

## “Them Was The Days”



## “Old Time Racy Racing Reflections”

Compiled by W P Howey, Scone

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### Front Cover

The classic drawing of a 'Stud Groom' by Cedric Emmanuel is the copy of an original in my possession. The 'model' is almost certainly an employee at Segenhoe Stud sometime in the 1950s or early 1960s. The late Cedric Emmanuel was a close friend of Mr and Mrs Lionel Israel and frequently visited Segenhoe. I am an ignorant artistic philistine but I believe Mr Emmanuel has admirably captured the very essence of the personality, character and genre of the type of man then occupying these positions in the stud hierarchy. There is both a prevailing poignancy and subtle pathos signified within the portrait and a tacit countenance of the 'man-and-his-horse' bond. The 'roll-your-own' tobacco pouch, cigarette holder and burning cigarette are classically symbolic of the times and fundamental bucolic ethos. In some sophisticated social circles cigarette holders were the very essence of glamorous chic. For the itinerant farm worker they were a practical means of preventing the acrid and sour taste of raw burning tobacco by-products from fouling the taste buds and the too hot ash from burning! Men like this (they were all men) have now disappeared; rather like much of this collage?

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Dedication: Harley Walden

Featured Image: Harry 'Darcy' Walden in the William Inglis & Son Sale Ring at Newmarket

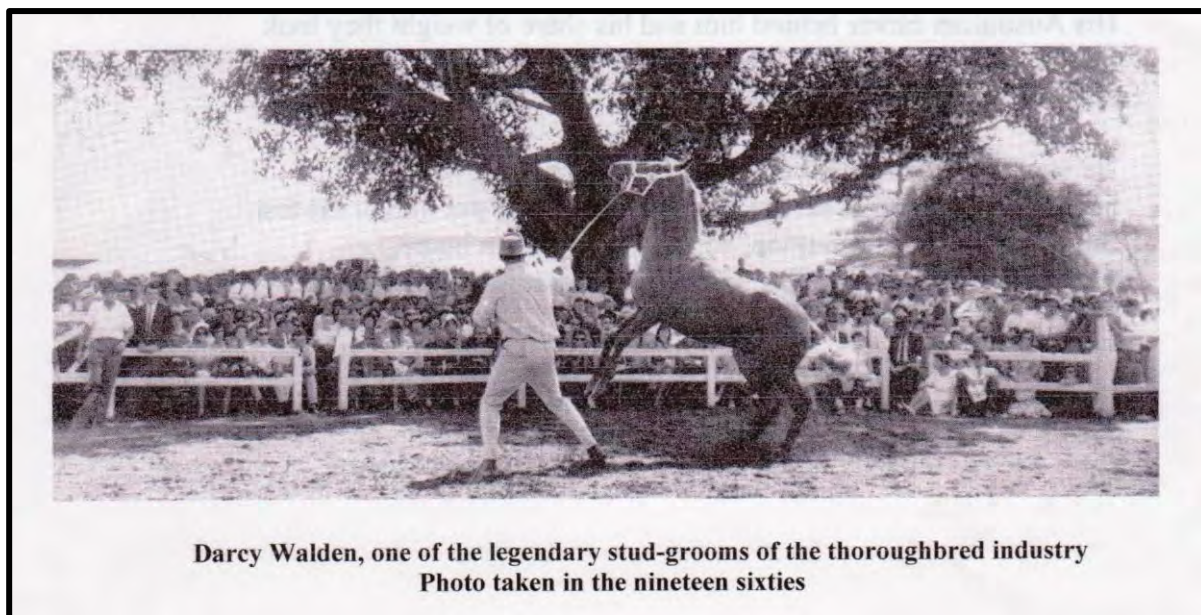


Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

I have dedicated this modest literary composite to the memory of the late Harley Walden. It's not enough; but at least it's something.

I had the honour of presenting Harley Walden's eulogy at his memorial service on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017. Peter Snowdon and Tommy Ollerton were two of the pall-bearers. If it hadn't been for Harley's lifelong consuming passion for the thoroughbred industry and the Scone Race Club in particular much valuable history would be lost to posterity. Among many other attributes Harley was a prolific amateur journalist. He wrote and recorded more about the Scone Race Club than anyone else I know. He had his chosen favourites; in horses, trainers, stud properties and horsemen. These are the ones he wrote about with ardent fervour.

I 'inherited' Harley's substantive collection. It has taken me ages to wade through the meticulous records. Harley had assiduously collected every race book from the old White Park Track 1947 – 1994. Similarly he scrupulously accrued the same collective from the very beginning of the new track at Satur in 1994. His hard-copy storage was meticulous in its methodology. I almost felt guilty in disturbing it.

The substantive part of this compilation I have euphemistically named "Them Was the Days" is extracted in part from Harleys' records. He collected and then typed out in hard copy his favourites articles accessed mainly from past copies of the Scone Advocate lovingly stored and maintained by the Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society. I have deliberately avoided repeating those vignettes which he has already published in "The Spirit Within" and other volumes.

I adduce here Harley's encomium to his own father; the late Darcy Walden. Darcy was the inaugural recipient of the Murray Bain Service to Industry Award presented by the Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association in 1994.



## A League of Their Own



Taken from a signed limited edition print in possession of the author

Featured Image: 'Stud Groom' by Cedric Emmanuel

Later 2005 by Harley Walden

Some considerable time after I had written the story about my late father Harry 'Darcy' Walden I happened upon an article in the Bloodstock Breeders' Review, the article penned in 1920 by Mrs E A Craddock who along with her husband had travelled to Australia from England and whilst here had paid a visit to some of the country's more famous stud farms.

The story pays a lot of detailed information to the studs, but also highlights the work carried out by the stud grooms under a heading Mrs Craddock has called "Industrious Stud Grooms" and goes on to say quote:

"The first journey taken for stud inspection in New South Wales was one to the celebrated horse breeding district at Scone, on the Hunter River. The principal things that strike one are the large size and abnormal early growth of the young stock, the placid temperaments of both the native and imported horses, and the enormous amount of hard work done by the stud grooms in very isolated places.

Often they will only have one other man, and possibly a couple of boys, to help, and they manage three or four stallions, thirty foals, break and prepare yearlings for sale, and, in the winter season, feed up to two hundred horses three times daily.

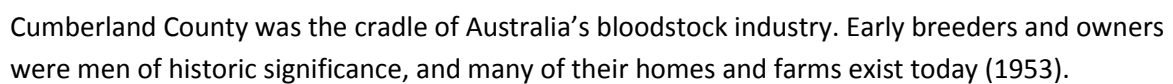
For this purpose carts go round all the time over the huge, bare, wire-fenced paddocks, laden with Lucerne and “chaff”, which later is corn cut green before the ears swell, then made like our hay. Rolled oats are of course given as well. A very useful mixture used at one stud is equal quantities of linseed oil, brown sugar and limewater, beaten into a creamy mass. It is given to foals with excellent results.

Stud groom in the summer will take mares by rough country tracks to other studs, often over a hundred miles away, riding or driving in a small sulky, camping out *en route*, and will later bring them back, with their foals in the same way. With the gathering of the crops, keeping records and nursing sick cases, stud grooms are, indeed, the hardest working class of man in the Australian thoroughbred industry.



Douglas M Barrie 1953

Douglas M Barrie 1953



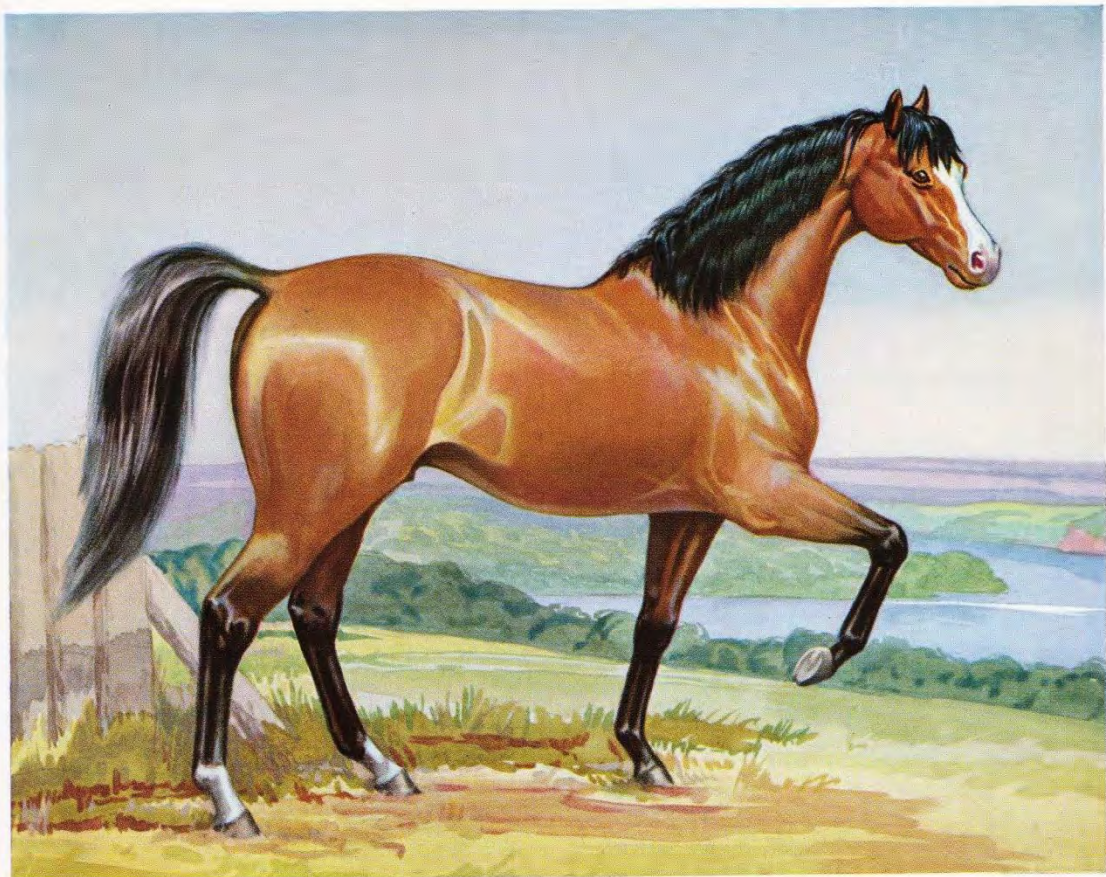
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Seventeen horses competed for the main events, besides “several matches held between ponies.” Further meetings were held in 1811, 1812 and 1813.

After the crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813, exploration commanded the energies of the leading citizens. Race meetings recommenced again in 1819, although it was not until 1825, when the first Sydney Turf Club was formed, that racing in Australia really went ahead.

There were a number of good stallions on the mainland early enough to beget our first competitors. Best of these was the English horse Northumberland (imported in 1802) and his sons Percy, Hotspur and Young Northumberland; also Rockingham (imported in 1799) and Washington (imported ex-America in 1802). Besides these were several stallions from Oriental sources, such as Campbell’s Shark and the same owner’s great early sire Hector. The majority of importations prior to 1820 were of Arab origin.



HECTOR

Bay Arab, at one time the property of the Duke of Wellington. Hector was imported from Calcutta to New South Wales, and was the most outstanding sire during the first decade of Australian racing.

*Featured Image: ‘Hector’: From a watercolour impression by Douglas M Barrie*

Stride, imported in 1822, and Steel Trap, in 1823, led the influx of great English blood, which has not since ceased. From this time breeding increased rapidly. Bloodhorses were required not only for racing; they had a vital role in the development of the Continent.



During the first fifty years breeding activity was centred in the County of Cumberland. Horses bred or used in the historic studs which were located along the Hawkesbury, the Nepean and their tributaries Eastern and Southern Creek, figured in the extended pedigree of some of our best horses of today. Early importations came from the best blood available in the world at that time. Steel Trap (Foaled in 1815; imported in 1823) was a star class exemplar.

In England Steel Trap was a good performer. His sire Scud got the 1818 and 1820 Derby winners Sam and Sailor, as well as Shoveler, the 1819 Oaks winner. Sorcerer, the sire of Steel Trap's dam Prophetess, was one of the best sires of his time and a link in the chain that led to Matchem down to Hurry On and Man O' War. Prophetess' sire Whiskey got Eleanor, the first winner of both the Oaks and Derby. His sire Saltram, won the Derby; while maternal great grandsire Diomed won the first Derby in 1780. Similarly, other imported sires came from the most successful English blood of their particular period.

Colonel George Johnston was the officer, who, at the instigation of Macarthur's party, arrested Governor Bligh in 1808. Johnston's stallion, Northumberland (imp), was one of the most used in early Sydney. He stood at Johnston's farm at Annandale, now a suburb of that name. Johnston's larger holding "The King's Grant" passed to his daughter and her husband Major Weston. Here, in 1817, historic Horsley Park was built, where the first hunt assembled in Australia, with hounds specially brought from England.

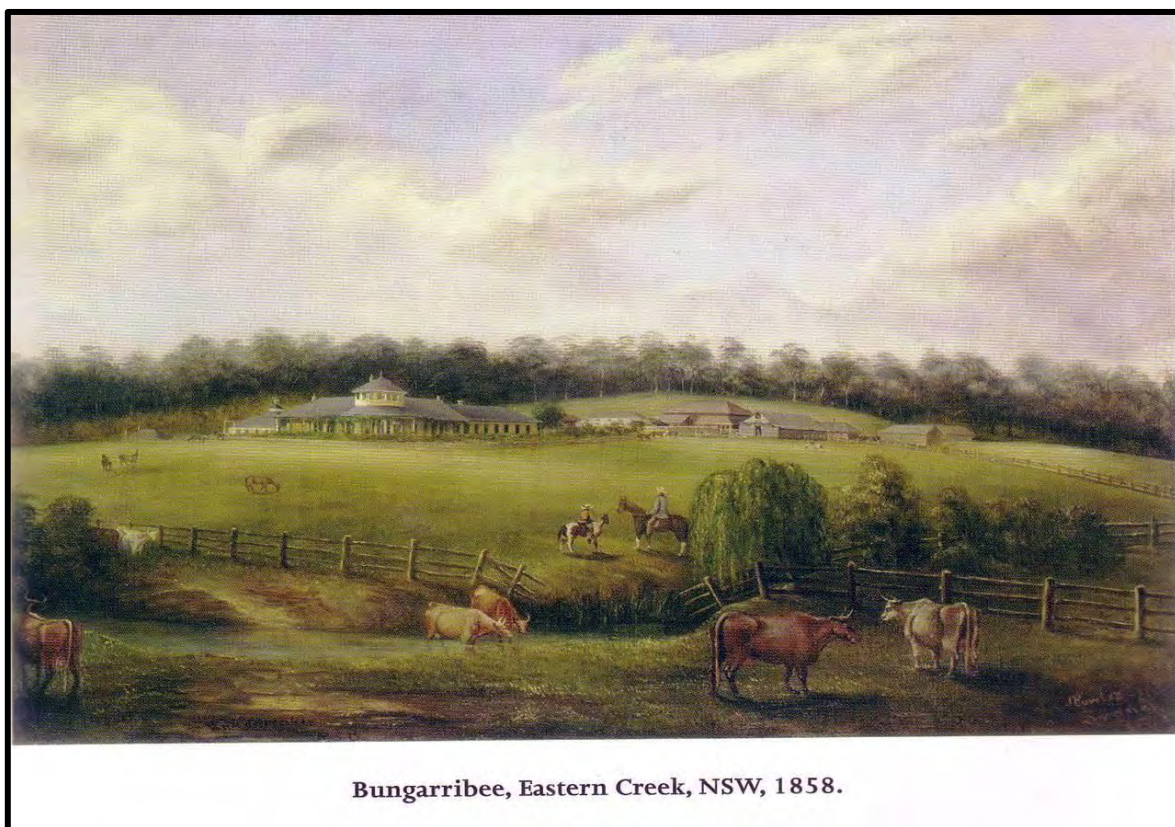
The first Australian-bred stallion advertised for duty was Captain Piper's Young Northumberland. He stood from 1804 at Hassall's stables at Parramatta. His owner was steward for the first Sydney Jockey Club and Point Piper takes its name from him. Captain Piper later left the coast for his "Alloway Bank" Estate near Bathurst, where he settled for the rest of his life.

Rival for Northumberland was Campbell's Hector, who was a great acquisition to the colony. His blood survives in maternal families. De La Salle traces back to a Hector mare.

Hector stood first in Sydney, at Campbell's yard in Bligh Street where the Union Club, the AJC and Stud Book Keeper's Offices are today (1953). His later owner, Mr D'Arcy Wentworth, was the father of W. C. Wentworth, explorer and statesman. Hector's next habitat was the "Home Bush Farm" where the Sydney Abattoirs are today (1953; now Sydney Olympic Park). It is possible that horses used in the first Blue Mountains crossing were progeny of Hector and Northumberland.

