

## 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.

### **‘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 for ever 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? 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 fulfillment 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 zealotry. 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

## ‘Defend to the Death’

“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”.

The citation above was attributed to Voltaire in *‘The Friends of Voltaire’* (1906) S. G. Tallentyre (E. Beatrice Hall) but is not found in his works.

Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister of Great Britain (1910) also invoked the same quotation in dealing with a youthful, determined and vituperative Winston Churchill who was allegedly most aggressive and assertive in debate. “You will learn, when you begin to understand that conversation is not a monologue” the PM is reputed to have rebuked the garrulous WC while still defending his right to free speech!

Not surprisingly I have been taken to task for printing ‘Ruffled Feathers’ with my Christmas Director’s Circular. I had contemplated and anticipated such admonishment and offer no apology! I have little further to add other than to reiterate the views expressed by Kevin McManus do not purport to represent those of the Foundation or its management. The PGFVS has (almost) always been ‘politically neutral’ and allows all sides the right to their say. This position will be nurtured and maintained. As far as I am concerned I have respect for the opinions of all my collegiate veterinarians although there are many I do not see eye-to-eye! My numerous associates in practice will attest to this pronouncement! Like Voltaire (?) I will ultimately defend the right of any individual to express his or her considered views without fear or favour and unencumbered by so called political correctness however conventionally unpopular. Anything less in my view amounts to an onerous form of editorial censorship. Who am I to judge my peers in this way?

Similarly my knowledge of the Muslim religion and contents of the Koran were brutally exposed by a well-intentioned and extremely well informed Christian member who has read the Koran! My major premise was to promote harmony, peace, good will and most importantly tolerance in these trying times! I must do my ‘home-work’ better in future although I still fervently believe in the essential unbiased content of the message promoting forbearance in general!

W. P. Howey  
Director

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 HVBBHBA. 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!

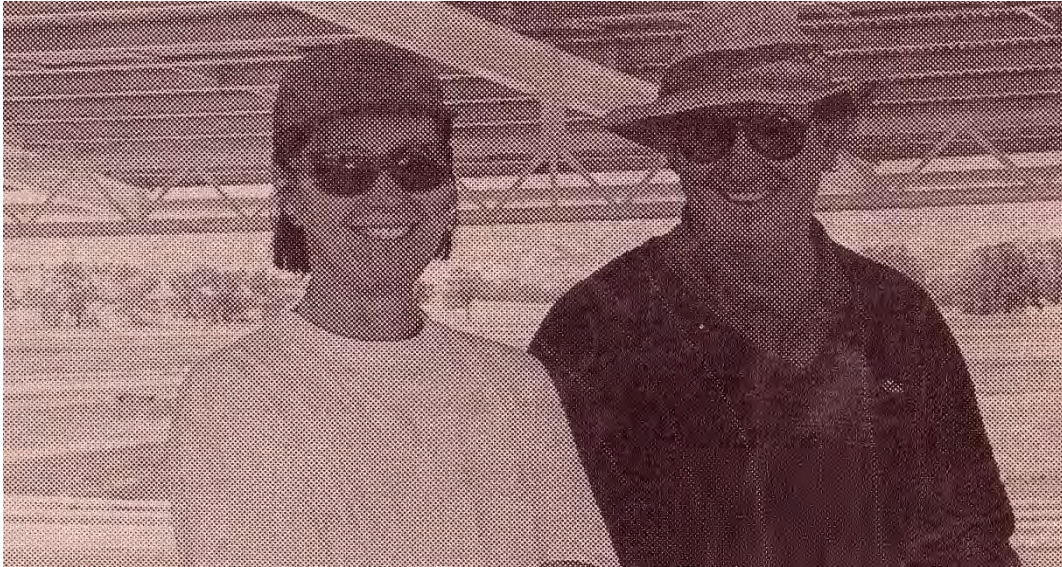
The Chairman of the Sydney Turf Club at this time was Mr. George Ryder, a long time Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Breeder first at 'Woodlands Stud' and latterly at 'Kia Ora'. George was an enthusiastic, energetic and innovative administrator, but who on occasion "ran his own race". He was an active proponent 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 leveled at the committee of the day!

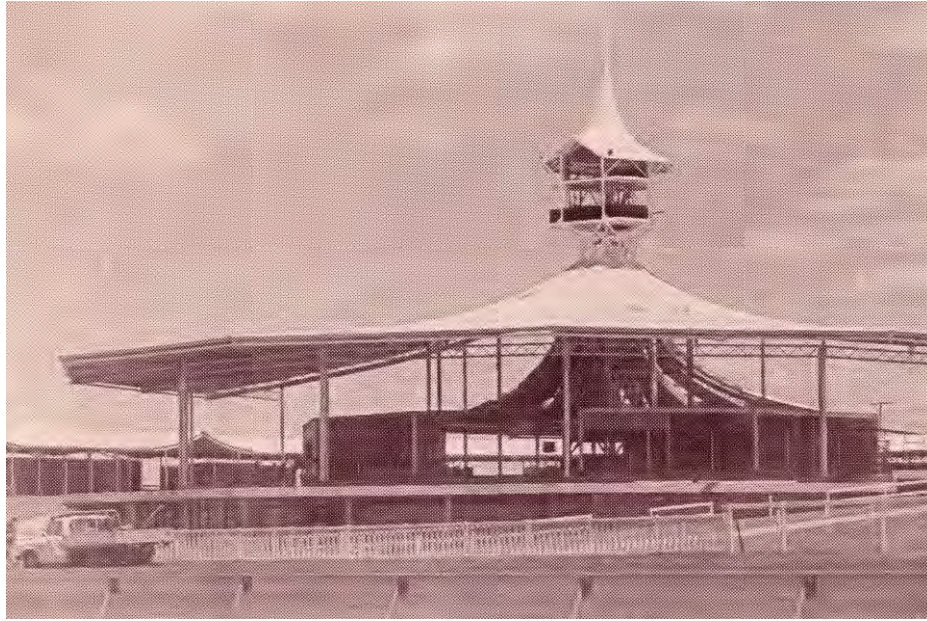


It was from this standpoint that FWR, with single-minded purpose vigorously pursued his vision and goal of the purchasing and development of a site selected by him at 'Tarrangower', Satur. That he was able to achieve this is testimony to his bullish determination part of the motivation coming from the 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.



