahead in foal medicine that I asked Bill Howey if he could arrange for me to work at Hagyard, Davidson and McGee in Lexington, Kentucky. He did so with the help of Dr. Walter Zent (one of the partners in the Kentucky practice) and I spent the season there in 1989 working in their neo-natal intensive care unit for foals. From this experience I decided to make my career in equine veterinary nursing. This led to an opportunity for me to take up a permanent position as head veterinary nurse/lab technician in a prestigious equine hospital in Kildare, Ireland which I accepted.

I commenced my employment at Troytown Hospital (formerly known as Cosgrove & Partners) in January 1990. In 1991 Peter Flynn and Jim Rodger (a former employer at SVH) visited me in Kildare and offered me the position of veterinary nurse at Woodlands Stud. Again, being a first as vet nurses weren't really apparent on horse studs but they felt the need for one at Woodlands, having so many foals born in a season and being a far distance from Scone. They felt they could treat the not so ill foals on the stud and wanted a nurse to assist the vet treatments. I was reluctant to leave my job in Ireland so they discussed with the partners at Troytown the possibility of me working seasons back to back thus paying my airfare to and from Australia. This was agreed upon and I did this until 1993 where upon I decided to stay put in Australia.

In 1994 I renewed my association with the Scone Practice and worked as a nurse at Clovelly Stables which had built up a reputation as an intensive foal care hospital after Karon Hoffmann started in the 1989 season with a team of American nurses running the unit. This led to a position as head veterinary nurse up at the surgery in Liverpool Street where I worked with a team of two other nurses Carolind Pike and Sascha McWilliam. Lisa Fidock who previously worked there in my absence of being overseas left and in 1995/1996 returned to the area with her husband and became another valued member of the nursing team. Carolind would work the season at Clovelly every year as that became her vocation since working with Karon Hoffmann and spending time in America also.

In 1998 when the receptionist of the Scone Practice left I approached the partners as to whether they would consider me for the job. I had married in 1997 and my husband Mike and I lived at Emirates Park Stud in Murrurundi, and the driving to Scone in the wee hours of the morning for a colic surgery plus the long working hours etc. soon took its toll. I was 36 years old and wanting a job with set hours. Luckily they agreed and I became more involved in administration duties plus running the reception area. It was such a change from wearing overalls – now I could “dress up” for work!

I fully enjoyed my time at the front desk and I felt I understood fully the running of the place having worked for many years on the other side.

Unfortunately I had to leave in 1999 as my husband accepted the job of yearling manager at Collingrove Stud, Sandy Hollow and it was obvious that the travelling everyday to Scone would be too far. I decided to go back to looking after sick foals after a break of two years and the day to day stud work. On the odd occasion I would fill in on a Saturday morning at the Denman Vet Clinic or in the off season when things at Collingrove were a bit quiet I would fill in for weeks at a time the reception position at Scone Vets while my replacement Catherine Gorman took her holidays. All in all I felt that I could slip back into any role at Scone Vets and be accepted. It was like I never left. Apart from my work as a nurse, my experiences led me to being offered a teaching role at Scone TAFE. Veterinary Nursing was being there as a certificate course (similar to what I had done in Tamworth) and I became part-time teacher. I still am involved in this to this very day.

Having been associated with the Scone Veterinary Hospital for many years I can say with all honesty that when I woke up every morning I looked forward to going to work, it was such fun, the practice was like an extended family to me. Not only did I work with these people I socialised and at time shared accommodation with them as well which never posed a problem. Even to this day I feel a close connection to the place and hope that it continues. The practice had such an influence on my life and as I did a lot of my growing up years there I feel very lucky that I had the opportunity to work in such a unique place.

Carolind Pike (Strong) is another pioneer nurse who made a huge impact and has steered and guided the evolution of veterinary nursing care in Scone. Carolind says that intensive care nursing in particular demands a very keen sense of observation and recognition of vital signs very quickly as critically ill neonates can deteriorate very rapidly. In this field the nurse plays a very vital role in the team. Without them and their skills the Clovelly ICU facility could not function. Nursing skills and administration of medications are just as pivotal as the veterinary diagnosis and antibiotics of choice. An ICU veterinary nurse's job is very demanding being on eight to nine hour duty roster shifts throughout every 24 hour period. It requires intense concentration and organisation and the ability to make clear quick decisions in an emergency.

Carolind has maintained a detailed record of the personnel at Clovelly since inception in 1990. In that first year Dr. Karon Hoffmann imported three trained ICU nurses from her one time alma mater the University of Florida and also the University of North Carolina USA. In subsequent years other Northern hemisphere nurses came from New Bolton Centre of the University of Pennsylvania and University College, Davis, California as well as from Florida and Carolina. There was also infiltration from Ireland and the UK. By about 1993/1994 more locals were trained and reciprocal exchanges organized between Scone and the USA in particular. There was a huge amount of interest generated in foal nursing and trainees began to emerge in droves. With the rapid exchange of knowledge and skills extant in the modern era only 15 years down the track we have a large number of highly trained and exquisitely skilled ICU veterinary nurses absolutely integral to the industry.