The Wentworths' larger holding was "Fitzwilliam Place" at Toongabbie, an important breeding centre in those far-off days. Mr J C Osborne is today (1953) breeding fine thoroughbreds at his small stud in Fitzwilliam Road, on a portion of the old estate. A Cold Shower colt bred by Mr Osborne was the biggest yearling offered at the 1952 Easter Sales, standing at 16.2 hands.

Friend of the Wentworths and one of the Blue Mountain trio was Lieutenant William Lawson. Shortly after the Bligh incident, in which he took part, Lawson built "Veteran Hall" at Prospect Hill. Today tall pines look down on Sydney's water reservoir; and mark the site of the house and stables where such horses as Baron (imp. 1824), Theorem (imp. 1828) and the Colonial-bred Spring Gun, stood the season. This son of Steel Trap was the winner of the Produce Stakes in 1828; the Governor's Cup, the Wentworth Cup (twice) and the Town Plate. Lawson was among the most notable of the early breeders.



'Bungaribee House', Doonside has been associated with thoroughbred since 1825 until at least 1953. The stables built by Mr Thomas Icely are seen on the left of the house (RHS of image)

A few miles west, near Doonside, is the historic "Bungaribee", rich in thoroughbred history, and where Steel Trap died in 1834. Built 130 years ago by John Campbell of India Mutiny fame, Bungaribee was at times owned by three important breeders. The first, Mr T C Icely, imported Manto; our first named thoroughbred mare. She was the grand-dam of Flora McIvor and ancestress of the very numerous families that produced Trenton and company.

A later owner was Mr Charles Smith, a noted breeder who carried on the thoroughbred tradition. Famous Bungaribee sires in his time, beside Steel Trap, were Rous' Immigrant (imp) and Emancipation (by Toss imp).

Next came Mr Henry Herman Kater, who imported Cap-A-Pie, Tros and Kater's Georgiana in 1839. Cap-A-Pie was a son of The Colonel, winner of the 1828 English St Leger, and a grandson of the 1815 Derby winner Whisker. His best colonial son was Mr Charles Smith's bay horse Sir Hercules, the son of Yattendon.

Not generally known is that this was a line of Eclipse which survived in the County Cumberland for 60 years before being returned to the United Kingdom. The line ran thus – Eclipse, Pot80's, Waxy, Whisker, The Colonel, Cap-A-Pie, Sir Hercules, Yattendon, Chester, Abercorn (exported to Ireland in 1898). Patron, another offshoot of this line, was also exported, to do well at the stud on the Continent.

“Bungarribee” was later used as an assembly depot by the Australian Agricultural Company when exporting our famous Walers. During the present century the property was owned and managed by Mr Tom Cleaver. In his time Messrs W Kelso, G Price, H R Telford, F Williams, J T Jamieson, Bayly Payten and Frank McGrath were among the leading trainers who sent their charges to spell in the paddocks which surrounded the old home. On the big oat-bin grooms have scratched the names of famous visitors. Clearly visible are such names as Gay Ballerina, Havoc, Chatham, Rampion, Pretzel, Phar Lap, Lord Valentine, High Caste, Lynch Law and Satmoth. Closing Time, Ammon Ra, Prince Humphrey, Amounis, make up a list of notable residents, not forgetting the great Peter Pan, who went from Bungarribee pastures to win two Melbourne Cups.

The gracious old home is now a ruin, although the big barn and stables, which housed good horses for over a century, still stand. What a pity that Bungarribee House cannot be saved from the fate which is rapidly overwhelming it.

Immediately to the north of Bungarribee was Mr Crawford’s “Hill End”, which may still be located today, between Doonside Station and Eastern Creek. Next door was “Flushcombe” the property of Mr R Lethridge. Hither came Bay Camberton in 1824 and here many colonials, such as Problem, were bred.

Bay Camberton’s bloodline survives today through the old maternal families. His sire, Old Camberton, was one of the gamest stayers ever seen on the English turf. He won a famous race against three others. Of these, one dropped dead after passing the post, one went blind and the third was never of use again. Old Camberton was later exported to France to carry on his stud success.

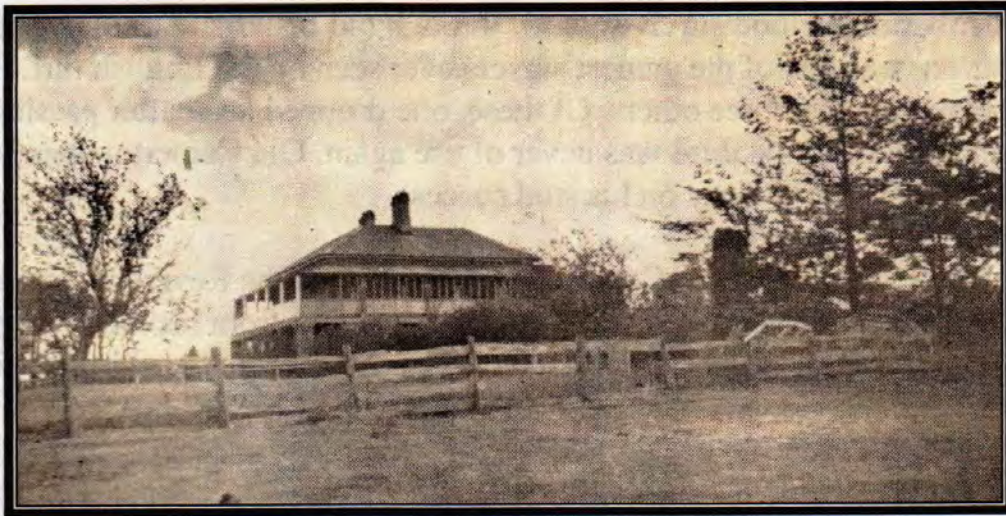
At the junction with South Creek was the holding of the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who dabbled in breeding and farming, apart from his more religious activities. Champion (1809) by Northumberland (imp) was bred by His Reverence at Marsden Park.

Between Marsden Park and Castle Hill is “Hambleton”, originally the estate of John Palmer, commissary general of the infant colony and the breeder of Palmer’s Grey (1808) and Regent (1815). One of the State’s most successful breeders today is Mr A Meehan, whose nearby Marylands Stud has in recent years produced Riptide, Free Rule and Nagpuni, etc.

At the headquarters of Eastern Creek, and almost next door to “Horsley Park”, was Mr Brown’s “Abottsbury Farm”, where Model, the milk-white Arabian, presided over the equine establishment. Model was one of the few Arabs whose blood survives in the old colonial families; the taproot mare Myrtle, (by Gemma Di Vergy), traces to Vesta by Model. His sons included Australian, the winner of the 1825 Two-Year-Old Stakes, while the stout gelding Jorrocks was a close descendent.

One of the best of the early importations was Gratis (imp. 1835), a son of Middleton the 1825 Epsom Derby winner. He stood in Sydney, and also at Mr Charles Roberts’ property Wallgrove, just north of “Abottsbury”. Dinah, by Gratis, is an Australian tap-root mare whose family was very successful in Victoria after the 1850’s and included Mermaid, the Sydney Cup winner, besides Briseis, the only filly to win both the VRC Derby and Melbourne Cup (in 1876).

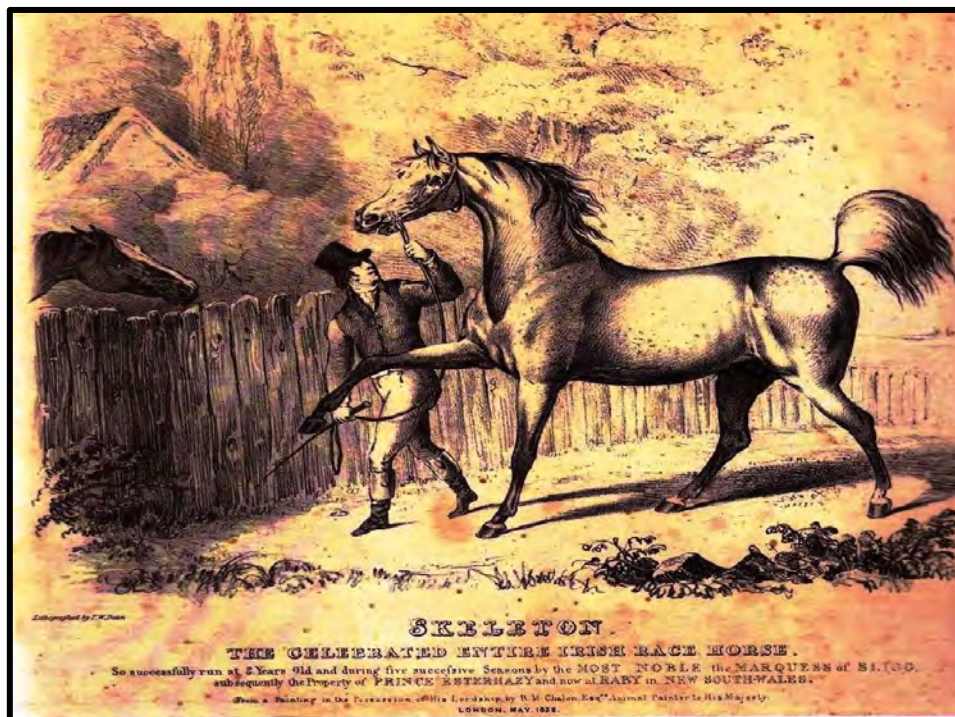




**Photo taken above in 1953 shows “Raby” Australia’s oldest inhabited Homestead. The stables which housed \*Skeleton are gone. They were beyond the trees on the right.**

South Creek rises near historic “Raby” and flows north to join the Hawkesbury at Windsor. Mr Alexander Riley, an early magistrate and pioneer wheat grower and sheep-breeder, imported Skeleton, Australia’s first Irish horse to Raby Park in 1827.

This was a brilliant racehorse and one of the fastest horses in Ireland. “Raby” is said to be one of the oldest inhabited homesteads on Australia. The present owner, Major Mitchell, is a grand old horseman and thoroughbred horses are still bred there.





Some miles down South Creek, Mr Henry Bailey bred some of the first racers at his “Bayly Park”. Here after 1830, the imported racehorse Whisker stood at stud, in between winning races and matches. He was a son and namesake of the 2815 Derby winner. He died in 1834 shortly after Mr Bailey had refused £1400 for him.

Less than three miles away was Gregory Blaxland’s “Lee Holme”, the starting point of the all-important Blue Mountain expedition. Today, close by is Mr H P McCormick’s fine stud “Sundridge Park”, where Edwardsi (imp) at present is top sire and where such good ones as Prince Dakhil have been raised.

South Creek crossed the old Western Road into “Bathurst”, at one time owned by John Oxley, the surveyor-general and explorer, and then flowed through the farms of Captain and Mrs King, where several of the Young Hectors did stud duty in the 1820’s.



Nazeer Farrib

Nazeer Farrib, ‘a high caste Arab’, painted in watercolour by Edward Winstanley, Sydney 1846. He appeared in early editions of the Australian Stud Book. Nazeer Farrib was part of the early Arab influence on the development of the Australian thoroughbred. Many of the Arabs imported to Australia in the early nineteenth century had raced on the turf in India. They were prized by breeders for fresh bloodlines, and were often put to thoroughbred or half-bred mares, or rheie daughters were out to thoroughbred stallions (Courtesy Mitchell Library, Ref. Z ML 282).

Messrs J Harris and Samuel Terry of "Terrybrook" were prominent breeders; each situated on the opposite sides of South Creek near the first site of the village of Castlereagh. Today, a few miles west nearer the Nepean River, is Mr J C Benrodt's "Princes Farm" and Mr H S Thompson's "Tarwyn Park" studs.

The boundary of the county is formed by the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers. Actually outside the county and across the Nepean River are historic "Camden Park", the home of John Macarthur and his descendants since 1805. Macarthur had been, perhaps, our leading breeder while at Elizabeth Park at Rosehill. Percy, a son of Northumberland (imp.) bred by Macarthur in 1804, and Hotspur, Percy's brother of 1805, was among the first of a numerous company of improving quality.

Over the long many years good racehorses and stallions came from Camden Park. Macarthur broodmares like Gulnare (imp.), Casandra, Alice Grey and Gedley have many descendants racing in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr William Howe's "Glenlee", well known in the early days, was just across the river. A mile or two northwest were two holdings so the surveyor-general Oxley, "Elderslie" and "Kirkham". The history of Kirkham dates back to 1816 when Governor Macquarie made a grant of 1000 acres to Oxley. Although Oxley's original home "Kirkham Cottage" has long since disappeared, the coach house and stables may still be seen. Oxley died in 1828 and for some years his sons managed the old home. Bachelor was a notable importation doing duty here from 1830.

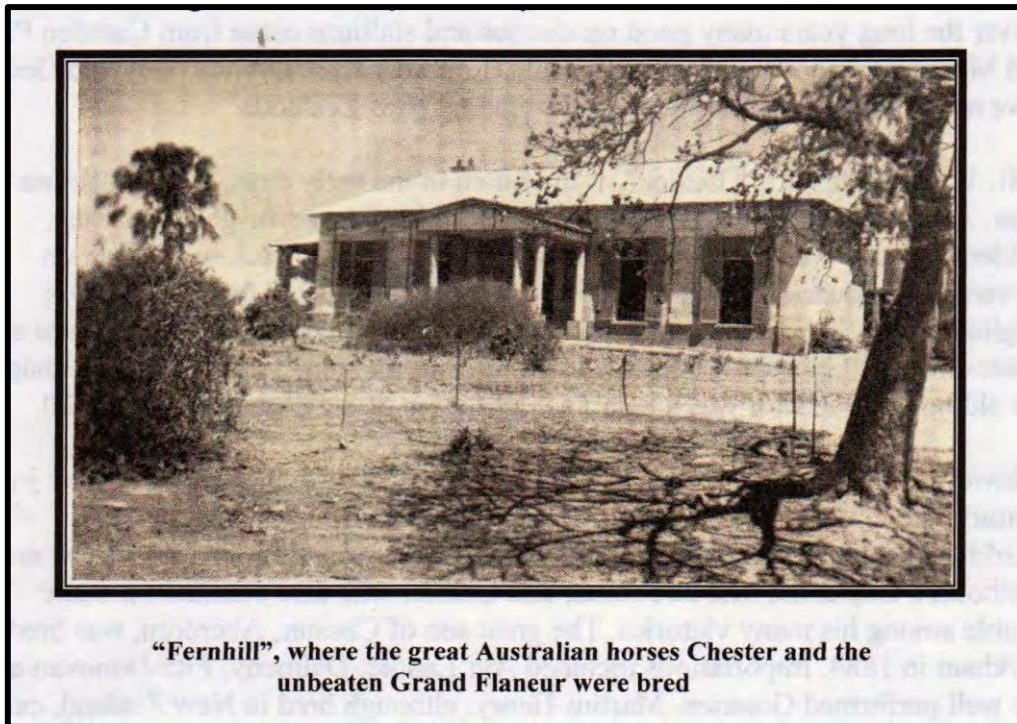
However, "Kirkham" won greater recognition as a thoroughbred home later in the century, when it became the property of the Hon James White. In his time "Kirkham" stud sires included Martini-Henry, who won the Victoria derby and Melbourne Cup at his first two starts; and Chester who also claimed the same double among his many victories. The great son of Chester, Abercorn, was bred at Kirkham in 1884. Importations included Ayr Laddie, Dalmeny, Fitz-Donovan and the well performed Gossoon. Martini-Henry, although bred in New Zealand, came to "Kirkham" when a foal.

"Cobbitty", just downstream from "Kirkham", has long been a horse centre and "Denbigh", the old home of the Hassall family, is nearby. In later years "Cobbitty" became famous as the headquarters of the NSW Polo Association.

At the junction of Bringelly Creek with the Nepean, were "Vermont", the pastoral home of William Charles Wentworth, and "Shancomore" owned by J T Campbell, Sheriff of the Colony and Secretary to Governor Macquarie. "Shancomore" boasted three publicised stallions in the 1810 – 1820 period – Abracadabra (son of Hector); Shillelagh (by Nelson, the son of Northumberland, out of Worrogombee by Rockingham, imp) and Abdallah a "milk-white full bred Arabian". The stud fee for the latter was "currency 5 guineas., or in lieu of money payment, 12 bushels of good storable wheat".

Mulgoa, near the junction of the Warragamba and Nepean Rivers, was the Cox country. The three brothers were sons of William Cox of Sydney and Richmond who built the first road to Bathurst. Henry Cox's homestead "Glenmore" is now a country club of that name. George Cox's "Wimbourn" was the stud home of the good early racehorse Chase in the 1820's. Chase was a son of Bay Camberton (imp.).





In 1842 Edward Cox built the beautiful home "Fernhill", which his son the Hon E K Cox made the showplace of the Commonwealth when Yattendon was top sire. Chester was bred at Fernhill and also the unbeaten Grand Flaneur who was another of the select company to win the Victoria derby and Melbourne Cup double. The Fernhill Handicap, run at Randwick, owes its name to this famous old stud.