Julie and Bill Rose at the new track under construction. November 1994  
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"!





‘Public Viewing Facility’  
November 1994

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, coincidentally 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 developments

## 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 6<sup>th</sup>. 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 '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

## Equality? Myth or Reality?

Have you ever contemplated the real meaning of equality in our society? The Macquarie Dictionary – like the Macquarie Thesaurus never far from my grasp these days! – defines ‘**Equality**’ as: “*the state of being equal; correspondence in quality, degree, value, rank, ability etc.*” ‘**Equal**’ is further delineated: “*as great as another; like or alike in quantity, degree, value etc.; of the same rank, ability, merit etc.; evenly proportioned or balanced; uniform in operation or effect; adequate or sufficient in quantity or degree; having adequate powers, ability, or means; level as a plain; tranquil or undisturbed; impartial or equitable; one who or that which is equal; to be or become equal to; match; to make or do something equal to; to recompense fully.*” Quite a lot in that little scenario! Just underneath is EEO! Is it realistically attainable and/or sustainable?

I was stimulated to think and prompted to write about this topic by another most welcome little present from Santa Claus! I was fortunate to receive an autobiography of Eric Blair by Jeffrey Meyers. Eric was an intriguing fellow who lived his short peripatetic life in the first cataclysmic half of the previous century ultimately falling victim to ubiquitous ‘consumption’. He left an enduring legacy as the writer, critic and social philosopher George Orwell. Described by his peers as ‘*the wintry conscience of a generation*’ he contributed greatly to the English language as the author of several seminal tomes including ‘*Animal Farm*’ and ‘*Nineteen Eighty-Four*’.

“All animals are **equal** but some animals are more **equal** than others” (*Animal Farm*) has become as much a part of our etymological heritage as “Big brother is watching you.” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*). Reference to another of my close companion edition(s) (*Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations*) reveals many scintillating citations from other sources. E. M. Forster in *Howard’s End* (1910 Ch. 6) attests humorously: “*All men are **equal** – all men that is to say, who possess an umbrella!*” In *Proper Studies* (1927) ‘*The Idea of Equality*’, Aldous Huxley affirms somewhat stridently, “*That all men are **equal** is a proposition to which, at ordinary times, no sane being has ever given his assent.*” Sir J. M. Barrie echoed the prevalent social conditions of the day in his play *The Admirable Crichton* performed in 1902, “*His lordship may compel us to be **equal** upstairs, but there will never be **equality** in the servants’ hall*”. This was presciently redolent of the proletarian philosophy so richly espoused in the very successful serial UK tele-drama ‘Upstairs, Downstairs’. “*We have talked long enough in this country about **equal** rights. We have talked for a hundred years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law*” was LBJ’s lofty ‘though doubtless sincere rhetoric in his speech to Congress, 27 November 1963 following his unpropitious succession to JFK. Sir Isaiah Berlin in *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) separated conceptual definitions thus: “*Liberty is liberty, not **equality** or fairness or justice or human happiness or a quiet conscience*”.

Have you noticed a common thread in these quotations? They are all male oriented and refer almost exclusively to the masculine gender! How sexist! “*All human beings are born free and **equal** in dignity and rights*” (“*Tous les etres humains naissant libres et*

*egaux en dignite et en droits*’ – sorry no French inflections in my program!) is in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 1948. It represents the ideological high-moral-ground pronouncement and being gender neutral somewhat redresses the balance. Following the massive immutable ‘juggernaut’ (not before time!) of the feminist revolution lead by Germaine Greer and others Polly Toynbee has stated with *metier* in the *Guardian* 19 January 1987: “*Feminism is the most revolutionary idea there has ever been. **Equality** for women demands a change in the human psyche more profound than anything Marx dreamed of. It means valuing parenthood as much as we value banking*”. Very interesting!

The most famous phrase in *Animal Farm* (enunciated by the self-serving pigs) combined Jeffersons’s fundamental concept in the Declaration of Independence, “*all men are created equal,*” with Eve’s self-destructive command to the Serpent in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (9.823-25): “*render me more **equal**, and perhaps, / A thing not undesirable, sometime / Superior.*”

Robert Zimmerman (*aka* Bob Dylan) obviously had reflective thought in composing his 1964 song *My Back Page*:

***‘Equality’**, I spoke the word  
As if a wedding vow  
Ah, but I was much older then,  
I’m younger than that now.*

Where the hell is all this leading I almost hear you ask! Well, as I’m much younger now I’ve also found time for reflective thought except, unlike Bob, I compose abominably and sing abysmally! I recall my entry into veterinary practice in Australia with Murray Bain at Scone NSW in the mid-sixties! There were 2.5 ‘all male’ veterinarians! Guess who was 0.5! Women veterinarians were almost unheard of, especially in rural practice! Ideologically, I’d made up my mind for various reasons I wanted time and space to myself in veterinary practice having been exposed to quite the reverse in Ireland and Scotland. Based on the premise ‘provide the service and get the work’ we expanded to 20 veterinarians (48 on the payroll) within 20 years in 1988. This was only made possible because the thoroughbred population of Australia and specifically the Hunter Valley quadrupled during these 2 decades.