There is no doubt Jeannie established the benchmark for excellence in veterinary nursing. However all the names mentioned in Jeannie's detailed expansive treatise also achieved similar exalted standards. Lisa Fidock was in fact top graduate in NSW TAFE in the year of completion of her certificate course. All have articulated to higher levels of expertise and management. I am immensely proud of my own association with NSW TAFE Commission and the evolution of suitable courses for veterinary nurses including the pioneer Equine Nursing Course. The truth is I was able to successfully plunder, purloin and plagiarise the curriculum Carolind Pike was "cajoled" into retrieving from New Bolton Centre, University of Pennsylvania during one of her early sabbatical sojourns in North America! This later emerged in customized and contextualised format as the aforementioned competency-based course in equine nursing now with national and international currency.

In 1988 Dr. Karon Hoffmann approached me and stated "the practice needs a foal intensive care unit and me to run it". This made very good sense following a visit by Dr. Anne Koterba from Florida USA who was major guest speaker at the annual AEVA Bain Fallon Lectures. The decision was made! The special expertise and ingenuity of 'Man Friday' John Flaherty was again conscripted and the fruitful results of his labours are evident in all the construction work at Clovelly Stables. It has been an unqualified success although not without some initial 'dystocia and spasmodic colic' not the least cause of which was financial elasticity!



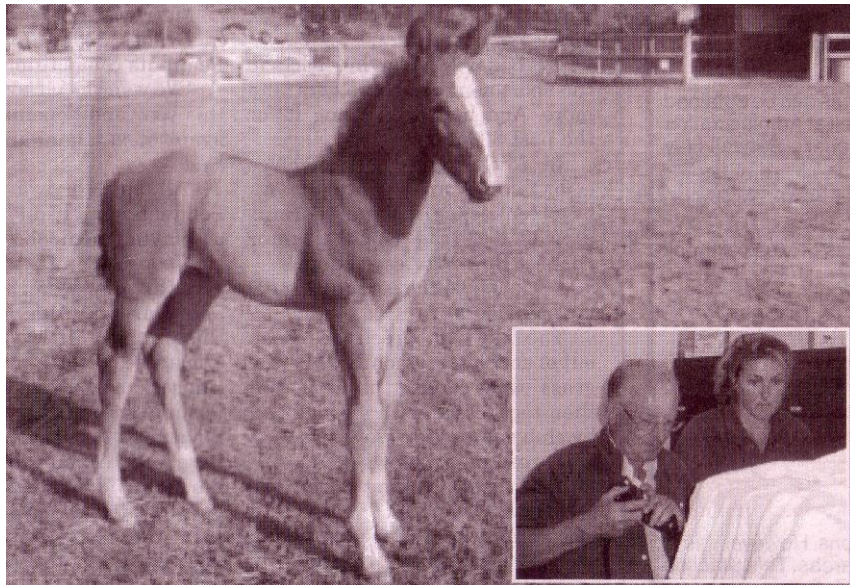
Jane Axon at Clovelly.

Denman Veterinary Clinic

Denman was always the “Achilles Heel” of veterinary hegemony within the “Kingdom” - or should that be “Sheikhdom” - of the Upper Hunter Valley. The original legal agreements supposedly binding on extant signatory incumbents stipulated they could not aspire to set up opposition practices within 50 miles of the PO Scone or within 50 miles of the PO Kerrabee. This effectively precluded the whole of the Upper Valley! While posterity has demonstrated these concessions were never legally enforceable they were nevertheless an impediment to construction of a dominant edifice of free trade. We at Scone appreciated we were vulnerable to strategic predatory attack in the South West from Denman including the ‘lucrative’ clientele in the Bylong, Widden and Martindale Valleys. We acknowledged we were susceptible on this ruthlessly exposed front or flank! It was surprising to us that Muswellbrook or anyone else failed to exploit this weakness!

‘General’ Jim Rodger came up with the answer! While the rest of us were guilty of internecine decades of dithering dalliance Jim acted! He volunteered to set up a branch practice in Denman! Oh Boy! Was I - and were we - relieved! Together with Jim and Mark Buckerfield we purchased, staffed and equipped very suitable premises in Ogilvie Street, Denman. This pioneering venture has flourished beyond expectations! While Jim has pursued a stellar career in equine practice and research leading to a Fellowship and specialty ranking within the profession his ‘totem’ still endures!

Denman is ‘pristine’ while still retaining the very best of innate cultural heritage. Indigenous might protest! I strongly suspect the ‘duality’ of cultures is richly preserved in Denman!



Jim Rodger and Clare Williams at work December 2005.