"Fernhill House" is an architectural gem wrought from local stone and timber and will look down on the grave of Yattendon and out across the cradle of the Australian thoroughbred for many another year.



Overlooking the rich flats, beside which the Grose joins the Nepean to become the Hawkesbury River, is "Hobartville". Records in the Mitchell Library disclose it was known as "Hobart Ville" since 1816 or earlier. The home of the Reynolds family for over a half a century, "Hobartville" had produced fine horses for famous owners for almost the previous century. Maribyrnong, Tim Whiffler, Grand Flaneur have in turn been the boss there; while recent notable, like Temeraire and Moorland, have come from Hobartville sires and Hawkesbury pastures.

Clarendon racecourse lies between Richmond and Windsor – one of Australia's oldest racecourses and another old Cox home. Near Windsor, Mr Charles Smith had "Clifton" and across the river were notable horse breeders, like the Baldwins. One of the most celebrated performers of the early racing days was Scratch. Bred and reared on the Hawkesbury it was nothing for Scratch to travel 30 or 40 miles to a meeting.

From these old homes within forty miles of Sydney, came horses that were to establish a breed of stayers as fine as any in the world. From the time of Jorrocks, the iron gelding Spring Gun and Scratch, until the present day, the County of Cumberland has continued to contribute some of the best racehorses.

Footnote:

Since Douglas Barrie wrote this original article in 1953 things have changed dramatically in the County of Cumberland. Now largely subsumed and swallowed by the inexorable urban expansion of Sydney westward, fewer of the icon historical establishments remain in 'production'. Very little genuine pastoral land remains available for agricultural pursuits. Similarly, since the arrival of Star Kingdom and the introduction of the Golden Slipper Stakes at Rosehill, the breeding industry has focused on rapid returns and 'quick fix' outcomes. The heady halcyon days of Victoria Derby and Melbourne Cup doubles are long gone!



## Horses of an Earlier Day

Excerpt, Letter to the Editor, **Scone Advocate**, 3 March, 1961; Reprinted in 'Mac Bridge; The Man and his Recollections' by Heather Ashford and Margaret Ashford-MacDougall 1983, Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society, 1983 Bi-Centennial Publication No. 2

About 2 years ago, through the columns of the Scone Advocate, I wrote mentioning outstanding qualities of a few utility horses whose owners were L E Wiseman of Gundy and Harold Doyle, who at the time resided at Invermien, Scone and a gelding bred at Segenhoe by the late Allan and Donald McDonald, that in the 1860's fell into the hands of the bushranger Fred Ward, better known as Thunderbolt.

Also, a horse owned by the late Bab Haydon, of Bloomfield, Blandford, who won five races in one day at Jerrys Plains. The latter I believe could claim thoroughbred descent, he being by Tester, sire of those good full brothers, Harvest Home and Gentleman Jim, they being by Tester, dam a Somnus mare.



Omission was made to mention a couple of exceptionally good horses that could claim to have descended at least on the sire's side from thoroughbred stock. There was Butler, bought in Central Queensland at the end of last century for the princely sum of £17 by Jack Almond, who led him behind a sulky to his home at Denman. Following the sulky probably prepared Butler for a role he was late called on the fill.

This great horse, Butler, who was the winner of sixty seven races between Sydney and the Queensland border.

The first time the writer saw Butler was in 1901. He was being driven in a sulky through Blandford, heading north for the two day meeting at Murrurundi. The sulky was loaded with horse feed, rugs and camping gear, it being the owner's custom to camp with his horse.

Butler won two races at the meeting. This would be the meeting at which Titania, a gelding owned by Jack Brodie, at the time stock inspector living at Murrurundi, won four races.

Also at the same meeting, a gelding, Brolga, by Albatross, bred at Martindale and owned by the late Harry Kenny, ridden by Syd Elwell, was killed in a race by hitting the end of the running rail with his chest. Two lengths of rail went right through the horse. Brolga died on the spot, the rider speared head first along the rail for a couple of panels and got off with only a scratched face. At this time the course was very dusty, evidently obscuring the rails from both the horse and rider, who was running in the ruck. The accident happened near the finish of a six furlong race.

Returning to Butler, to show what a kind and even tempered horse this great son of The Butler was, the return from Murrurundi coincided with the holding of the Muswellbrook Show. Butler was entered for and competed in the ladies' hack event. Ridden by the wife of the owner, Mrs Almond, riding side-saddle, it was awarded the blue ribbon. Evidently crowds had no effect on Butler.

Another one brought up in the hard school was Piallah, a grey stallion by an AJC Derby winner, Charge, son of Carbine. Piallah was owned, trained and raced by J J McGivney, of Blandford, in the first and second decade of the present century.



Carbine ("Old Jack") was the grandsire of Piallah

The colourful old James, who was at the time well past the seventieth milestone of life's journey, rode the horse in his working gallops, mostly along a metal road between two mile pegs, taking the time on a watch held in his hand. Some of his friends said it was alarm clock he carried!

No such conveniences as floats in Piallah's time. The horse was ridden or driven in a sulky by his owner, carrying training paraphernalia from home to various race meetings. At times Piallah was called on to prove his sex before a night's lodgings at various places could be secured for the horse and owner.

Piallah was the winner of a number of races, well above the twenty mark, and it was said that with anything like fair treatment should have been among the first class horses of his day. This grandson of Old Jack, as Carbine was mostly known by those near him, would hardly know what the inside of a stable looked like. His stable was mostly of the post and rail yard type, or tethered to a wire fence.

*(The letter writer discussed 'Beauford' at this point which I included in my tribute elsewhere)*

The late Bob Haydon, of Bloomfield, Blandford, also owned a property, Warrah Ridge, in the Quirindi district. It was his custom to go and stay at Warrah Ridge during shearing operations. He would do the journey in a buckboard drawn by four horses. On one of these trips, in 1901, among his four in hand was a gelding by Tester, named Splash. Although he looked to have a fair amount of draught blood in him, it was said he could run a quarter of a mile in about twenty four seconds.

On the road Mr Haydon met a carrier with a horse team. Of course, the conversation turned to horses. During the talk a challenge was issued and accepted. So Mr Haydon took the harness off Splash whilst the teamster unharnessed a grey gelding from his team, and a quarter of a mile race was run. The grey horse taken from the team was the winner. This so impressed Mr Haydon that he made inquiries as to the breeding. This horse was by Cooper, son of Gipsy Cooper; dam unknown to the writer.

Mr Haydon lost no time in purchasing the sire, Cooper, in hopes that his stock would cross well with the Tester blood. Result of this venture is unknown to the writer.

Today little is known of the utility horses such as stock, draught and coaching types. One writer in **The Australasian Post** of October 11, 1956, writes:

*"Looking at the almost horseless streets, and perhaps even more horseless highways today it is hard to conceive the fact that in 1870, the peak of the coaching era, Cobb and Coy. Alone were harnessing 6000 horses a day, and that their coaches were travelling an enormous daily mileage, through Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria."*

That mentions only one coaching venture. Add to this the number of horse who were at harness and saddle work in the towns and cities, and the countless horse teams that travelled throughout the countryside. Also the number of stock and farm horses in use. It should not be hard to realise that the part the horse played in Australia before the advent of the motor vehicles, which did not make itself felt till towards the end of the 1920's.

To older generations it is not hard to realise why the horse was known as one of man's best friends, and that the horse was at times cartooned and written off as 'The Horstralian Idol'.



## The First Wave of Free Settlers on Hunter's River

By Keith R Binney 2003

Thomas Potter Macqueen 1791 – 1854

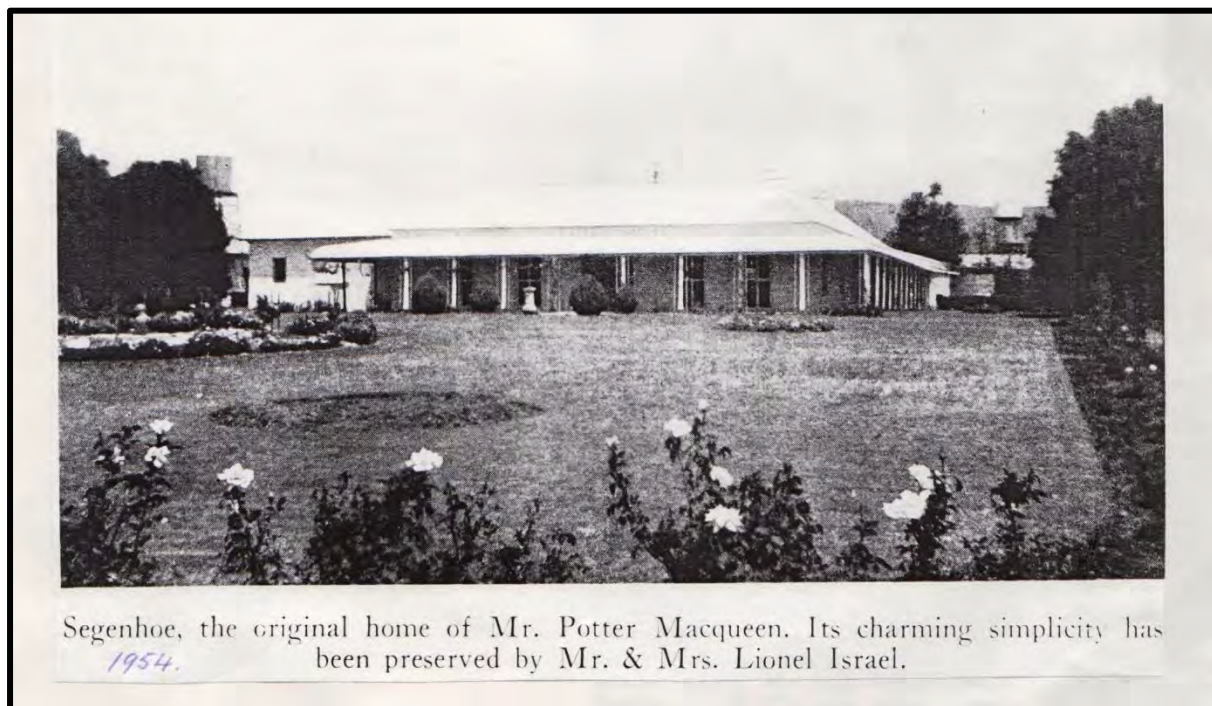


Image courtesy of Harley Walden Archive

Note: At about this time my late good friend Keith Binney published his seminal tome ***‘Horsemen of the First Frontier and The Serpent’s Legacy’ (ISBN 0 646 44865 X)***. This article is taken from his book in Section Three: ***‘The Hunter Valley and the counties of Northumberland, Hunter and Phillip, 1823 – 1860’; Chapter Nine: – ‘The First Wave of Free Settlers on Hunter’s River, together with some emancipists and currency lads’***. This is a modest synopsis which is largely about the vicissitudes of Thomas Potter Macqueen and his iterations at historic Segenhoe Stud near Scone. Harley Walden had actually typed the whole section for inclusion in his personal record.

Henry Dangar’s *bete noir*, the Honourable Thomas Potter Macqueen MP, was born in Bedfordshire, England at *Segenhoe Manor*. His father, Dr Malcolm Macqueen MD came into possession of this fine estate through his marriage to Mariana, daughter of Thomas Potter. Thomas Potter Macqueen was a Member of Parliament for East Looe, Cornwall, in the period 1816 – 1826, following which he was a Member for Bedfordshire between 1826 and 1830. During his latter parliamentary tenure, Macqueen established a friendship with John Macarthur Jnr, at that time a resident in England. The politically inclined barrister John Macarthur proved to be a most useful helper to Macqueen, particularly on the election hustings. It seems that around the period just before the recall to England of Governor Brisbane and no doubt at the instigation of John Macarthur Jnr, Thomas Potter Macqueen made discreet overtures to be appointed the first civilian Governor of New South Wales. However, for what reason, the position was not offered to the ambitious Member of Westminster.



Potter Macqueen was successful in acquiring a land grant of 10,000 acres in New South Wales with a provisional grant of a further 10,000 acres through the good offices of the Earl of Bathurst. Today this would be 'insider trading' but was *de rigueur* in those days. Macqueen privately chartered two ships, the Hugh Crawford and the Nimrod, to transport the first free emigrants, livestock, goods and chattels to NSW. Included were overseer Peter Macintyre, "a Highlander of the best repute in Perthshire", and other sundry associates. It is probable that the thoroughbred horse Crawford (GB 1820), by Warrior out of Miss Catton) was on the shipment and located at Segenhoe by 1827.

There followed a whole series of inflammatory bureaucratic 'spats' between Peter Macintyre and colonial 'heavies' such as John Macarthur, Surveyor General John Oxley and Assistant Surveyor Henry Dangar. Eventually full title was established over the property under the management of Peter Macintyre. In 1830 H C Semphill replaced Macintyre who began farming in his own right. Kayuga 1827, near Muswellbrook was Macintyre's home base and may have been in his purview all along? Thomas Potter Macqueen himself located to Segenhoe on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1834. Semphill's role as overseer may have come under scrutiny. He had established a very large property portfolio himself but was a victim of the crash of the "Hungry Forties". He returned to Scotland where he died in penury.

Macqueen himself proved to be an incompetent manager. John Bevan was sent from England by his brother Hugh Bevan to sort it all out. He failed. Macqueen reconnected with Peter Macintyre. At this time they founded the township of Aberdeen.

Macqueen was joined by his family at Segenhoe but the financial situation escalated out of control. The family returned to Europe where Macqueen managed to avoid his creditors before dying of apoplexy at Oswestry in 1854. He was described by his GB-based Segenhoe agent John Bevan as an 'arch idiot'. In 1871 after many aborted attempts Segenhoe was finally sold to respected thoroughbred breeders, brothers Honourable James and Frederick White Esq. Their good work was later followed up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by William Brown and Lionel Israel.

Horses to grace the paddocks at Segenhoe included foundation sire Crawford (1824), Arab stallion Abger (b. 1820) by Model (Arab) ex Derwent mare, Spaniel (c. 1830) by Peter Fin (GB) ex a Spaniel mare, and Currency Lad. In the lower Hunter River at 'Glendon' brothers Robert and Helenus Scott had successfully established a thoroughbred breeding enterprise. Imported Stallions included 'Toss' (1828) and 'Dover' (1830). The latter was to emerge as a major source of superior bloodstock including for the enterprising Haydon family of 'Bloomfield', Murrurundi.



**TO COVER THIS SEASON,  
AT GLENDON, HUNTER'S RIVER.**

**Toss,**  
For each Mare, 100. *Sig.* Groom's Fee included.  
**THE BAY HORSE**

**TOSS:**

15 hands 2 inches high, foaled in 1822;

**WAS** got by Bourbon, dam (Trump's dam) by Gohanna, her dam Fraxinella by Treutham, Woodpecker, Everlasting by Eclipse, &c. &c.—*vide Stud Book, Vol. 3.*

Bourbon was got by Sorcerer, dam by Precipitate, her dam by Highflyer, out of Tiffany, by Eclipse, &c. &c.—*vide Stud Book, page 289, Vol. 2.*

Gohanna was got by Mercury, dam by Herod, her dam Maiden by Matchem, &c. &c.—*vide Stud Book, page 151, Vol. 2.*

**PERFORMANCES in 1827.**

*Newmarket 1st Spring Meeting, Monday, April 30th, 1827.*  
Handicap sweepstakes of 10 sovereigns each, for Horses of all ages, Ab. m.

Lord Southampton's b. c. *Toss*, by Bourbon, 8 st. 10 lbs. 1  
Mr. Wyndham's bl. c. Black Swan, 8 st. 6 lb. 2

Lord Darlington's Abion, 9st. 5lb.; Mr. Howe's Skiff, 9st.; Mr. Payne's br. c. the General, 8st. 2lb.; Duke of Richmond's b. c. Linkboy, 8st. 2lb.; Lord Anson's ch. c. by Merlin, dam by Scud; 6st. 8lb.; Mr. Grey's b. c. by Spectre, dam by Poulton, 6st. 8lb. also started, but the Judge could only place the first two: 4 to 1 against Black Swan, 6 to 1 against the General.—*vide Racing Calendar, page 26.*

**EPSOM, FRIDAY, JUNE 1st.**

*The Woodstock Park Stakes of 10 sovereigns each, with 10l. added from the Fund, first half-mile.*

Lord Southampton's *Toss*, by Bourbon, 5 years old 10 st. 1  
Lord Mountcharle's ch. c. by Carlton, out of Ursula, 3 years old, 7 st. 9 lb. 2

Captain Lusk's br. c. Fairlawn, 3 years old, 7 st. 7 lb. 3  
Duke of Richmond's bl. c. Bush, 3 years old, 7st. 3 lb. 4

Mr. B. Bond's bl. c. Sparkler, 3 years old, 7 st. 3 lb. 5  
Duke of Richmond's ch. p. Starch, 3 years old, 8 st. paid.