The present Associate Director was the debutante female neophyte to ‘see practice’ in Scone. What a memorable revelation! The Stud Managers and ‘strappers’ were most impressed! Gentlemanly conduct (and fear!) prevents me from divulging when! Wendy Paul, now a PGFVS Councillor followed soon after, had a similar impact and was the first non-male employee veterinarian in Scone as a locum tenens. Again, modesty forbids time disclosure! Murray was not only an ardent ornithologist but also *rue gallante* with a highly cultivated eye for the aesthetically pleasing female form! The late Sue McCubbery was the first full time employee just prior to Murray’s tragically early demise in 1974. Scone Veterinary Hospital, the evolutionary outcome of our earlier efforts, employed in excess of 20 veterinarians in the season just completed in 2001. More than 50% were

female. Does this mean, using the Scone analogy we have achieved professional 'equality'? I rather suspect not! However, I believe it has little or nothing to do with gender but everything to do with generation, attitude and aptitude!

On entering practice, my naive altruistic ideal was for a socially democratic veterinary cooperative capable of delivering eclectic service, excellent facilities, adequate financial recompense, cutting edge CVE and CPD and appropriate unencumbered family oriented and focused lifestyle. My personal goal(s) included intense involvement and commitment to local clubs, societies and cultural and communal activities not excluding social events! After preparing duty rosters for so many veterinarians in practice over 20 years I reached the irrevocable and immutable conclusion, like Orwell's 'pigs' that **'some are more equal than others!'** Is this mildly cynical and slightly pejorative redolent of inculcated sanctimonious 'old flatulent' attitude? I do not think this situation has altered dramatically with the passage of time. What has/have changed exponentially is/are the expectations of the veterinarians themselves, clients, employers and employees. This reflects profound societal development and is certainly no bad thing!

I regard the PGFVS with patrician care rather like my practice but with broader boundaries and widely divergent philosophies! I trust this is not too, too 'Orwellian'? In *Animal Farm* every detail had political significance in this allegory of corruption, betrayal and tyranny in Communist Russia. The human beings are capitalists and the animals Communists led by the principal pigs with the margins of their 'acquired' behaviour becoming increasingly blurred as the plot unfolds! Interestingly in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Blair did not foretell the ultimate demise of the great human social experiment of the twentieth century within a decade of the passing of 1984! In *Animal Farm* the pigs, like the bureaucrats at the BBC, "had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called 'files', 'reports', 'minutes' and 'memoranda'". Does this mean my role resembles that of 'Napoleon' (Stalin), 'Snowball' (Trotsky) or more likely the self-sacrificial horse 'Boxer'? I'm acutely aware of the dangers of creeping, crawling, cancerous bureaucracy so I'll opt for the latter and promise to do my best! It is a sobering thought that Boxer, like Orwell, collapsing from overwork suffered a tubercular haemorrhage: "A thin stream of blood had trickled out of his mouth..... 'It's my lung', said Boxer in a weak voice." Isn't it fortunate we occupy such healthy space these days?

**'Equality'**? Are there such things as two equal halves of anything? Are 'identical twins' ever exactly the same? It depends on the criteria applied and the circumstances prevailing. I think of **equality** as a finely balanced see saw with two 'equal objects' arraigned at identical distances from the fulcrum. Applied to the veterinary context, such are the forces of nature and vicissitudes of human (animal) behaviour they will never be in 'perfect balance' apart from the infinitesimally short time the 'bar' is perfectly horizontal in fluctuating between ends. Goodness, I'm waxing lyrical! It's about time I stopped! I've just received a telephone call from my wife Sarah with news a very great friend of mine has died not unexpectedly at Warwick, QLD! Fortunately I called him on Christmas Day and also wrote to him the same morning! Thank God some are more equal than others! I'll leave it at that!

We have a lovely young lady undergraduate who is assisting us the PGFVS. I almost earned a slap in the face the other day when I said: “Of course we’re not equal – I have more testosterone than you!” I really meant it as a compliment but Anne was not quite so sure! Dangerous territory spiked by our new age nemesis ‘political correctness’!

W. P. Howey  
Director

## The Hunter Valley Bloodhorse 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> March 1979 at which 204 lots were catalogued. There was a barbeque and parade of yearlings at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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!

## Irrelevant?

I very vaguely evoke my earliest recollections of considering veterinary science as a career. I was in the equivalent of Year X (4<sup>th</sup>. Form) and had some decisions to make. Neale Holmes-Smith was in my year at school and a close friend. His father was an eminent Ophthalmic Surgeon but Neale was passionate about animals and veterinary surgery although Botany was his best subject. I was very keen on making the 1<sup>st</sup>. XI, summoning up enough courage to ask out Maggie K. and bashing one John Michael Horrocks-Taylor for ducking me at swimming pool. He was the same person who bore the brunt of my imitation Stradivarius in Year 1 before they took it off me!

I put down 'Veterinary Science' when I was called to see the Careers Advisor. Guess what my first lesson was? Neale gave me the idea in the first place and I couldn't think of much else! My science master said everyone wanted to be a doctor and they were 'commonplace'. Eventually I made it into the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College in Edinburgh via all the sporting teams, school hierarchy and some timely diligence in Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology. I never did manage to impress the eternally beautiful (in my memory) Maggie K.! I still wonder what became of her? However I digress! Neale struggled with basic sciences and eventually found his niche at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. He was a devout Quaker and I think disapproved of my 'freshman' discovery of bacchanalia! We lost touch!

Coming from a farming community in the 'Borders' where my family had practiced the mixed variety without significant change for over 400 years I was full of idealistic altruism! My father was a very good farmer but excelled at hedonism. Punting on the races was an absorbing and consuming passion. I could see the family heirloom gradually and systematically working its way to Margaret Laidlaw the SP in the Turks Head Hotel in Rothbury. I determined to win some of it back! I also thought I could improve the lot of the national flocks and herds to the great benefit of the food chain, the nation and all of mankind! Pompous pious puerile little prick!

Some of the established routines on East Hepple Farm were not best or current practice. It was a revelation in 1950 when my neighbour Aunt Peggy started intensive deep litter pullets in the old blacksmith's forge and battery laying hens as well. Much to our consternation they all made happy noises! They weren't so happy when George Foggon's rabbit ferrets escaped one night and slaughtered more than fifty unsuspecting chickens in the old forge! In a village our size that is news, news, news!

Dad knew lots of short cuts especially if it meant saving veterinary fees for the 3:15 at Epsom! We spent quite a bit of time pumping up the udders of the lambing South Country Cheviot ewes succumbing to 'Grass Tetany'. It works although slowly! The wonders of the parathyroid gland! I thought there had to be better ways so set off to find out on my journey of discovery. My mission was the health of the nations' food producing animals. Companion animals didn't count. This was probably the prevailing philosophy of the day. 'Smallies were pussy and sissy'! I still thought I was 'relevant'!

Imagine my dismay more than forty years adrift when I distinctly heard a senior eminent 'production animal scientist' - a veterinarian – state at a public forum veterinarians are largely 'irrelevant' in today's animal management systems on farm. How did we manage collectively to achieve this remarkable feat in so short a time? Is it just? With OJD peregrinations we know from bitter first hand experience we are very much 'on the nose' in the sheep industry. Do we deserve this or have we brought it on ourselves? We won the TB war and the S19 battle but lost the routine work involved in subsequent CAB follow up investigations.

There are fewer Government funded 'get on farm' animal health programs involving private veterinary surveillance these days. Are we outnumbered in Cattle PD's, Horse's Teeth floating and Equine 'Chiropractic'? Do we have the numbers and the will and/or desire to compete for territory? Are there enough graduates with the essential 'attributes' to take on this type of work? Is it worth they're while even if they do? Do the Universities really have the resources to assist in their preparation faced with ever diminishing Government financial support?

I'm worried! I don't like feeling 'irrelevant'!

W. P. Howey

“It Ain’t Over ‘Til the Fat Man Spins”!

*Or*

‘The Acquisition of Life Skills’

I have just spent a few wonderful days attending the Third Cricket Test 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 my ‘dry’ mates from outback and way back migrating and congregating annually to assuage thirst and reinforce mutual bonds! It is a tricky manoeuvre to avoid meeting too early for fear of missing most – or all – of the match! Peter Roebuck has great admiration for the ‘bushies’ and their intimate intricate knowledge. Great to see Gary from Trangie, Tim from Merriwa, Brian from Narromine and the strong Upper Hunter contingent as usual! Yes, I am a resigned ‘flannelled fool’ and addicted extant cricket tragic! I share this ultimate fatal flaw with the PM who I met at a school cricket match! I was delighted to entertain as my guest the thirteen year old Pyotr Judzewitsch for the first two days of the match. ‘Petie’ is the youngest sibling of the Associate Director’s brood. With a Russian father and Oberon mother and raised in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia his early cricket education was found wanting but is being rapidly enlarged and enhanced! It is heart warming to observe the thrill, exhaustive energy and bubbling enthusiasm of the pre-pubescent ‘teens’ all in standard ‘uniform’ chasing down and accumulating autographs from their heroes! Meanwhile, the elder generation sits back, imbibes and absorbs the feral pheromones wafting so generously around the SCG!

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 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 will 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! Time for decisions! You cannot run to Mummy or hide behind Daddy! Curtly Ambrose 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! Curtly arrives and something vaguely red flashes past before you've moved! You hear the inevitable chilling 'death rattle' just 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 disconsolately tuck your bat under your arm and trudge 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 boarding 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 almost 50 years later! I distinctly recall my elder sister Diana and her friend Mary Shrouder laughing loudly at my humiliating demise! I can still recall their resounding cackles to this day! 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 Kirsty and Hugh 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 and perceived - real or imaginary - discrimination, discrepancy and downright irregularity. Rudyard Kipling had a bit to say about the *metier* in his poem with the shortest title ever!

How well trained is the average veterinary undergraduate in 'life skills'?

Learning and acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes is arbitrarily divide into 3 'Domains':

1. Cognitive Domain - Knowledge, understanding, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, evaluation
2. Psychomotor Domain - Hands on skills and 'doing things'
3. Affective Domain - Feelings, attitudes, values, interpersonal communication

I believe the cognitive genre is well covered in the undergraduate course. Surgical and other manipulative skills are also very well taught in principal and in theory but only more practice will 'make perfect'. Ultimately much of this will be work place based learning, training and instruction. What about the 'affective' components of the education process? How will this be accumulated and assimilated? Will the reclusive 'loner' be isolated on a limb? A very good friend who has run a very successful veterinary practice for over 30 years asks each aspiring new associate, 'what team events did you take part in'? A 'team' could mean any communal activity whether sporting, social or cultural. Henry Collins has loudly espoused the importance of the human/human and veterinarian/client relationship as well as veterinarian/animal and client/animal in modern



day veterinary practice. How important is the development of 'team spirit' and 'team play' in our veterinary society? How do we *effectively* communicate with one another? Is this a team activity or very much individual idiosyncrasy?