*vide Racing Calendar, page 42.*

**HAMPTON, TUESDAY, JULY 3rd**

Lord Southampton's b. c. *Toss*, by Bourbon 1  
Mr. Turner's br. c. Royal Oak, 4 years old 2

Mr. Westcote's ch. c. Counsel, 3 years old 3  
*vide Racing Calendar, page 70.*

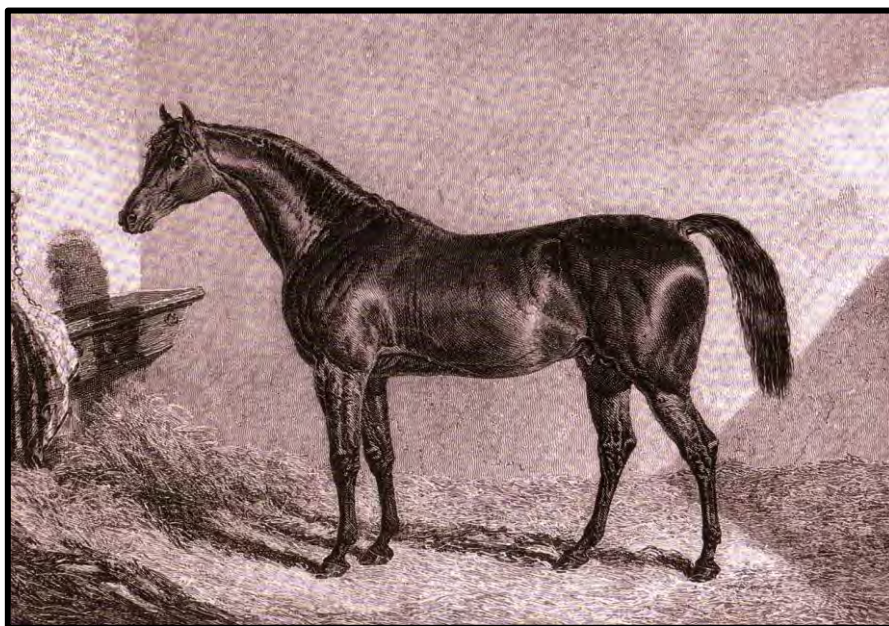
Accommodation for Mares and Foals at the usual prices.  
All expenses to be paid before the Mare is taken away.

*The Horse will be limited to Forty Mares.*

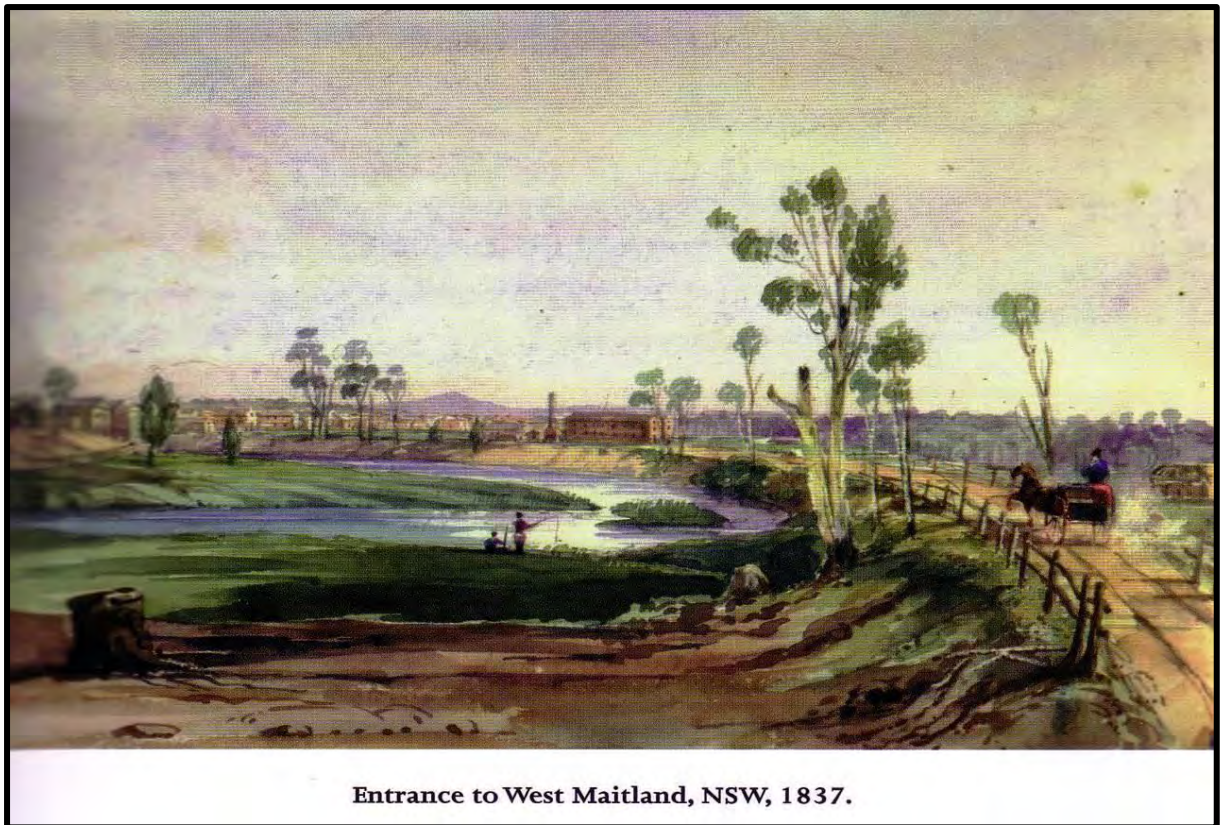
N. B. A Certificate, respecting the identity of the Horse "Toss," from Mr. R. Tattersall, of Hyde Park Corner, London, may at any time be seen, by applying to the Proprietor.

An advertisement for "Toss".

Sydney Monitor, 9 August 1828.



Dover at 'Glendon' c. 1830

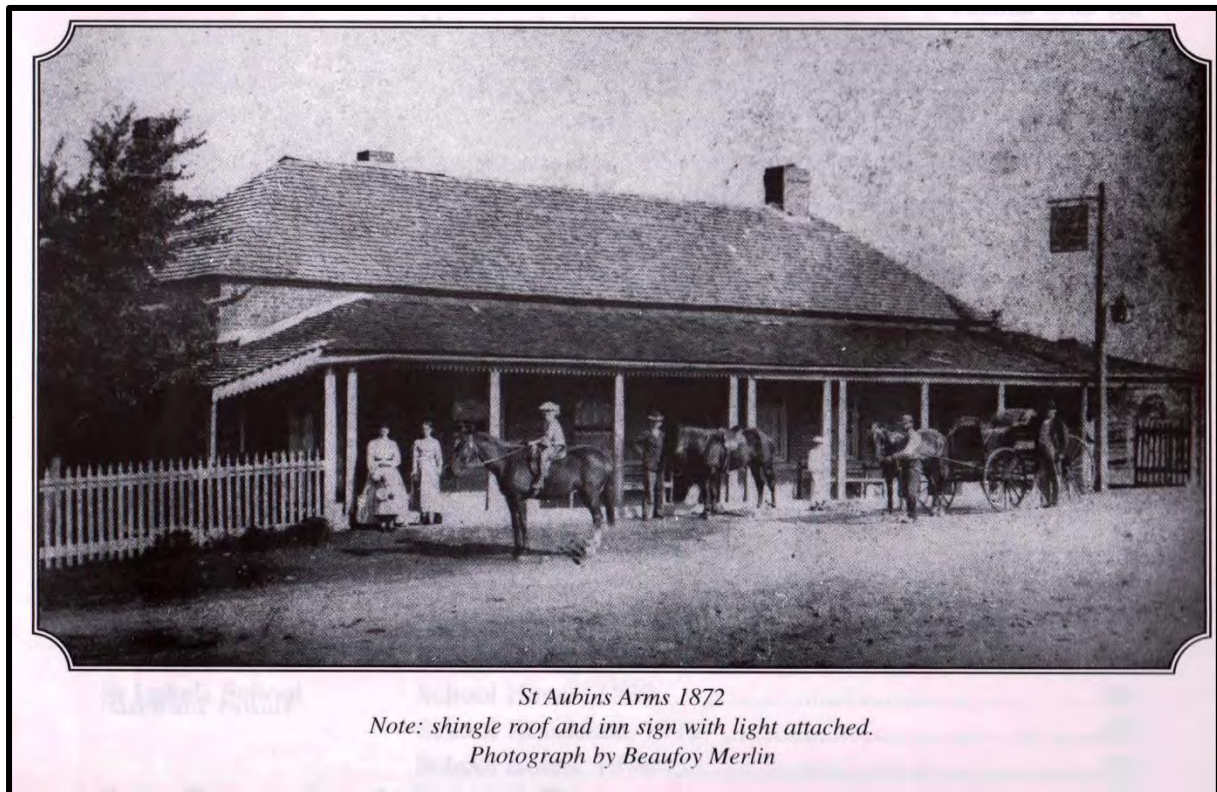


**Entrance to West Maitland, NSW, 1837.**

Watercolour by Robert Russell by permission of the National Library of Australia from 'Horsemen of the First Frontier' by Keith R Binney



## St Aubins Arms



Featured Image: St Aubins Arms 1872 Note: shingle roof and inn sign with light attached.  
Photograph by Beaufoy Merlin

Arguably the most interesting house in Scone is also the oldest. In 1836 the Dangar Brothers Thomas and Henry leased 6 acres of land at *St Aubins Village* from Captain William Dumaresq. By then the Great North Road commissioned by Dumaresq's brother-in-law Governor Darling was in constant use and became a busy thoroughfare between the Hunter Valley (Patrick Plains = Singleton) and New England (= Liverpool Plains).

Early Government law required that a wayside inn be built at 25 mile intervals along highways to allow rest and hospitality after a hard day's riding. Ever on the alert for commercial opportunity the Dangar brothers constructed the first Inn and Store on site beginning in 1836 and finally completed in February 1837. The first name of the Inn was '*The Bird in Hand*'. Later it became the '*St Aubins Inn*' and then the '*St Aubins Arms*'. George Chivers and his wife Elizabeth settled there in 1838 as innkeepers. 'Chivers' was the name chosen by the Bain family during their occupation from the early 1950s to the early 1980s.

The Inn and Store secured a place in the history of NSW in a dramatic manner at 7 o'clock in the morning 21 December 1840. Seven bushrangers under the command of Edward Davis ('The Jewboy Gang') raided the Inn and Store and killed a young Scot John Graham. They were famously apprehended and captured at the gunfight at Doughboy Hollow (Ardglen) by celebrated Magistrate Edward Denny Day. Murray Bain told Lionel Israel of Segenhoe a bushranger was shot outside his house. '*That's nothing. One lives there now*' was Lionel's instant retort! LBI did not like paying veterinary bills.

Over the next 180 years there have been many reiterations of the illustrious old dwelling; firstly as an Inn and then a private residence. 'Chivers' enshrines more of Scone's enduring history than any other building. I actually spent the first few nights of my new life in Australia there during the first week of October 1967. The exponential increase in traffic, especially the heavy loads have detracted from the aesthetic (heritage) ambience. The opening of the Scone Bypass (2020) will bring a 98% reduction from the approximate annual loading of 6 million traffic movements along the New England Highway of which c. 20% are very heavy vehicles.

Acknowledgements: 'St Aubins Arms' by Mace Bain in 'The Inn, The Dentists and The School' by Mace Bain, Roger Humphreys BDS and Gillian Blandford Hayes; Federation Publication, No 2.; Published by Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society 1998.

## Racing – A Walk Down Memory Lane

By Harley Walden 2002

The story of Australia's greatest national sport began with an impromptu bush racetrack, the meeting run by settlers near Windsor in New South Wales in 1805. It contained all the elements of the rugged, the exciting, the bizarre, the picturesque, the daring, the roguish and the boisterous, but never dull and never static as entertainment.

The first recorded Australian race meeting was staged in Hyde Park in Sydney Town on October 15, 16 and 19, 1810. The main event, a two mile run, carried the prize of a silver plate worth fifty pounds. Captain Richie riding Case, a grey gelding freshly imported from the Cape of Good Hope was the successful contender.

# RACING KALENDAR.

## SECOND DAY,

### Wednesday, 14th of August, 1811.—To Start at One o'Clock.

A CUP, Value 50 Guineas, given by the LADIES of the Colony, will be run for by Horses of ALL Ages belonging to the Subscribers to the SYDNEY RACE COURSE, carrying Weight for Age, viz.

3 Yrs old to carry 7 st. 4 lbs. 4 Yrs old ..... 8 st. 5 Yrs old ..... 8 st. 12 lbs.	6 Yrs old to carry 9 st. 10 lbs. Aged ..... 10 st.
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Horses Entered	Colour	Age	Weight carried St. lbs.	Rider	Dress	Owners	Heats
Strawberry	Ross G.	6 yrs		Phil. Macdermot	White, blue facings cap the same	Mr. Williams	1 2 3
Tipsey	Bay G.	4 yrs		James Reynolds	Pink, blue facings cap the same	Mr. Lord	
Flying Ben	Bay G.	4 yrs				Mr. Bayly	
Chace	Grey G.	aged				Captain Ritchie	
Scratch	Bl. H.	aged		Thomas Leaver	Pink jacket, white sleeves, black cap	Major Cleveland	
Cado	Bl. H.	3 yrs		John Fisher	All black	Colonel O'Connell	
Match'em	Ch. G.	6 yrs		Thomas Atkins	Sky blue jacket, yel. sleeves & cap	Mr. Bent	
Miss Bessy	Bay M.	3 yrs		Thomas Young	Orange jacket, pur- ple sleeves and cap	Lieutenant Owens	
Hackesbury	B. H.	4 yrs				Captain Piper	
Gig	Bay G.	4 yrs				Dr. Wentworth	
Monmouth	Bay G.					Captain Cameron	

## MATCHES.

A PONEY RACE (each weight) for 10 Guineas each, will be run by the following Horses:  
 Lieutenant Owens b. p. Fennagh—Rider, Young Reynolds—Dress, orange jacket, purple sleeves and cap  
 Lieutenant Maclean's b. p. Whiskey Mr. James Cox a ch Fiddler.

A RACE for HACKS, open to all Horses, for a Saddle and Bridle, given by the Subscribers: The best of three one-  
 mile Heats—The Horses to be entered at the Starting Post.

### Defeription of Monday's Races.

FOR THE PLATE.

Mr. Bayly's Flying Ben, Lieut. Owens's Miss Bessy, Lieut. Leyne's Glandore, and Mr. Williams's Strawberry were drawn:  
 Mr. Lord's b. h. Tipsey took Strawberry's place.—The Horses that started for the PLATE were, Mr. Bent's Match'em,  
 Captain Ritchie's Chace, and Tipsey.—Two heats run.—Both won by Match'em.

MATCHES.

Major Cleveland's Scratch, rode by the Owner, beat Dr. Wentworth's Gig, a 3-mile Heat—close running.  
 TWO-YEAR OLD SWEEPSTAKES—Three started; viz. Major Cleveland's gr. colt Dugannon, rode by Young  
 Reynolds, Captain Ritchie's gr. colt Cheviot, rode by Fisher, and Lieutenant Maclean's b. c. rode by himself, a two-  
 mile heat, won by Cheviot.  
 Lieutenant Wright's b. h. Charston beat Mr. Birch's ch. h. Ratler, a two-mile Heat—both rode by the Owners.

PLATE 41. A page from the race programme published for the 1811 Hyde Park meeting.

Acknowledge 'The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing', Freedman & Lemon



Up until then the Cape had been the main source of the better-class horse in the colony, but stallions and some valuable breeding stock were also imported from England, and on two occasions from America.

Among the most outstanding of the imported sires was Northumberland, brought to Australia in 1802, and Hector, shipped from Calcutta, 1806. By the time of his death in 1823, Hector's genetic dominance was well established. Three sires, the Byerley Turk, the Godolphin Barb and the Darley Arabian, imported into England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were the source of some of Australia's early bloodlines. The Darley Arabian began notable sire lines, which included Eclipse, and further down, Carbine.



Sydney's Hyde Park races were abandoned in 1832 in favour of a newly cleared portion of land at Randwick. The first meeting held there was staged on April 15, 1832. The same year the Australian Jockey Club came into existence – “men of vision and integrity picked from the cream of Colonial society” – as one contemporary Sydney newspaper wrote.

But it has not always been the landed gentry that have held sway over the Sport of Kings. Although the organising strings have been pulled by such gentlemen over the course of time, it has been the battling owner, trainer and jockey, and in the depression years it was Phar Lap, who captured the imagination and raised the spirits of the average Australian.

Australian folklore is an indelible part of our history and our descriptive poets have ensured that it remains so. One such story that depicts this comes from the small town of Boglong (the earlier name for the township of Bookham on the Hume Highway) in 1872. The course laid out in a clearing of stringy-bark scrub had horses, riders, pub owners, and punters from as far as the Snowy River, the Murrumbidgee and Yass. Among the congregation was a young eight-year-old boy having his first day at the track. This experience was to become part of Australian literature and the source of one of the great Australian ballads. A horse called Pardon won the Bogolong Plate. The young lad was A.B. (Banjo) Paterson and 'How Pardon Won the Cup' part of our national heritage.



Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson

There is not a single day goes by that some kind of controversy arises from the Australian turf, and this is what intrigues the followers of the sport. It is a sport that is placed high on the gambling mantle, whether it be breeding, owning or just having a "flutter" on the Melbourne Cup, but one could then say that every walk of life is a gamble. The stock market, land deals, corporate ventures all have a series of 'booms' and 'busts'.

It was the helices of days of racing when bookmakers traded pounds then dollars with punters that a gauge can be set on the enormous amount of money that would change hands, hundreds of thousands of currency would legally change hands each and every race meeting, and then there was the local SP (starting price) who was busy dodging the tax-man and the local law, while still trying to relieve the bloke at the local of the weekly milk money.

Today we have the TAB (Totalisator Agency Board), and it is well publicised the amount of money that passes through these outlets. It would be fair to say that the average Australian likes a "punt". If you were new to this country and wanted to know what Australians were like, what they wore, how they spoke, then the place to go would be the TAB or the races.

The word Champion denotes ***an overall winner of an event***. Then there is the title Legend, ***a traditional famous person***. With the depth that lies within Australian racing with its hundreds of famous people and horses the term Legend becomes hard to decipher, but I thought well, why not, and my first choice is one whom I feel no one will query, Phar Lap.

From the time he placed foot on Australian soil the horse with the unfashionable pedigree, to all of those but the trainer Harry Telford, who purchased the horse sight unseen for 160 guineas, was destined to capture the newspaper headlines around the world for the next four years.

His scratching from the 1930 Caulfield Cup, leaving the way open, as was widely publicised, for certain people to clean-up on the Caulfield/Melbourne Cup winning double of Amounis and Phar Lap. The famous or infamous attempt to shoot the champion on the Saturday before the big event, the horse's owner and trainer's constant run-ins with officials, were they trying to weight him out of Australian racing ending with his tragic death on foreign soil?

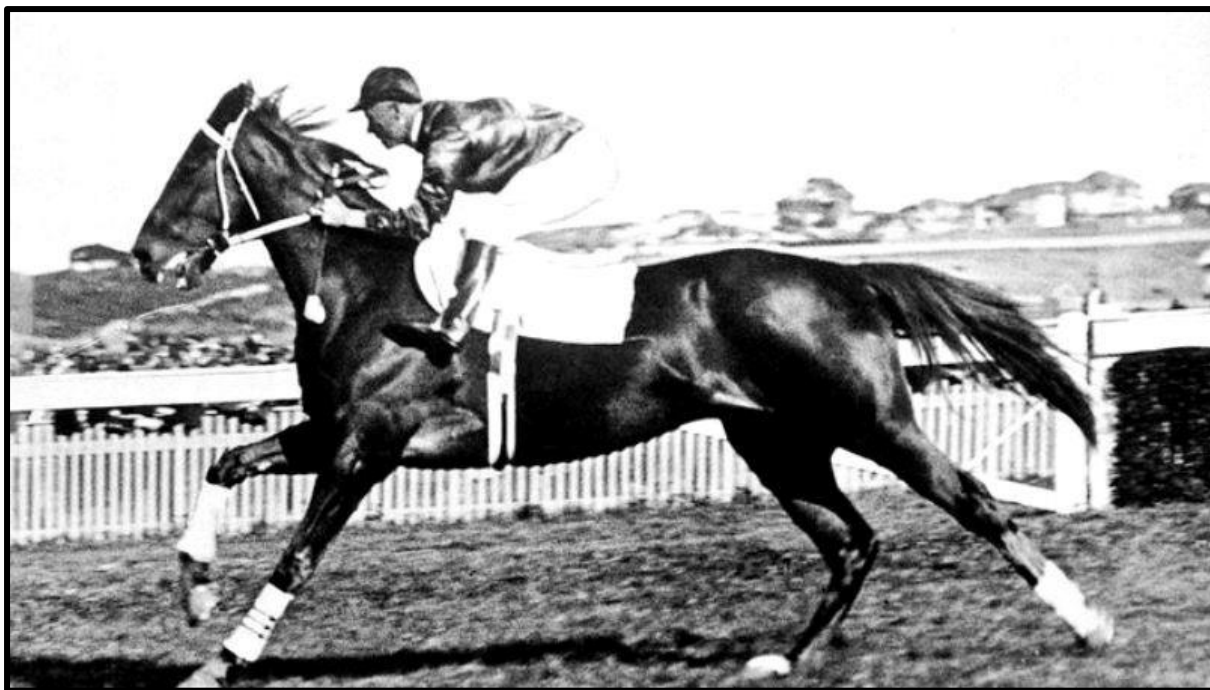
The words spoken by jockey Jim Pike, who rode the great galloper for 27 wins and two seconds from 31 races, summed up his thoughts, and probably those of all Australians on the wonder horse, with these words, before the ill-fated trip to New Mexico:

"The only way they are going to beat him over there, is if they breed a horse with wings and get Kingsford Smith to ride him."

Of course they didn't beat him, Phar Lap winning the Agua Caliente Handicap on March 20, 1932, and in less than weeks the great horse was dead.

Tommy Woodcock's "Bobby" had passed away and into our language. The phrase, "a heart as big as Phar Lap's" is a saying among Australians for the horse that has become an icon and whose memory is still honoured more than seventy years passed.





Phar Lap

Just over a half-a-century ago a new era was about to unfold in Australian racing and breeding with the arrival of the legendary Star Kingdom. Sent to Australia by the astute horseman, Stanley Wootton to stand at Alf Ellison's Baramul Stud in the famous Widden Valley, a move that was to play a significant role, a role that would turn the Australian breeding scene from one based on stamina to that based on speed.

Star Kingdom was not readily accepted by breeders and covered only small books of mares in his first couple of seasons in an era when 60 or 70 were classed as a full-book for a stallion, unlike today when 130 plus is readily accepted.

But things were about to change, from the moment the first of his progeny hit the racetracks in 1954, Kingster winning the Breeder's Plate and Ultrablue the Gimcrack Stakes, the Star Kingdom juggernaut had started to roll.

The winners of the first five Golden Slippers were his, and then in 1964 his champion son Todman (who had claimed the first running of the now world acclaimed two-year-old race) came up with Eskimo Prince – a Golden Slipper winner from his first crop, and then again three years later with Sweet Embrace, the first filly, and a maiden to boot, to take out the coveted event.

When Star Kingdom died on April 12, 1967 he had been Australia's Premier Sire on five occasions, the year following his death he achieved the double – champion two-year-old sire and leading broodmare sire.

The champion stallion sired hundreds of "black type" winners, but probably his greatest attribute was the legacy of an extraordinary sire line, leading sires such as Todman, Biscay, Planet Kingdom, Noholme (USA); grandsons Bletchingly, Imposing and Luskin Star, all playing a large role in what is a cornerstone of our breeding today.



Acknowledge 'The Star Kingdom Story'; Thoroughbred Press; Peter Pring

#### Star Kingdom and Todman at 'Baramul'

Trainers and Jockeys are an integral part of the racing game, people like the late T. J. Smith who trained so many great horses and captured 20 Sydney Trainer's Premierships in as many years, and now his daughter Gai Waterhouse who has taken up the challenge left to her by her famous Dad.

The late Colin Hayes, leading trainer in Victoria for a record thirteen successive seasons, and in South Australia, his home State, for twenty seven seasons, the last seventeen in succession; founder of the famous Lindsay Park Stud, renowned throughout the thoroughbred world for its breeding achievements.

The Cups King, J. B. (Bart) Cummings, had eleven victories and five quinellas in the Melbourne Cup. These three gentlemen must rate high on the list of champions, if not legends.

The names Bill Duncan, Scobie Breasley, Jim Pike, George Moore, Jack Thompson, David (Darby) Munro, Neville Sellwood, Athol Mulley and Roy Higgins along with Bobby Lewis rode four Melbourne Cup winners, a feat equalled by Harry White in the nineteen-seventies, would head a list of great riders, and I have left out many, who would have proved their equal.

Racing families have always had some role on the Australian Turf, and no one combination would have been more popular with the racing public than the father and son combination of Bill and Peter Cook who between them won four Melbourne Cups. Father Tom and Bayley Paten each enjoyed for lengthy periods, the distinction of being Sydney's Premier Trainer. Hugh Munro won the 1901 Melbourne Cup with Revenue; his other runner in the race was the wonder mare Wakeful.

The Munro siblings were also a formidable combination, James and David. Jim Munro won the Melbourne Cup on Windbag and Statesman and rode every champion of the ear. Darby won the Cup on Peter Pan, Sirius and Russia and was embroiled in one of the sports' most controversial races, yet claimed by many as one of Darby's masterful exhibitions on Shannon when left 50 yards at the start of the Epsom Handicap in 1946, and then failed by only ahead to catch the winner Blue Legend.

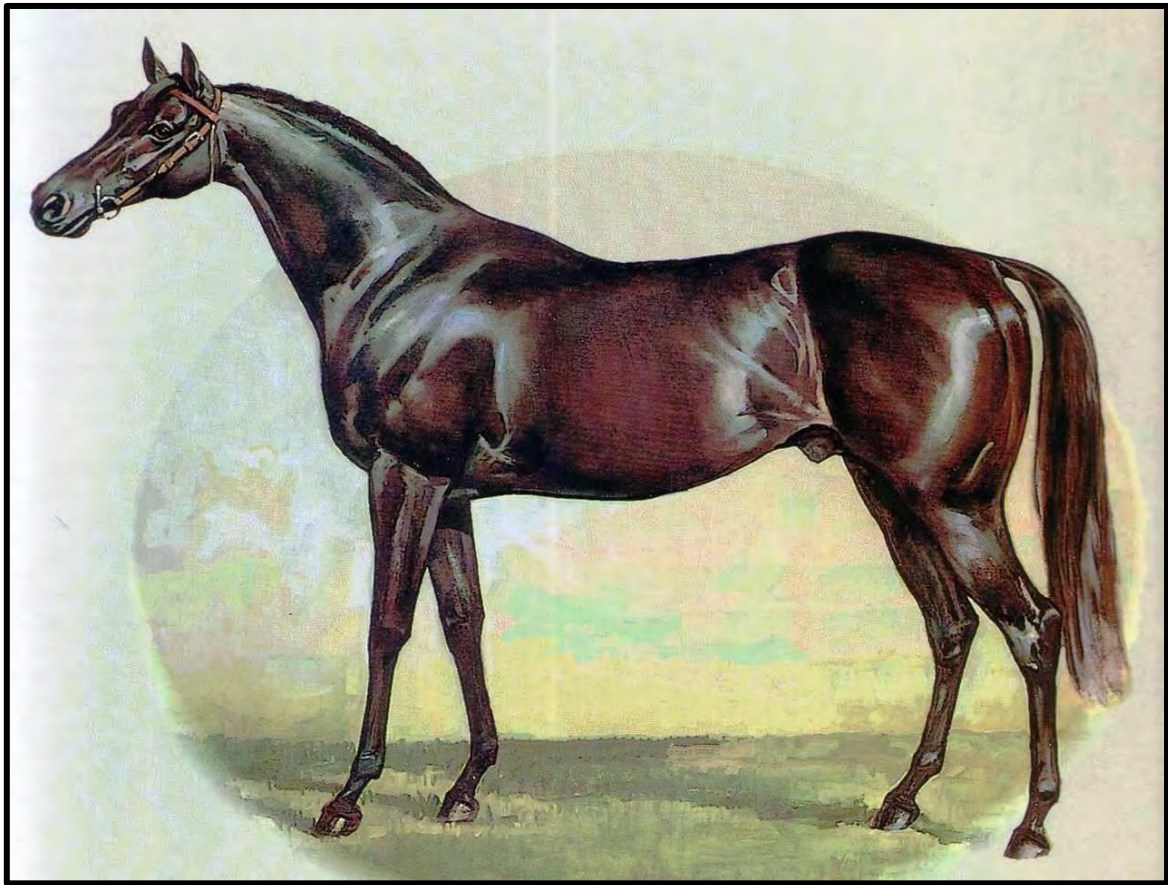
Down through the years the Australian racing annals have been graced by some colourful personalities, some of who have achieved their ambitions. And then there have been those who have just made up the numbers, but whatever role they have played, whether it be man, woman or beast, they have helped develop an odyssey of racing that at times envelopes people from all walks of life.



George Moore



## The Barb



**The Barb**

The Barb was an Australian bred Thoroughbred racehorse, famed for winning the 1866 Melbourne Cup, the Sydney Cup twice, and other quality races. He was bred by George Lee and foaled in 1863 at Leeholme, near Bathurst, New South Wales. He was known by some as the 'Black Demon'

### **The Barb inducted into the Australian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2004.**

Thousands of Thoroughbreds have competed in Australia, but fewer than 50 have been successful enough to merit induction into the Australian Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

Some of these are fresh in the minds of punters, having achieved Hall of Fame worthy results in recent times. Others, however, date to earlier times.

Their exploits were equally remarkable and to prove this we need look no further than a black stallion known as The Barb.

It's not certain if his name was meant to invoke the spirit of the Arab-Berber cavalry horses of that name which were so effective during the eighth century and were reputed to relish fighting, but The Barb seemed to possess enough of that nature to earn him the nickname, "Black Demon".

**He was often described as high strung and temperamental.**

Some attribute these characteristics to the fact that he was stolen and perhaps miss-treated by bush rangers while he was a foal at foot from Leeholme, NSW.

Whatever the reason, he did live up to his reputation through throwing his rider and bolting the first time he was tried.

Fortunately, his owner and trainer, John Tait, found a way to channel The Barb's exuberance productively.

So much so, in fact, that The Barb finished his 23 start career with 16 wins. (Records of that era contain some discrepancies regarding the exact number of starts and wins. One source lists 16 wins from 21 starts, another 15 wins from 23 starts. The third place finish in his first official race and a second in the All Aged Stakes leave between three and six races unaccounted for, possibly DNPs).

By way of background, The Barb was foaled near Leeholme, NSW, in 1863. Bred by George Lee, his sire was Sir Hercules, who sired 18 stakes winners, and his Dam was Fair Ellen. Both were of predominantly British bloodlines, with the exception of one near predecessor of Sir Hercules, also of that name, who hailed from the Emerald Isle.

After being recovered from his abductors, The Barb was sold for 200 guineas to honest John Tait, a man who is sometimes credited with being the first to make horse racing a commercial venture.

The business was apparently to his liking, because he fielded four Melbourne Cup winners as an owner, a record that has been tied but never surpassed, and one could reasonably conclude that Tait's 100-1 long-shot, The Pearl, who won the Cup in 1871, brought a broad smile to Tait's face.

As a two year old, The Barb probably gave Tait pause to wonder if his 200 guineas had been squandered. There was the afore-mentioned bolting incident and a third place finish, but to The Barb's credit, 1865 did produce a win in The Nursery Stakes.

A spell seemed to induce some measure of calmness in The Barb. When he returned as a three year old he was the class of the field. He won the AJC Derby first up, started and won as the favourite in the Melbourne Cup with W. Davis aboard. His erratic nature then resurfaced briefly, perhaps costing him a victory in the All Aged Stakes. He came back to post and easy victory in the Australasian Champion Stakes.

The Barb continued to perform respectably in 1867, notching Group 1 wins in the Launceston Town Plate, the Port Phillip Stakes and the Sydney Cup.

It was as a five year old, however, that he reached his zenith, winning all seven of his starts, which included a second Sydney Cup, Craven Plate, VRC Royal Parks Stakes, AJC Metropolitan Handicap and Queens Plate.

All this success resulted in The Barb being assigned a 73 KG weight for the Melbourne Cup.

Accustomed as he was to carrying great weight, Tait, not willing to risk losing lucrative stud fees, retired the horse, selling him to Charles Reynolds. Standing at Tocal Stud in the Hunter Valley, he failed to get any really good runners, certainly nothing approaching his record, but that case is not entirely unusual. Some of his daughters did become noteworthy broodmares.

The Barb died in 1888 at Mitta Mitta, at the considerable age of 25, perhaps some measure of compensation for his early hardship.

One criterion all horses who aspire to the Hall of Fame must meet is having run against top level competition. This was represented for The Barb by 1867 Melbourne Cup winner Tim Whiffler and Fishhook.

Strong competition and an impeccable record, despite being hard to precisely ascertain, resulted in The Barb earning a place in the Australian Racing Hall of Fame in 2004.