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' 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! Well done Matt Hayden, Justin Langer, Damien Martin, Stuart McGill and Gary Kirsten! All have 'reinvented' after earlier demise! Welcome the new brigade including Brett Lee and Botha Diepenaar! As ABC commentator Tim Lane correctly announced the thumbs were down in the Coliseum when the 'Fat Man' came on to spin on the 4<sup>th</sup>. day! Not even Kerry O'Keeffe's 'asinine' laugh could delay the inevitable!

W. P. Howey  
Director

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!

## 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 25<sup>th</sup>. 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 1/10<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 27<sup>th</sup>. 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 20<sup>th</sup>. 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 29<sup>th</sup>. 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 29<sup>th</sup>. 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!





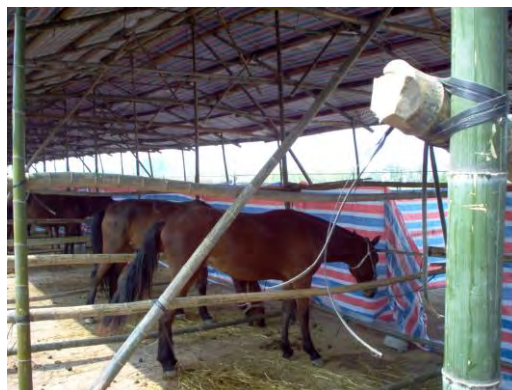
Horse 'Crush'

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 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



Australian Stock Horse Society on parade at Wuhan

The Orient Lucky City complex hosted the 'China Wuhan Equestrian Festival' from 1<sup>st</sup>. – 7<sup>th</sup>. 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



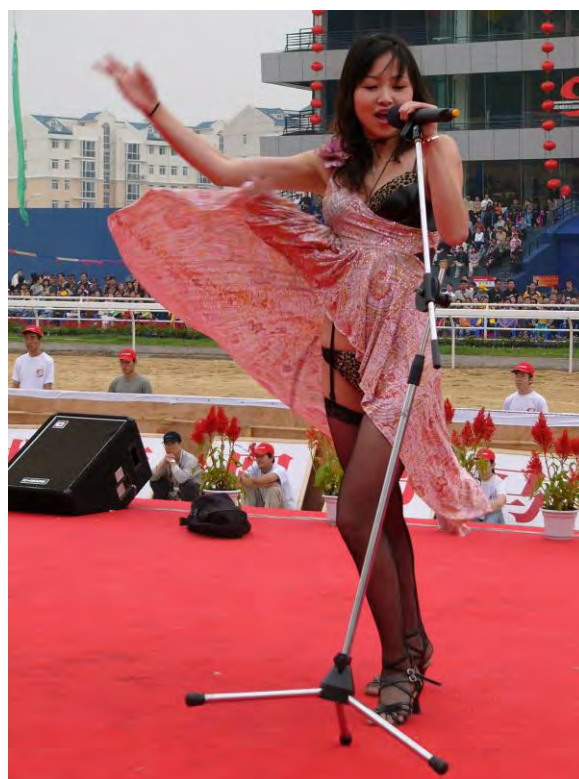
## Polo at Wuhan

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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



## 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 Presidents 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	

120 St. James Road  
Bondi Junction  
Sydney N.S.W. 2022  
Tel: 389 0102

St. Aubins Arms  
245 Kelly Street  
Scone, N.S.W. 2337  
Tel: 45 1040

22 September 1988

The Hunter Valley Equine Research Foundation,  
c/o Mr. Bill Howey,  
P. O. Box 280 Scone.

Dear Bill,

Further to our telephone conversation, I  
enclose a cheque from the producers of the  
Star Kingdom Dynasty film which is in  
payment for Royalty fees for the use of  
footage from the film "The Veterinary  
Surgeon on the Stud Farm" which as you know,  
was produced by Murray.

I requested that these royalties be paid to  
the H.V. Equine Research Foundation as a  
donation from the family of the Estate of  
the late Murray Bain.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Mace

M.J. Bain

PS The film I think is being shown on  
Channel 10 around 1pm on the 16 Oct.

TELEPHONED

13-10-88

REQUEST

TROPHY

"MURRAY BAIN  
SERVICE TO INDUSTRY AWARD"

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: P.O. BOX 822 BONDI JUNCTION N.S.W. 2022

### ‘Punctuality’!

I called to see Tom the other day (14/05/02) on my way from my city *pied a terre* at Bondi Junction to my *real* home at Scone in the Hunter Valley. This involves traversing Sydney from the Eastern Suburbs through the CBD to the Upper North Shore. Foolishly I agreed to be at ‘Farleigh’, Burns Road, Wahroonga at 9:00am sharp! It is palpably unwise even bordering on extreme stupidity to rely on smooth passage through the *milieu* of Sydney traffic at this hour! Almost inevitably I was late! Tom was not amused! The first task I performed was to change a light bulb for him. At 90+ he was not confident of climbing and balancing on a high ladder. (‘Farleigh’ is a magnificent old residence redolent of the area with very high 12’ ceilings rarely encountered nowadays). This small ‘charitable’ act seemed to humour him a little. The truth was I was not game to refuse!

Our discussions centred on the origins of the PGFVS and also the 10<sup>th</sup>. Edition of T.G. Hungerford’s ‘Diseases of Livestock’ (McGraw-Hill). It was a fascinating two hours and included a delightful morning tea with Mrs. Hungerford as gracious hostess. (‘The worst wife I ever had’! – TGH). Tom actually prepared the tasty sandwiches I enjoyed so much.

The concept of continuing veterinary education had its genesis through the aegis of the largely NSW based AVA in 1964. Hugh Gordon, Victor Cole, Murray Bain and Ron Churchward were the front runners. Ron was Registrar of the AVA and had a ‘political’ agenda to pursue. Together they formed the Post Graduate Committee and the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science of the University of Sydney with Vic Cole as Chairman. The original philosophy engendered ‘refresher courses’ rather than ‘new knowledge’ promulgation. The first course offered was on ‘Sterility of Cattle’. No notes were provided prior to the course and none were delivered for the course. A total of six ‘consultants’ were appointed to advise on different areas of veterinary activity. Tom was invited to counsel on poultry. Keith Sanders and Graham Edgar were others briefly involved at this early stage.

Eric Butt, a non-veterinarian, was appointed Executive Director of the PGFVS in 1967. It was not long before Tom began to make his very strong views apparent as an ‘adviser’ to the Foundation! The eventual outcome after much sabre rattling was for Tom to be offered the position of Veterinary Director. ‘When can you start’? He was asked. ‘Tomorrow’ was his succinct and curt reply! As good as his word Tom assumed office at 7:30 am on 6<sup>th</sup>. August 1968 after leaving his Penrith (NSW) practice the day before. Eric did not stay long thereafter and Tom soon became the sole full time Director. Others such as Don Gates had brief sojourns and Tom ‘went on the attack’ to achieve his goals!

Tom’s goals were admirable and certainly worth revisiting today! It was envisaged to hold a maximum of four major courses per year. These were to be of great intensity and the highest standard of ‘worlds’ best practice’. Notes were to be produced one month in advance and authors paid per page of *new* material produced. The courses were to be so much ‘must attend’ so that veterinarians would feel ‘blackmailed’ into being there!

Great emphasis was placed on *punctuality* at the courses by both the participants and the tutors. (At this juncture Tom fixed me with his best ***bold italic underlined*** steely expression as he emphasised the point! The message hit home!). Tom had great delight in relating to me how he switched the microphone from the rostrum to his hand held 'mike' just as soon as a tutor's time was up! He had no compunction in interrupting in mid-sentence and always maintained strict control!

Tom described how it was necessary to impose strict discipline very early to instil absolute confidence in the participants so they would now exactly what to expect and when! Similarly Tom fought and won other basic and not so basic philosophical arguments at this time. 'Control and Therapy' articles were a case in point. Tom defied Committee direction and printed them unedited just as received. Filibustered by a wildly enthusiastic protagonist Vic Cole was 'big enough' to admit Tom was right! A similar situation evolved with control and editorial content of the 'Director's Circular'. Score: Hungerford 2 – Committee 0.

*'Punctuality is the virtue of the bored'*. (Michael Davies (ed.) *Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* (1976) 'Irregular Notes 1960 – 65', 26 March 1962.

Somehow I don't think Tom would have liked Evelyn Waugh very much?

Further discussion centred on the proposed 10<sup>th</sup>. Edition of 'Hungerford's Diseases of Livestock'. Tom gave a wonderful rendition of his original 'negotiations' with the senior principal(s) of publisher McGraw-Hill in head office New York City. Tom opened with the gambit about the 'worst wife he ever had' but the (female) president countered by opening Tom's book and citing the following dedicated quotation:

*"As of the bow the cord is  
So unto man is woman  
Though she bends him  
Yet she obeys him  
Though she draws him  
Yet she follows  
Useless one without the other"*

The allotted maximum 10 minutes interview duration extended to over two hours! Ardent feminists would not have approved but the McGraw-Hill President was impressed! At the end of this time Tom was allocated 'all the resources he required' to produce the 9<sup>th</sup>. Edition of his seminal tome. I don't think it will be that simple for the 10<sup>th</sup>. one Tom!

W. P. Howey

## Relevance Deprivation Syndrome (RDS)

Andy Warhol put into perspective! We are each entitled to our own fifteen minutes of fame! Some of us are allocated more time and some less. Old Bill Shakespeare also intimated how we can artificially influence our fair share by being selectively proactive in making life's most important decisions:

“There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the full leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyages of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries”

(IV, iii ‘Titles from Julius Caesar)

We all have to deal with it sooner or later and it can be a bitter pill to swallow! I confess the intellectual property of the title is not my own – although I would claim it! I heard it mentioned on talk back radio as part of the acrimonious debate over the internecine NRMA Board debacle in NSW. A particular formerly high profile media delegate was described as suffering a bad case of ‘relevance deprivation syndrome’ (RDS). I liked it and it stuck!

Whenever we volunteer for duties or are elected to Association, Council or Board positions we must remember we have a finite term of duty! Knowing when to quit is the big question. Senior iconic sporting figures seem to have the most difficulty? Is it dollars or is it hubris, vanity and ego? I must confess to my fair share of wounded soul searching and retribution in the past. Now in the twilight quadrant of my life's journey I am completely inured to its effects. Does it matter? Could it be related to successful extirpation of my own expansive ego a decade ago? One of Australia's great national treasures put it beautifully many moons back. ‘Remember, we are merely temporary custodians of the (greater) game’. Thank you Sir Donald! I will never lose sight of that!