Adam Lindsay Gordon saw him as a horse who 'surges and flashes' past the field. Bells Life in Sydney wrote of the AJC 'Australian Derby' in 1866:

*'He appears delighted when going a strong pace, and in a race he fairly revels in going a cracker from end to end. It was a sight worth looking at on the Derby Day to see him make the running from start to finish; his jockey sitting quietly, hand down, and the other running **after** him, not **with** him. **The Barb** to be appreciated must be seen in action. When standing quietly in his box, he might be passed by as not a very attractive looking horse; but set him going, and the way he gets over his ground, with his beautiful action, so true and level, once seen is not easily forgotten.'*



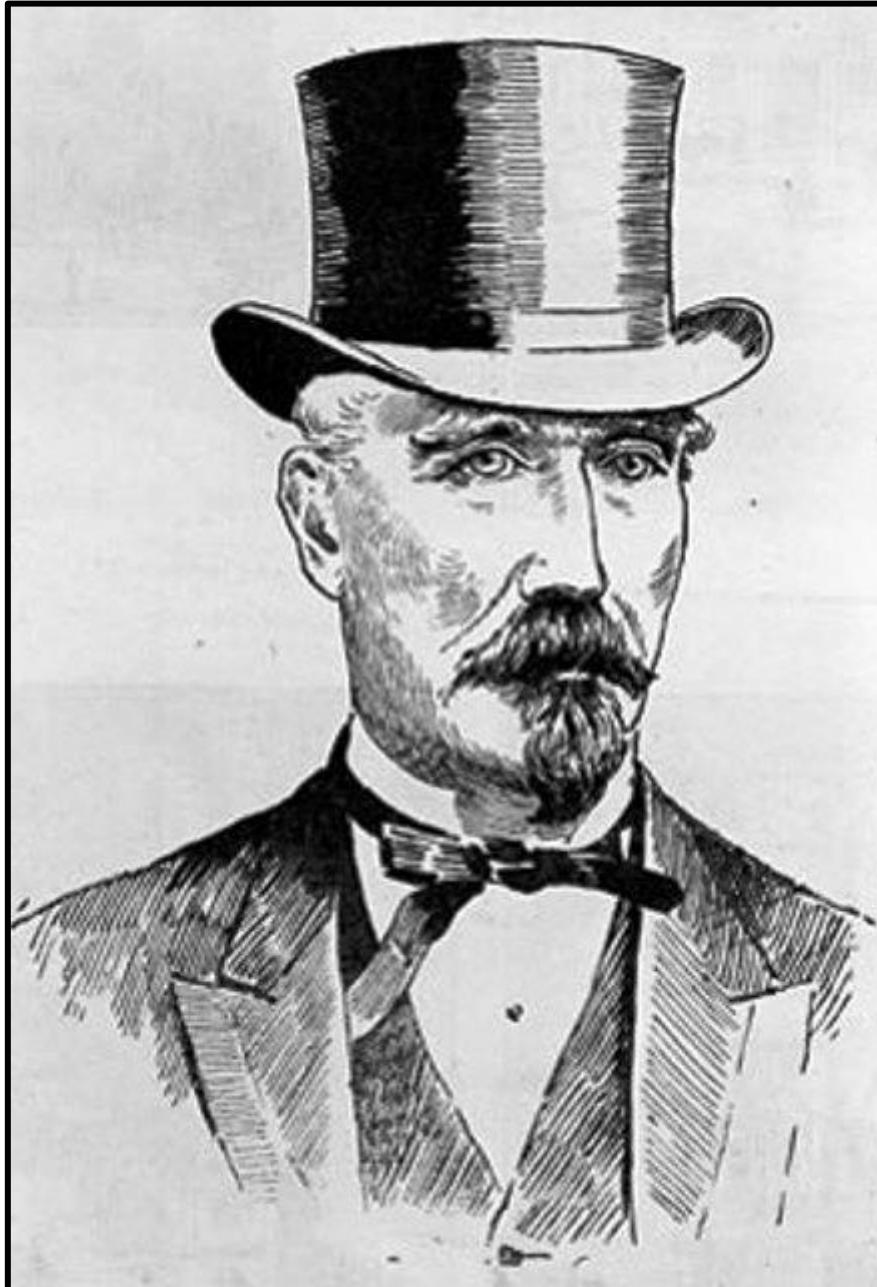
The Barb



**Tait, John (1813–1888)**

By Martha Rutledge

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*John Tait, 1888*

John Tait (1813-1888), racehorse owner and trainer, was born on 5 November 1813 at Melrose near Edinburgh, son of Robert Tait, jeweller and engraver, and his wife Margaret, née Maitland. Trained as a jeweller he with his wife Janet, née Buchanan (d.1880), and daughter, reached Hobart Town in the *Hindo* on 2 November 1837 and opened a business. He soon moved to New South Wales and in June 1843 became the licensee of the Albion Inn, Hartley, and in 1847 took over the Black Bull Inn at Bathurst. Strong and wiry, his 'great skill as a boxer' enabled him to cope with his rougher patrons.

In 1847 Tait won the New South Wales St Leger at Homebush with Whalebone. He soon acquired a string of horses from such local breeders as Thomas Icely and George Lee and engaged Noah Beale as trainer and James Ashworth as rider. In 1851-54 at Bathurst, Parramatta, Homebush and Penrith he won races with stakes totalling about £2500, including two more St Legers with Cossack and Surplice and three Queen's Plates with Cossack (twice) and Sportsman, carrying his first colours, a black jacket and red cap. In 1854 in a match race at Homebush Sportsman defeated John Eales's Cooramin for £1000-a-side. Tait had probably moved to Sydney in 1853 and become licensee of the Commercial Hotel, Castlereagh Street.

In 1855 he sold his racehorses and visited England with Ashworth to choose breeding-stock. With Alfred Cheeke he imported Warwick, New Warrior and Magus, who sired Clove, winner of the first Australian Jockey Club Derby in 1865. He returned early in 1857 and was in partnership with Cheeke for several years in a stud farm at Mount Druitt and in racing some good horses. Tait adopted his famous racing colours of yellow jacket and black cap and in the early 1860s he set up with stables at Byron Lodge, Randwick. In the mid-1860s he acquired the Overland Stores at Dubbo which he still owned in 1888.

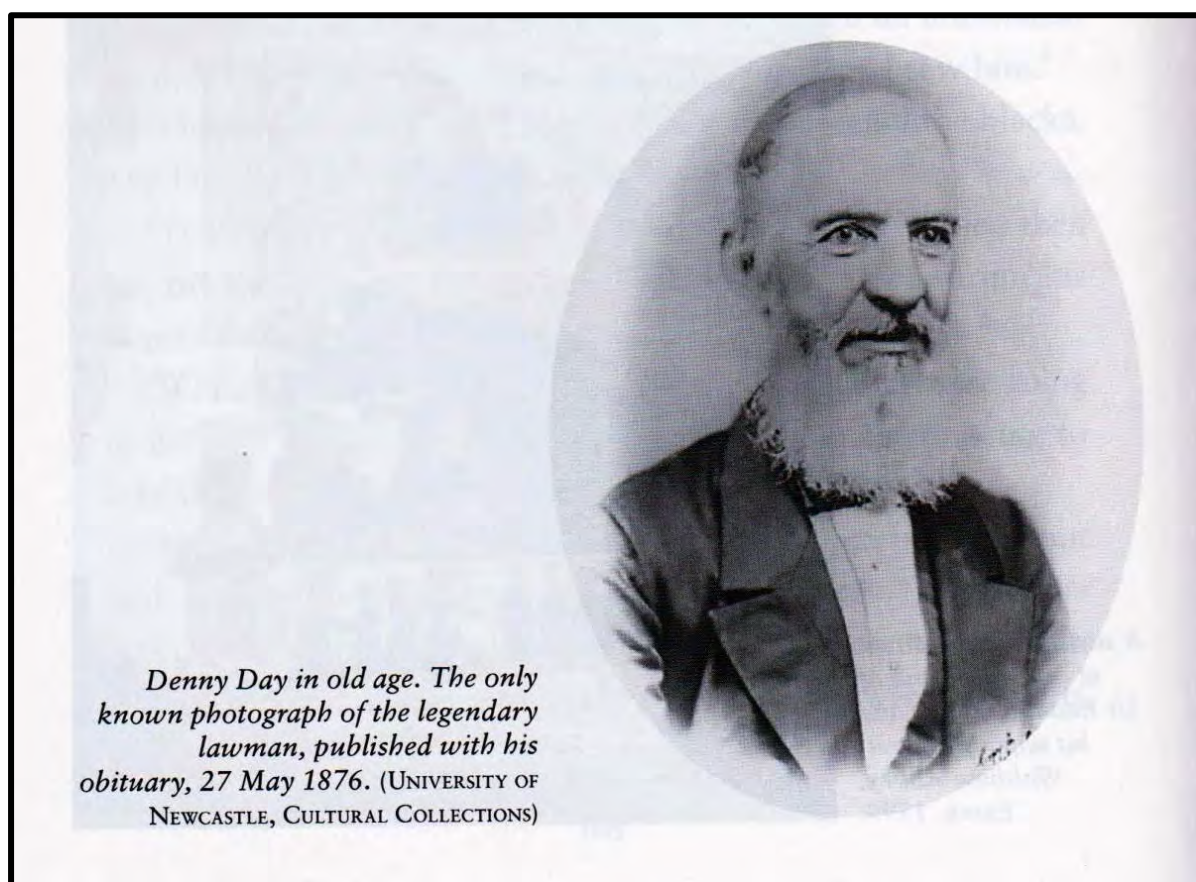
Unlike his fellow sportsmen Tait 'went into racing as a business'; as his fortunes depended upon the winning of many races he closely supervised the training of his horses, which always ran in top condition. His most famous horse was The Barb, 'the black demon', among whose 17 wins in 24 starts were the A.J.C. Derby and the Melbourne Cup in 1866 and the Sydney Cup in 1868 and 1869. In 1868 The Barb won the Metropolitan and defeated E. de Mestre's Tim Whiffler in the Queen's Plate but weighed in 2 lb. (.9 kg) light; Tait vainly offered £100 reward for proof of foul play. He owned two triple Derby winners: Fireworks, who won 12 of his 16 starts including the 1867 A.J.C. Derby and the Victoria Racing Club Derbys in both 1867 and 1868 (when the date for the race was changed to 1 January); and Florence who in 1870-71 won the A.J.C., V.R.C. and Queensland Turf Club Derbys and the V.R.C. Oaks Stakes. His other notable horses included three Melbourne Cup winners: Glencoe (1869) who also won the A.J.C. Derby, The Pearl (1871) and The Quack (1872). Goldsbrough won the Epsom-Metropolitan double for him in 1875 and Amendment won Tait's last big race, the 1877 Metropolitan. 'Caspian', writing in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* on 1 May 1880, estimated that between 1865 and 1880 Tait had won almost £30,000 in stakes without added money. Known as 'Honest John', he won repute for fair dealing with the press and protested only once—after the 1866 Sydney Cup when Pitsford crossed Falcon and 'hocked' him; Thompson, the offending jockey, was disqualified.

In bad health in 1880 Tait visited England and on 18 August in London he married a widow Christian Ann Swannell, née Garie, who had borne him six children. By 1883 he had moved to Toddington, The Boulevard, Petersham, where he was noted for his hospitality. A justice of the peace from 1879, he was a committee-man of the Animals Protection Society and a New South Wales commissioner for the 1887 Adelaide and 1888 Melbourne exhibitions. On 21 May 1888 he collapsed and died of heart disease; he was buried in Waverley cemetery without religious rites. Tait was survived by two sons and a daughter of his first wife, by his second wife and by two sons and two daughters of their children. His estate was valued for probate at £24,296.

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## Hunter Valley Hero



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

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

Edward Denny Day (1801-1876) was the son of Reverend John Day a clergyman of the Church of England in County Kerry, Ireland, and his wife Charlotte née Denny. In 1820 he joined the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment as an ensign and in 1833 became a lieutenant in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. After serving in India he resigned from the Army in 1834 citing ill health. He then went to Sydney where he obtained employment as clerk to the Executive Council. He served in the office of the colonial secretary in 1835. In 1836 he married Margaret fourth daughter of the postmaster-general James Raymond. There were six sons and five daughters from the marriage. Day was appointed police magistrate at the Vale of Clwydd (Hartley and Lithgow) in January 1836, Maitland in January 1837 and Muswellbrook in October 1837.



In Muswellbrook his circuit included Merton and Invermein. His duties included visiting Invermein on a fortnightly basis. His jurisdiction extended beyond the settled districts of the Liverpool Plains and the country west of the Great Dividing Range up into what is now Queensland. There were at least two episodes where Edward Denny Day established his outstanding credentials as a hero of law enforcement in the emerging infant Colony.

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

*Peels River      July 9<sup>th</sup> 1838*

*Sir*

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

*I am'*

*Sir*

*Your obt Servant*

*W Hobbs*

*E D Day Esq Police Magistrate      Invermein*

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Battle of Doughboy Hollow (Ardglen); Capture of the Jewboy Gang



### **ARDGLEN**

#### **The gang destroyed, 21 December 1840**

Following the murder of John Graham in Scone, the bushrangers knew that the law would be in close pursuit. They headed into the Liverpool Range to their old haunts around Doughboy Hollow, now called Ardglen.

On the same evening of the murder, Day's police party caught up with the gang in the camp at Doughboy Hollow. In a brief gun battle that followed, Davis was wounded and five of his companions were rounded up and secured. A few days later, the Governor belatedly agreed to send thirty-five mounted policemen to the Hunter.

Featured Image: Doughboy Hollow (Ardglen) courtesy of Bushranger Tracks by Gregory Powell

The 1936 edition of the journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society contains an interesting story concerning Captain Edward Denny Day, who was the Police Magistrate in Muswellbrook in 1837. The writer of the interesting narrative is Mr. Ben Champion, DDS, DDSc.

The following extracts of interest to Muswellbrook and Scone districts, are reprinted from Mr Champion's story:



"Many elderly people in the Newcastle-Maitland district have very pleasant and humorous memories of Captain Edward Denny Day, who died in the year 1876 at Maitland. This popular figure in our early district life was the son of an Irish clergyman, and was born in the year 1801 in Ireland. He chose the Army as a career and in 1820 became an ensign in the 46th Regiment of Foot (the South Devonshires). With this regiment he served until appointed to a lieutenancy in the 62nd Regiment (the Wiltshires) in the year 1833.

"In October, 1837, Captain Day was appointed to Muswellbrook. In June, 1838, Governor Gipps saw fit to despatch him as officer-in-charge of a party to apprehend the murderers of at least 28 aborigines who were slain in the most callous manner on Mr. Dangar's property at Myall Creek.

"While visiting at Muswellbrook in December, 1840, he learned of a gang of bushrangers, the leader of which was a man named Davis, styled "The Jew Boy." After, terrorising the district for some months, this gang raided Sir Francis Forbes' station at Muswellbrook and the Turanville Station of Mr. Dangar, which was close to Aberdeen. They then proceeded to Scone, broke into Chiver's Hotel and Dangar's store, where Shea killed John Graham, an assistant. It appears that, in the raid, Graham was overlooked. When the bushrangers bailed up the occupants of the store he fired at them, and then ran to give the alarm. He was overtaken and shot in the back, and died shortly afterwards. In the west wall of St. Luke's Church, Scone, there is a tablet dedicated to the memory of John Graham. The inscription reads:

" 'Sacred to the memory of Mr. John Graham, of Inverness, Scotland, who was cut off 21st December, 1840, at the early age of 21 years by a lawless gang of seven bushrangers who maliciously shot him whilst in the conscientious defence of his master's property, Mr. Thomas Dangar of this parish. Six of these unhappy men suffered for their unhappy crime the extreme penalty of the law in Sydney, 16th March, 1841.'"

Day's evidence at the subsequent trial of the bushrangers gives a splendid word-picture of the events leading to their capture:

Edward Denny Day, esq., examined on oath, stated: "I reside at Maitland. Shortly before then I was Police Magistrate at Muswellbrook. On the 21st December I was at Muswellbrook on my own private affairs; I received information on Sunday evening of 20 of a party of bushrangers being out and took steps to collect a party of men to go in pursuit. I started about seven next morning. I had ten mounted men and a black boy. I took the direction of Scone, and passed through it. I continued in pursuit until six that evening. I came up about fifty miles from Muswellbrook with the bushrangers, at a place called Doughboy Hollow. About half a mile off the road we saw some drays encamped and some smoke; there were some horses tethered and some men in their shirt-sleeves making a rush for the opposite side of the gully where the encampment was. I saw about six or seven. We galloped in amongst them; a great many shots were fired on both sides. I can speak positively to Davis having fired at me. Davis rushed from the gully, evidently to get behind a tree; whilst he was running I fired; he turned and fired at me. I was not more than twenty yards from him, he then ran towards a tree, and resting the gun in the fork of the tree, fired at me through the branches. I returned the shot, and wounded him in the shoulder. Five prisoners were taken in less than five minutes after we charged them.

Shea, Marshall, Emerett, Davis and Chitty were the men; they had arms; there were ten or 11 guns and a great many pistols and seven horses. Glanby was taken next morning; a good deal of conversation took place between the prisoners; they were very communicative.