W. P. Howey

## “Revelations” at Christmas

Because I believe it is appropriate, I like to think optimistically at Christmas time!  
“Revelations” helps!

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations”. (Revelations 22:1 – 2)

Similarly, eminent authors and modern composers have poignant cogent advice barely concealed in exculpatory rhetoric:

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried”. (*G. K. Chesterton* 1874 – 1936, *What’s Wrong with the World* (1910) pt. 4, ch. 14).

“And here’s to you, Mrs Robinson  
Jesus loves you more than you will know.  
God bless you please, Mrs Robinson  
Heaven holds a place for those who pray”.  
(*Paul Simon* 1942 - , *Mrs Robinson* 1998 song; used in the film *The Graduate*)

(The Mrs Robinson character so excellently portrayed by Anne Bancroft in *The Graduate* might have more in common with Madame Bovary than the Madonna!)

## A Happy Ending after All *The last word is the best news of all*

A New World at Last

“There will be no more tears then, nor pain. Wild animals will frolic, not kill. Once again creation will work the way God intended. Peace will reign not only between God and individuals, but between him and all creation. The kingdom comes out into the open. The City of God flings wide its gates”.

Revelations ends on a note of great triumph. Somehow, out of all the bad news augured here, good news emerges – spectacular Good News. To those who believe, Revelations becomes a book not of fear, but of hope. God will prevail. All will be made new. *There is a happy ending after all.* (Revelations 22)

Everyone at *PGF Team 2000* wish for you all at the time of an inchoate Millennium the merriest Christmas and the happiest and most prosperous New Year!

W. P. Howey  
Director (On behalf of PGF Team 2000)



## The Centurians

I have just returned from my annual vicarious nostalgic and highly emotional 'cricket fix' at the SCG Test in the early new year. It never ceases to thrill to 're-live' 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 and Dominion! Little did I think then it would be my 'ultimate privilege' to share the experience of an Ashes Test at this iconic halcyon Antipodean '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 days' 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 General Peter Sinclair presented him with the richly deserved award! 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! Surprise? Surprise!

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 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.



Harold Larwood  
Nottinghamshire & England

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 at the SCG! Initially he thought the crowd were gloatingly celebrating his dismissal by Australia. Then it dawned on him the deafening appreciative applause was all for him and his heroic efforts! 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 great almost 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

## Vicarious Thrill – Graduation 2001!

I had a fabulous time at the awards presentation ceremony for new Sydney BVSc graduates on Wednesday 19 December 2001! For the information of Sydney alumni it was held in the W. P. Young Room of the Veterinary Science Conference Centre and on the lawn outside. This was an exceptional occasion and huge success with the ambience 'perfect'. Congratulations to the Faculty (Dean Reuben Rose), Veterinary Science Foundation (Jennie Churchill) and everyone else involved! It was a great thrill and honour to present the PGFVS Prize for Clinical Competence the Dr. Elizabeth Duys BVSc, a most worthy recipient. The PGFVS makes similar awards each year at Melbourne, Queensland, Murdoch and Massey.

I had a ball! My only regret is that I had to drive away so greatly inhibiting my style! Graham Brown (Chris's father) reminded me of when I didn't make their wedding in Newcastle 33 years ago because I'd rolled my car and obliterated a few fence posts leaving Denman Races! So perhaps it was as well I was 'restrained'! Graham was PP Board Vet in Scone when I arrived in 1967! I found a lot of other soul mates and 'blasts from the past'! Perry Manusu I'd rarely seen since he knocked over my magnum bottle of Scotch somewhere in mid-West USA on the PGFVS Beef Cattle trip in 1973! This was the first and last time the PGFVS went 'on tour'! Victor Cole was an outstanding tour leader! Dave Mossman and Brian McCrae excelled in the 'hospitality' stakes!

It was great to run into John Hayes (Angus's father). Angus and Sam Walker were staunch mates of my son Hugh at St. Paul's College. Chris Brown was also in the coterie although 'in denial' at St. Andrews! George Russ has done well to secure Chris for Neutral Bay! He expects all the 18 - 25 nubile young females from the lower North Shore to turn up regularly for feline consultations! (Actually, I think he said they'd be bringing their cats!)! Angus, Chris and Sam all stayed at our place in Scone when doing 'practical work'. Sarah, not surprisingly, thought they were all 'divine' even heavenly - especially Chris! Nicky Jagger also stayed with us - at my invitation! I met her parents for the first time that night! Genetics rules OK!

Andrew and Janie Stevenson (Edwina's parents) were in their element. Andrew is chairman of the Widden Stud Board as well as St. Vincents Hospital and Westgarth Chambers! Good to see former VETSOC leader Kym Hagon who is bound for the North Coast. There were lots of others but time and 0.05 are limiting! I felt quite 'patriarchal' with some of my proteges now BVSc. Well done! It was an enormous thrill to be there – vicarious like most of my pleasures these days!

My son Hugh leads our family's Christmas prayers each year! Hugh has a very strong faith - finely balanced by the opposing 'anarchist' views of his elder sister 'Cyclone' Kirsty! As I began to write this she was recuperating in Buenos Aires following a hectic global peripatetic perambulation of 10 months duration. Not surprisingly civil unrest had just exploded! Kirsty managed to sneak across a remote border in escaping from Nepal at the time of the Royal slaughter! She was in Turkey for S11! She pushes the boundaries!