Davis and Marshall kept us awake all night telling stories. I did not hold out any inducements to them; as they came out, I asked their names; they gave a history of all their proceedings without my inducing them to do so. Shea said there need nothing more be said about it; it was he who shot Mr. Graham and no one else; Davis said he had always opposed the shedding of blood; for he knew if they once committed a murder, they would not reign a week; and as he said this, he looked to right and left, and said 'As you see, we have not reigned a day.'

"Mr. E. White (A.A. Company), Shinkin (Chief Constable of Muswellbrook), Constable Nowland, Walker, Davies, Daw and Evans and Kelly and an assigned servant named Dunnigan were of my party, as also was Mr R. Dangar. We were afterwards joined by Evans and Warren, ticket-of-leave men of Mr. Dangar and Dr Gill.

"A very skilful case was presented by Mr. Purefoy, but the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. The prisoners were hanged on March 16, 1841, at Gallows Hill, Sydney, before a large concourse of spectators, and were buried in Devonshire-street cemetery.

"The "Australian," of February 27, 1841, tells of the practical manner in which the residents of the Scone district repaid Captain Day for the efficient manner in which he carried out this exploit:

"The service of plate which is to be presented to K. E. Day, esq., is on view at the establishment of H. Lamb and Co., jewellers, and bears the following inscription: Presented to Edward Denny Day esq., Police Magistrate at Maitland, by some residents of the district of Scone, as a testimonial of their admiration of the promptitude and gallantry he displayed in following and capturing a band of bushrangers which had for some months infested the Hunter. February, 1841.'

"This service of plate was presented to Captain Day at a dinner held in Maitland on April 5, 1841. Day had resigned his post as Police Magistrate in Maitland before "The Jew Boy" episode, and had entered into private life, assuming, as a means of livelihood, certain business activities in Maitland. He did not, however, prosper in the business world. Through the kindness of Mr. W. C. Wentworth, his estate was not sequestrated, Wentworth refusing to sign the papers as chief creditor."

### **History of Ardglan ('Doughboy Hollow')**

Ardglan is a mining village NW of Murrurundi, which is North of Scone along the New England Highway.

The population of the town and surrounding areas is around the 360 mark and the area other than the quarry employee's people are employed in the sheep, beef and cattle industries.

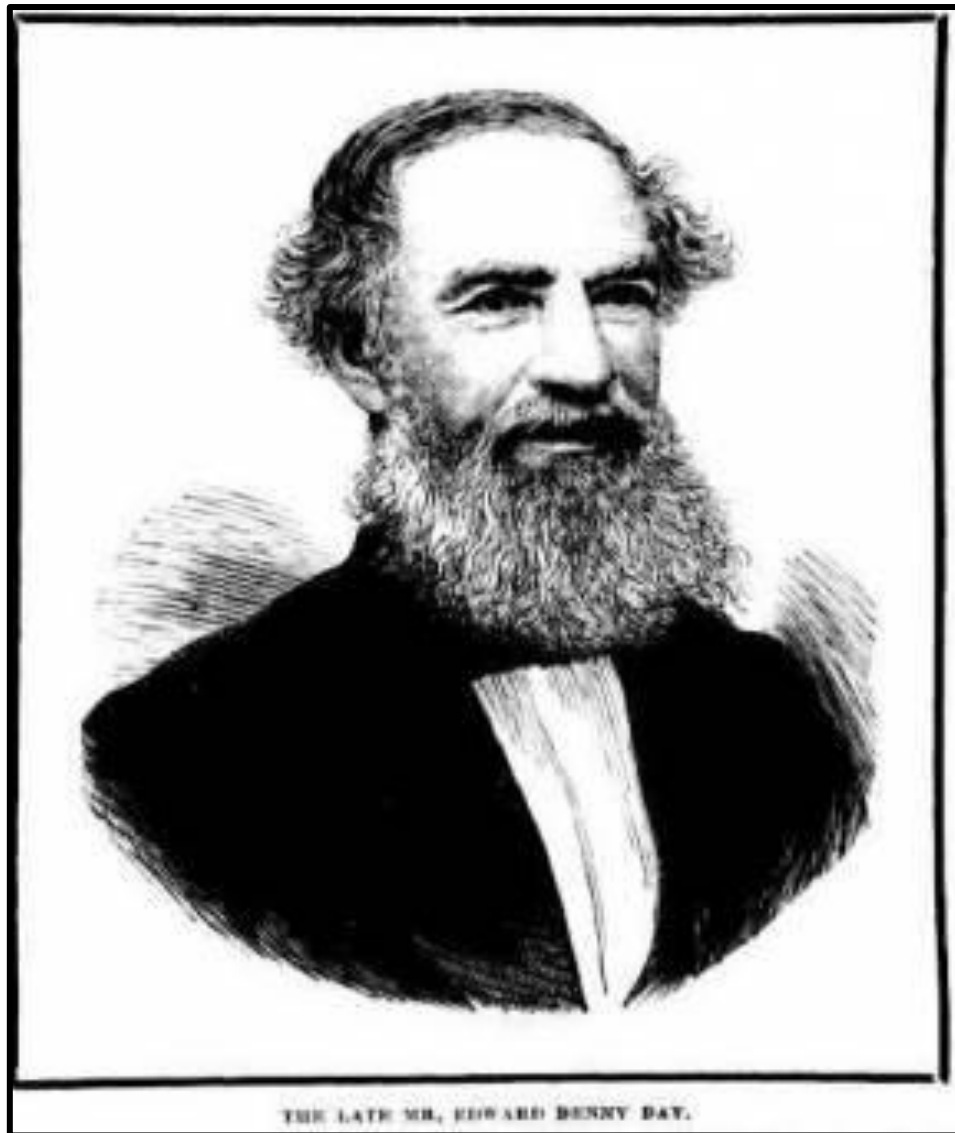
Back in the beginning, William Nowland discovered the Murrurundi Gap, over the range he then drove his stock northwards and established a new station, he called this station Doughboy Hollow and later on this would be changed into the current name of the town, Ardglan.

In 1833 he was pushed off his land by the Australian Agricultural Company which was given by grant, the million acre Warrah station.

The Doughboy Hollow Public School was established in February 1876.

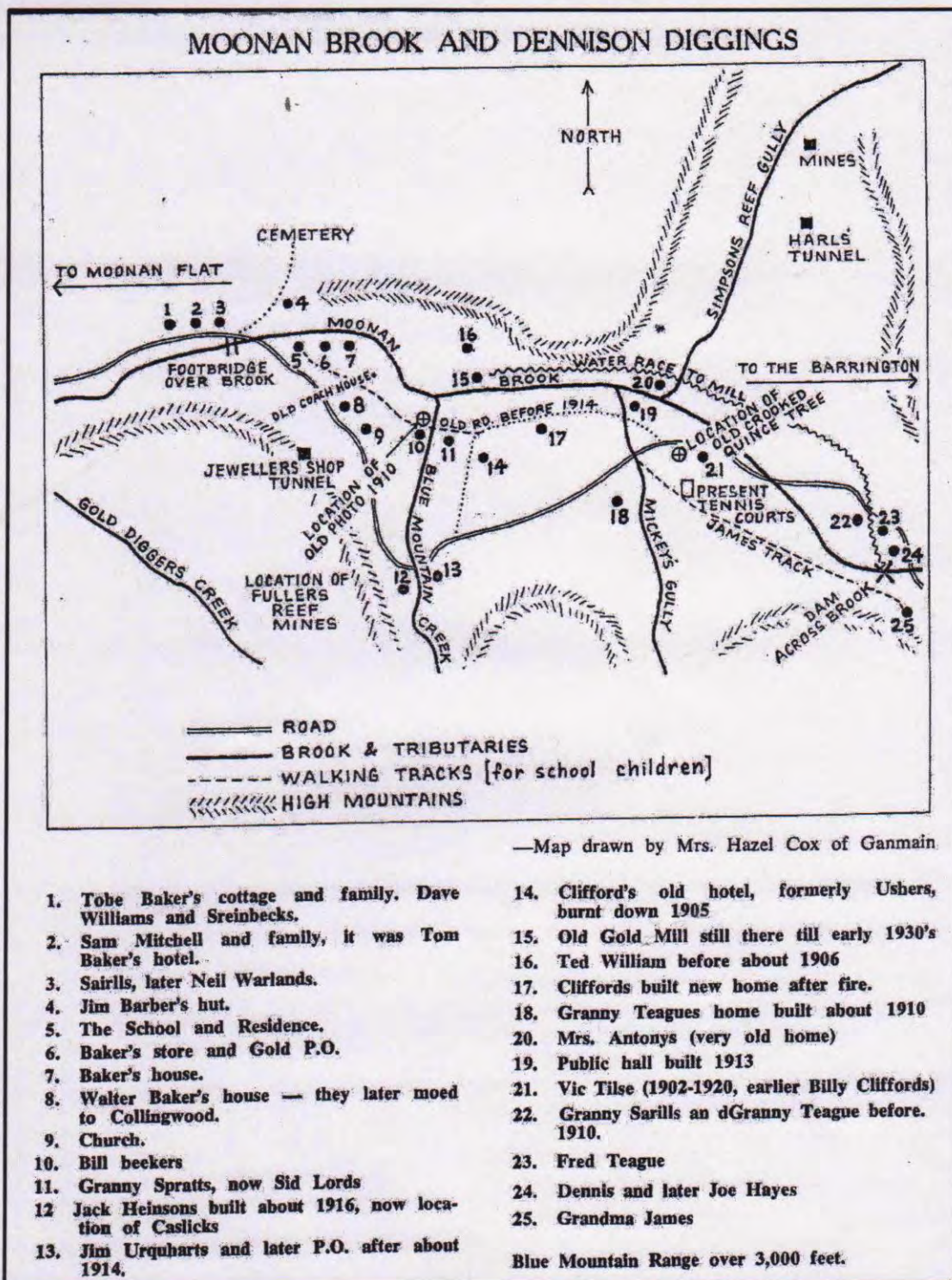
The Doughboy Hollow Post Office officially opened in November 1877 and was later renamed Ardglan Post Office later in 1893.

In March 1893 the public school was renamed from Doughboy Hollow Public School to the Ardglan Public School, this as you can see is at the same time as the Post Office.





## The Denison Diggings



(Reproduced by kind permission of Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society and 'Pioneers of a Great Valley')

We have been favoured by a gentleman who has just returned from a visit of enquiry to the Denison diggings, on the head waters of the Hunter, with the following account of what he ascertained on the spot. Our readers may rely with confidence on the faithfulness of the account. It still leaves the profitable or non-profitable character of the new diggings a question to be solved only by a little more labour from practical diggers:

Gentlemen - I embrace the earliest opportunity of handing you a few brief but impartial notes of a trip to the Denison diggings. Omitting the details of our journey, we started from Maitland on horseback, on Thursday morning, the -th inst., and reached the locality in question on the afternoon of the following Saturday. Previous to reaching there we met 53 return gold-seekers, (for the term "diggers" could not properly be applied to them, many of them, as we afterwards learned, never having put spade or pick into the ground,) almost all of them expressing in strong terms their dissatisfaction with the diggings, and condemning in no gentle language the conduct of Mr. Ward, in making such exaggerated statements concerning them, in spite of such a mass of unvarying evidence, we determined to go forward and see if there was sufficient cause for such discouraging reports.

We accordingly pushed on, and on arriving there we found four parties at work on the Flat, at the junction of Gulf Creek with the Moonan Brook. One of these parties, mustering four strong, had been at work for five days, sinking a hole, and washing such of the stuff as was thought likely to yield gold, but without any success. On the 6th day they succeeded in bottoming it at the depth of fifteen feet, and got what they called a speck- that is a piece just large enough for one to see. Another party, consisting of three, had been six days at work, and got nothing. In that time they had sunk to the depth of 18 feet, raising their stuff by means of a lever purchase, and a rope and bucket made of green hide. They thought they might get gold when they reached the bottom, although the soil through which they worked gave no indications of its existence, and the water at that depth began to flow in almost as fast as they could bale it out. The other two parties, one of four, another of three, had also been at work for some days, but, as they stated, with only the result of a few specks.

Leaving the flat we proceeded up Gulf Creek, which is dry, and found 15 hands located on its banks, in different parties, and who all appeared to be labouring to some advantage. One of them showed us a piece of 15 dwts 16 grains which they obtained among the rocks in the bed of the creek, the day before we arrived. One individual, working by himself, had made out 4 dwts in 4 days ; another, 5 dwts in the same time. Everyone working here appeared to be getting gold but certainly in small quantities. In addition to these findings, many of them are piling up washing stuff on the banks, waiting for the first rains to wash with, and from which they expect a fair amount of gold.

We went up the creek until we came to headquarters, where we found Messrs. Ward and Simpson, the original discoverers, who received us very courteously, and gave us every information and assistance we desired. Mr. Simpson handed us a dish full of earth, which he had just taken out of a hole in the bed of the creek, and said he believed we would find gold in it, if we washed it. We took it to the nearest water, and after putting it through the ordeal, found a small piece at the bottom of the dish, about 6 or 7 grains. The day after our arrival we picked out and washed 14 tins of stuff on our own account, and got as the result three small specks, which we brought with us. We afterwards cleared the bottom of a ledge of rock that ran in an oblique direction, quite across the bed of the creek, thinking, with some of the diggers, that it was a very likely spot. It was a work of no small labour, the rock dipping more than we expected; aided, however, by another hand whom we engaged, we got to the bottom, but without seeing any gold. Some water being at hand we cradled the stuff lying nearest the rock, but got only five very small pieces.

That there is gold there is beyond a doubt, but whether it can be got in sufficient quantities to pay for the working is a question that time and labour can alone determine. One great cause of discouragement at first, and what indeed necessitated many to return without giving these diggings a fair trial, was the absence of rations and digging implements. This evil is in some measure remedied, as a settler named Cook, living four miles this side of the diggings, supplies them with rations at a moderate price, and we met on the road a team from Scone, loaded with general supplies.

It is the opinion of many of the professional diggers that we conversed with, even of those who were unsuccessful, as well as the opinion of the original discoverers, that gold will yet be found in considerable abundance in these localities: Moonan Brook, Gulf Creek, Blue Mountain Creek, Oakey Creek, and Stewart's Brook all giving indications of belonging to the class of gold-producing regions.

Hoping that the above rambling but reliable notes may profit or interest some of your numerous readers.

I am, Gentlemen, yours respectfully,  
A. D.

Since the above account reached us one of the diggers on Gulf Creek spoken of in the letter, called on us with his mate on his return towards Sydney. He is a practised digger, having been at California as well as several of the colonial diggings. He says that the accounts first published of the Denison diggings have deprived him and many others of the fruits of hard earnings, these diggings, so far as yet known, offering no chance for the single or the poor digger. He and his mate, after sinking several bores, got only "the color of gold ; "and he believes very little more was got by any who tried. But notwithstanding this, he expresses a confident belief, from the general character of the soil and the rocks, that there are heavy deposits of gold somewhere on these diggings, and that someday they will be found by parties having capital to enable them to continue prospecting and working for a sufficient length of time till they find the lead of gold. Till then he thinks single or poor diggers from a distance should not think of going to the Denison diggings.

Another party of five diggers, returned from the Denison diggings, including: amongst them experienced diggers, we met on Monday evening, and they gave a nearly similar account of their own luck, and an equally confident opinion that gold in quantity really exists on these diggings, but that they had not capital sufficient to stop and search longer for it. This is discouraging, but we may perhaps yet get some more favourable reports if any of the few diggers left should hit on a rich piece of ground. Meanwhile, as the Mercury has never intentionally over-praised the district diggings, or ran down other diggings, we think it our duty to publish all statements that appear.

The New Dennison Diggings 14<sup>th</sup> November 1855

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/708629>

Return of Mr. R Ward Junior

We have been favoured with the following communication from Mr. G. Denshire, Muswell Brook: -



GENTLEMEN - I have the pleasure to inform you that Mr Richard Ward, Jun, accompanied by Mr. Walter Biddulph, returned to Muswellbrook on Saturday evening 10th instant, and the following oral testimony from Mr R.W. I beg, at his request, to lay before you and your readers. He reports then, that having visited Gulf Creek, and prospecting therein, the two were successful in procuring 9 ozs in ten days: and, from washing nine buckets of earth 1.5 oz of gold were obtained, with having to carry the washing stuff 200 yards to the water; and never sinking above four feet.

In prospecting the present spot, now occupied by them 0.5 oz gold, from three pans of earth, were secured: and half a mile above their place of working they have taken 0.25 oz from one pan of earth. On Saturday 3rd instant, Mr Biddulph, in "crevicing" with a pocket knife, got a nugget 0.5 oz. It is apparent that water is plentiful in Moonan and Armidale Brooks; and Mr. W. considers that fine gold is procurable from the drift at the junction of the for- with the Hunter River.