Since she arrived home NSW has been on fire! Ah well she is her father's daughter! Like I said genotype predominates! ***I will close in wishing you all a fabulous Year in 2002!***

W. P. Howey  
Director



What Makes a Good Horse Vet?  
What Makes a Horse Vet Good?

Many years ago the late Alf McGeoch delivered me a crumpled piece of paper with a hand written note on it. Alf is the sire of Olympic bid hero Rod as well as my mate Andy and was then the major stud stock consultant with the AML & F Company. I enjoyed the distinction of playing Rugby with Andy who had earlier partnered the legendary 'Pine Tree Meads' in the King Country XV in NZ. (Talk about 'decline and fall' and 'sublime to ridiculous'!) His son James and my son Hugh later played second row for Sydney University Colts. However I digress – I thought you really needed to know that! The writing on the note was in the shaky scrawl of the very elderly F. K. ('Darby') Mackay. 'FK' was my wife's great uncle, a prominent thoroughbred breeder and former vice chairman of the AJC. Like the 'Wizard of Dormello' Federico Tesio he made an intimate study of horses around the world, their behaviour and genotype ('breeding'). Nebo Road and Royal Sovereign were two of his champion breed. His note posed two superficially simple questions:

“What makes a horse good?”

*and*

“What makes a good horse?”

“Good luck” said Alf as he bid *adieu*. I needed it! I have struggled for correct answers ever since. It's rather like the extant situation with veterinary training. What are the answers?

***“Imagination is more important than knowledge. I never came upon my discoveries by a process of rational thinking”.*** Albert Einstein.

***"Struggles in academia are always mediaeval and vicious because the spoils are so small".*** J. K. Galbraith.

W. P. Howey  
Director PGFVS

Word Puzzles!  
And/Or  
A Little Light Learning!

Many veterinarians have commented on my barely comprehensible use of words and the English language in general! My secondary school teacher vehemently expressed the same critical opinion 45 years prior with profound deleterious effect on my grades! I had great difficulty in making it 'over the line' for the absolutely necessary pre-requisite pass in the subject to attain University entrance! This will surprise no one! Perhaps I spent too much time on the playing fields and too little in the library?

One of my colleagues at the PGFVS (who shall remain nameless!) presented me with a small copy of a book by Guy Noble 'Word of the Day'. This is an etymological compilation of the wonderful words and what they mean as heard on ABC Classic FM radio in Sydney. Guy Noble has been the host of 'Breakfast' on ABC Classic FM since 1999. He is also a conductor, pianist, incurable word buff and father of two small children.

Purely to be obtuse I composed the following from words (with definitions) appearing in 'Word of the Day'. I believe it makes a sentence although my 'Windows 98 Spell Check' refutes the spelling and has great difficulty with most of the words! This is the literary equivalent of Eric Blair's [aka George Orwell] 'doubleplusgoodduckspeaking' in his epic '1984'!

***"The pixilated slubberdegullion uxorious poodlefaker was a blutterbanged flibbertigibbet last night, cachinating to a lickspittle before haughmagandy, susurrations and persiflage with a prurient soubrette slooming it off before dysania and becoming caliginous gutfoundered with tintinnabulation on a muckle turdiform fuscous goatsucker followed by borborygmus and afflatus!"***

Perhaps I should explain! Some of them are not what you might think! I have occasionally been slightly 'blutterbanged' and mildly 'pixilated' myself! I'm feeling a trite tittup today as I spuddle about my umbonate! It's all crapulous logorrhoea to me!

Pixilated = Bewildered, crazy, drunk: as amusingly eccentric as a titillated pixie!

Slubberdegullion = A worthless, slovenly fellow

Uxorious = Excessively fond of one's wife

Poodlefaker = A youth too much given to tea parties and ladies' society generally

Blutterbanged = Confounded; overcome by surprise (from Lincolnshire)

Flibbertigibbet = Flighty, gossiping person

Cachinating = To laugh loudly or immoderately

Lickspittle = A toady

Haughmagandy = Adulterous sexual intercourse

Susurrations = Whispering or rustling

Persiflage = Light raillery, banter

Prurient = Given to or arising from indulgence in lewd ideas

Soubrette = In 18<sup>th</sup> century French theatre, a clever but impertinent servant girl  
Slooming = Sleeping heavily and soundly  
Dysania = Having a hard time waking in the morning  
Caliginous = Misty, dim, dark  
Gutfoundered = Exceedingly hungry  
Tintinnabulation = Ringing, tinkling  
Muckle = A large amount  
Turdiform = Having the form of a thrush  
Fuscous = Sombre; dark coloured  
Goatsucker = Common name for nocturnal birds such as frogmouth and nightjar  
Borborygmus = A rumbling of the guts  
Afflatus = A sudden rush of divine inspiration  
Tittup = To move or behave in a restless manner; caper, prance, frisk (impatient horse)  
Spuddle = To go about a trifling business as though it were a matter of great importance  
Umbonate = Having a rounded boss or protuberance in the centre  
Logorrhoea = Excessive flow of words  
Crapulous = Suffering the effects of intemperance

My Associate Director was distinctly not amused when I described her as a trite “tittup”!  
It has just come to my attention that Windows XP spell check cannot handle this  
etymological miasma! Eat your heart out Bill Gates! You’re defeated at last!

About the author



I'm a Gnu!

*Photo courtesy of Galago Publishing (Pty) Ltd. 1986*

Perhaps you can read the book?  
Ah well, back to the trammels of quotidian life!

# ‘The Infinitive History of Veterinary Practice in Scone’

*Aka ‘Hippomedon Hyperbole’ and/or ‘Nomius Nexus’*



Frank Leslie Williams