Now, as it appears, should these localities prove attractive (of which there is every geological and natural probability), that there is ample working room for 20,000 men. Moonan having the depository of all the smaller creeks containing gold, and Armidale being similarly located, the grand desiderata are, a good supply of tools, and an abundance of provisions "Diggers," say Messrs Ward and Biddulph, "forget not to provide picks, shovels, dishes, and cradles" The creature comforts are daily expected, several parties having set about sending down drays for the purpose. I may add that Moonan Brook is 22 miles long and has a running stream both in winter and summer. Mr. Ward met with an awkward accident, through his horse taking a sudden leap down a precipice laying him up from Sunday, the 4th, to the Wednesday following" but which I mention to show that, had he been working all the time of his exploration, more gains would most probably have arisen from his exertions.

I append a copy of a letter from Mr Biddulph to me. Messrs Ward and Biddulph purpose going back to the "Denison Diggings" tomorrow, and several other parties are intending to dip into the lucky bag of Dame Fortune - I remain, Gentlemen, yours truly, G. DENSHIRE Muswell Brook, Nov. 12 1855.

"Denison Diggings" 6th Nov 1855.

"Dear Mr Denshire-You may expect to see us backat the latter end of this week or the beginning of next. Good luck has attended us, with the exception of Richard getting a bad fall on Sunday.

"I got half an ounce of gold by scratching with mv knife. Tools are much wanted up here, about five to a shovel, and the pick continually on the go - first one, then another borrowing it.

'No doubt there is plenty of gold and plenty of men are travelling up to try for it. Also I think it would pay well to send flour, tea, sugar and alops up here. A license for slaughtering has been taken out for this

Till we meet, dear Denshire, I remain yours &c. -

"WALTER J. BIDDULPH "

"To Mr. George Denshire, Postmaster, Muswell Brook"

The following letter, received by a gentleman in Maitland from his brother, who is at present at the above diggings, has been kindly handed to us for publication.

Prospect Point, Gulf Creek,

Denison diggings Friday evening

MY DEAR BROTHER -We arrived here on Tuesday evening last, there were only two parties taking on the creeks then, one of whom have been, and are still, doing very well. We had another addition last evening - a party from the Rocky - so we now muster quite strong after the day's work is over. There is no question there is a great deal of gold here, but whether it will be found sufficiently productive to draw a mob nothing but its' being worked by a large number of men used to that description of labour will show. One great drawback is there not being any place that rations, tools, &c. can be obtained nearer than about 30 miles ; and until there are more consumers there is not sufficient inducement for anyone to risk sending supplies on to the ground, the road being for a considerable distance very bad in fact almost unpassable.

We have built ourselves a gunyah now, and are pretty snug; if it comes on wet, as it keeps threatening, we shan't hurt much. Our prospecting has not produced us anything beyond a few specs yet, and am afraid not very likely to much more. We shall most probably return about Wednesday or Thursday next; we shall then, before we start, know what success the fresh hauls have up to that time, and also whether there are any fresh arrivals. I don't suppose there will be any great numbers till after the shearing and harvest are over, but then I think there will.

Wednesday mid-day

We have had two more arrivals this day - old diggers, from the Rocky, one party consisting of four, the other of three. I must now conclude this, as the individual who will post it (about 30 miles from here, the nearest place), is just about to start. A gentleman who went up to the Denison Diggings returned last evening, and was kind enough to give us the following particulars: -

After he arrived on the diggings (Gulf Creek) Mr Ward's party were only at work, and since then two or three other parties arrived, and all were doing very little else than prospecting. One of the parties in sinking a few feet found a nugget nearly an ounce weight, and another party, arriving on last Saturday afternoon, also found gold. The diggers appear perfectly satisfied that these diggings will turn out profitable, and a party from the Hanging Rock was talking bringing his party to convey the water from the Moonan Creek to the Gulf Creek, as the water was rather scarce at the latter place.- Numbers were met on the road, proceeding to try their luck ; and it is the intention of our informant to return in a few days. The road is pretty fair, and no commissioner or other person from the Government, has been there to take charge, or issue licenses.

The Denison Diggings 12<sup>th</sup> May 1866

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18704623>

THE DENISON DIGGINGS 12<sup>th</sup> May 1866

We extract the following description of the Denison diggings, and the road leading thereto, from the "Random notes" of the Herald's "Wandering Reporter."

The road from Scone lies almost due east up the course of the Page, now crossing the flats that border the river, now rising and falling over some short ridge that turns the course of the stream, when there is one- for not a drop of water was to be found in the bed of the river and then crossing the river itself. In this way the Page is crossed some eight or nine times, until at last the Hunter is reached. Here we find a bright running stream, but so attenuated that with a good spring it may be jumped over; and at a distance of some twelve miles from Scone we come to Bellevue, a small store recently erected, with a sheep station and cultivation paddock connected with it.

Following up the course of the river for about twelve miles, sometimes over rich flats, at others over scrubby stoney ranges, we cross it again some half dozen times, and reach Belltress, a very beautiful station, the property of one of the White family, having a large extent of rich cultivation ground, all utterly valueless in this dry and hot season, without the slightest trace of verdure upon it, and so hard and baked as to render ploughing it an impossibility. The property, however, is a very beautiful one, and has a most picturesque appearance even in these days of drought. Situated on the banks of the river, the family residence is surrounded by a mass of bright green, from the fruit and ornamental trees with which the garden ground is stocked. These form a perfect oasis upon which the eye, wearied with the monotonous brown of the hill sides, and the dark green of the indigenous timber, rests with the intense pleasure.

A range of three high-peaked conical hills rising up immediately from the opposite bank of the river, with towering masses of mountains showing themselves behind, form a background that is seldom excelled either in grandeur or beauty. A few miles further on we cross the Hunter for the last time, and passing over a gap of a high mountain range we fall upon Moonan Creek, an important tributary to the head waters of the Hunter. Following this up, and without incident of any kind, save one of a somewhat suspicious character, but to which I do not at present feel myself justified in alluding, we come at last to the Denison, after a journey of some thirty-six miles, over what I then considered about as rough a road as a dray could travel.

My subsequent journey-ings between the Denison and Nundle have altered this opinion; and I give that route the palm over any other I have ever seen in the colony for everything that can be imagined in the shape of difficulty, whether it be up hill or down. The Denison township would be a very pretty little place, if seen under other auspices than those which attended my visit. It is situated some distance up Moonan Creek, though not so far as to have the mountains encroaching too heavily on the valley through which the stream finds its way. This valley occasionally opens out into flats of a few acres in extent, allowing plenty of building room, and here and there a paddock patch. The hills-or I ought rather to say the mountains-shut it in on every side, the interlocking spurs from either side apparently closing it to both entrance or exit. The population numbers 119 souls, consisting of 41 men, all engaged in mining, 21 women, and 57 children. The men are particularly hard working, steady, and orderly-so much so- that I was told in Scone, in which police district it is situated, that no case from these diggings had yet been brought before the bench. The houses are all neatly and substantially built, in bush style, of slabs, roofed with bark, and many of them have little gardens attached and securely fenced in. During the present season, they are only gardens in name, for hardly the appearance of vegetation is to be seen in them. The mountains also, are not only dry and parched, but absolutely bare of feed, giving a most miserable air to the valley, which at this season ought to be green with verdure on all sides, and to have I the look of one large garden. '

Moonan Creek is a beautiful running stream, but so decreased in volume by the long-continued drought, that sufficient water is not obtainable for working the water-wheels on which the reefers rely for the motive power of their crushing machines. There are two eight-stamper water mills erected by the side of the creek. One of these is laid up altogether for want of water, and the other has barely supply sufficient to work four stamp heads, instead of eight, its usual number. They are worked by overshot wheels 16 feet in diameter, and when having the ordinary supply of water work with a force equal to about 8 hp. There is also a steam engine working 12 stampers, but this has long been out of work, being now' held by a mercantile firm to repay certain advances made to the former owners. These are on the eastern side of the creek, the main shafts being about two miles distant from what may be called the township. It is known as Fuller's reef, and is worked more or less along a length of 4 miles, for though the out-crops have received other names, such as the Prince Albert, Antonio, Crow's Nest, and so forth, they are all continuations of the one reef running N. 33 degrees E.



Upon this, at the spot known as Fuller's Reef, where it has been worked the most extensively, eight shafts have been put down, striking the six inches to seven feet, the reef getting wider as it descends, and the stone turning poorer as the reef gets thicker. Spratt's shaft has been put down to a depth of eighty-five feet, and has turned out 167 tons of stone, yielding 185 oz. The next shaft, Shepherd's, is down 130 feet, and has produced 284 tons of quartz, which gave 428 oz. Welsh's shaft is down seventy-five feet. 348 tons of stone have been passed from it, and the return of gold has been 407 oz. Campbell's shaft is down 140 feet, and 144 tons of quartz, yielding 88 oz. of gold, have been procured from it. On the prospecting claim, from the surface where the reef cropped up down to about twenty feet, 211 tons of stone have been raised, yielding 157 oz. of gold. The Company's workings extend from Campbell's shaft for 140 feet along the line of the reef. These workings have been very extensive, large quantity of stone having been raised from them. The amounts I have given above are those produced from the opening of the reef in 1861, up to May of last year. Since then the company have raised and crushed the following quantities of stone, viz :-30 tons, yielding 88 ozs. 18 dwts., or 2 ozs. 19 dwts. 6 grs. per ton ; 25 tons yielding 77 ozs. 5 dwts., or 3 ozs. 1 dwt. 19 grs. per ton ; 20 tons yielding 43 ozs., or 2 oz. 3 dwts. per ton ; 28 tons yielding 115 ozs., or 4 ozs. 2 dwts. per ton ; 12 tons, yielding 22 ozs. 15 dwts., or 2 oz. 1 dwt. 12 grs. per ton; and 24 tons, yielding 36 ozs., or 1 oz. 10 dwts.

Besides this, the company's machine has done some crushing for other parties, but they have been mainly of stone prospected on different portions of the reef, and have given an average return of about half an ounce to the ton. The party working on the Swamp Oak reef in June last came across a rich nest of nuggets and specimens, obtaining from a crushing of 40 lbs. of quartz, 36 ozs. of gold. Thinking themselves in luck they got another parcel of stone of about five tons, from the immediate vicinity of the lucky find, but on being crushed, this quantity gave only 5 oz. 5 dwts., or 1 oz. 5 dwts. per ton. A lot of nine tons, procured immediately after, gave only 4 oz. of gold, or about 9 dwts. to the ton. This record brings the crushings up to the middle of November, since which time very little work has been done, owing to the scarcity of water.

On the continuation of the reef on the opposite side of the hill, Shepherd's party have had three parcels crushed, of 18, 22, and 21 tons each, and these have given respectively a yield of 1 oz. 2 dwts. 17 grs., 3 ozs. 1 dwt., and 2 ozs. 19 dwts. At the Walchuian's claim, the first crushing of 54- tons gave a yield of 3 oz. 6 dwts. to the ton. This yield fell in the next crushing to 18 dwts., and subsequently a lot of 10 tons gave a yield of only 16½ dwts. Mr. Collett's claim was on a continuation of this reef, and this gentleman, at considerable expense, put in an audit or tunnel, but upcoming discouraged when he had reached a distance of 126 feet, he gave it up. The claim was subsequently taken up by another party, who, after penetrating only some three or four feet further, struck the reef and obtained good payable stone.

As I have said before, work is now perfectly at a standstill from the want of water.

### Scone and the Dennison Diggings

#### SCONE AND THE DENISON DIGGINGS FROM OUR SPECIAL REPORTER

STARTING from Murrurundi, by a midday train, I arrived at Scone, a distance of 25 miles, just a little too late for dinner. It was the Sabbath Day when I arrived, and a fitting township I found Scone, partaking as it does more of the village, to spend a day of rest. The celebrated Denison Diggings lie 35 miles in an easterly direction from the township, and early on Monday morning I made up my mind to start for them. I had no horse, and to Dr. Creed, M.L.A., am I indebted for the loan of a good one to carry me there and back.

The horse difficultly settled, Monday morn found me on the road in a drizzling rain. Showers had fallen during the night, and the road commenced to get in the undesirable state commonly known as "greasy." In consequence thereof I made but slow progress, as cantering was out of the question. Onwards, past stations and farms for 20 miles, every two, crossing a river or creek just fordable; this was lucky, for in 35 miles river or creek crossings to the number of 22 have to be got over, some of them wide and all flowing. Gates have to be opened and closed nearly all through the journey at a distance of two or three miles apart. At 20 miles Mr. White's station "Belltrees" is passed (I may not be correct in the name).

From there the country becomes mountainous, and some of the wildest scenery I have passed through in this trip met my view. Hills, for the most part bare of timber, are clustered together in and over a valley between ranges of no mean altitude, at the time I passed them cloud and snow-capped. What timber that does exist over the hill sides has all been rung (killed), and the whitened arms of the defunct gums stand out like "weird monsters' arms," taking all kinds of fantastical shapes in the fading light. Truly it was a lonesome road to ride over on a wet cold evening. I was cold, numbed; in fact the rain was quite enough to wet, the air cold enough to freeze. Glad was I to stretch my mud-bespattered limbs before Warren's (the hotelkeeper) fire, and there formed plans for viewing the reefs and workings on the morrow.

Gold was discovered at "Denison" over ten years ago, and from that time the fortunes of the place have been fluctuating. Several lines of reefs were discovered, and for years worked, until down to a level where they proved too much for the miners engaged, the greater portion of who were mere amateurs in reefing. Good returns have been obtained from many of the lines worked in this way, but one by one they were abandoned, but few remaining on the field. Alluvial was worked in many of the gullies, and Denison at one time had a fair escort return to its credit.

To give an idea of how the reefs are situated a brief description of the country will be necessary. With lofty ranges on each side flows the Moonan Creek, a heavy stream of water running nearly east and west. Into the Moonan, from the north, a creek named the Gold Digger winds its way down a gully running through a break in the range. Where the Gold Digger junctions the township stands consisting of two hotels, a store kept by Mr. Campbell, and a fair sprinkling of weather-proof huts—weather-proof they need be, for the climate in winter is very severe. On the sides and tops of the ranges, close to the town, the outcrops of the reefs were found, and so lofty were the claims that cuttings on the zigzag principle had to be made to cart or pack the stone grassed from the reefs at work. The idea of tunnelling, strange to say, never entered the heads of the claim-holders for years, and it was not till lately that practical miners turned their attention to the abandoned lines and started tunnelling from the gullies' level.

On Fuller's reef I visited the ground held by the Denison Gold Mining Co., there I found one of the working hands just about to start in with the track along the tram. Procuring a light I groped my way to the end of their tunnel, now in 660 feet ; a party of five still driving on contract at £2 3s. per foot, going in with the reef, which throughout at that level is nearly 4 feet thick. This level is hundreds of feet below the original shaftings on the hill side, one of which is down over 200 feet. The reef runs north and south, the underlay varies at times east, but may be termed west. The stone is not at this level rich, although it gives fair promise of being payable; the returns vary from 4 to 18 dwts.; the rock a "kellus" is hard, but shoots well. An opportunity is here afforded by this tunnelling enterprise of working a payable reef with a "grand chance" of its improving at any hour. The quartz is milk white and charged with mundic. I fancy that to burn before crushing would be advisable. A party of wages men work at a higher level on the reef. The company has its own machine, recently erected on the Moonan Creek, a considerable distance from the claim.

The stone will, therefore, have to be carted. I and others, when speaking on the subject, agreed that it would have been advisable to place the machine close to the claim, where a good site could be obtained for it, and the quartz shot from the trucks to the stampers. To counterbalance this, where the machine is at present a plentiful supply of water was and is obtainable to work a waterwheel; there might have been a difficulty to introduce water to the claim, but that could be surmounted. The machine is one of 10 stamps, 7 cwt. each working in two batteries, and the tables copper and blanket are on the latest principles.

The machine was manufactured by Russell, of Sydney, and, as soon as a broken pinion is put to rights, will commence crushing. Mr Martin is the general manager; Mr. Landrigan the underground captain. Joining the northern boundary of the company, Johnston, Anderson, and party have a lease on the Blue Mountain reef, where Collett and Co., some time since put in a tunnel 500 feet. Work will soon commence, two men are at present busy making preparations. From the Fuller's Reef I crossed the gully, here called the "Blue Mountain," to the Swamp Oak reef, an abandoned line for years, now taken up by a party of practical men. Usher, Johnstone, and Co., have 8 acres, and are down on a well-defined body of stone, running N. and S., and about 2½ feet thick. Here I saw some good golden stone that ought to render a good account at the mill. Sixty tons are grassed, and crushing will soon commence. I descended their two shafts, one is at 75, the other at 67 feet ; below I was much pleased with the appearance of the reef, which is well defined. A little surface water renders baling now and then necessary. Werbeck and Co. are tunnelling for the same vein now in 145 feet. No. 1 south, Dickie, Wilson, and Brien, 8 men's ground, have a tunnel in 110 feet, and expect every shift to cut the vein. No 2. South is a 10-acre lease, Dickie, Johnston, Richards, and others.

The reef in this lease shows on the surface, and the party waits the result of No. 1 tunnel before commencing work. North, O'Brien, and Co., hold a lease of 10 acres, and in it two lines of reef have been found on the surface, gold bearing; No. 2 North, Carroll, Grabb, and party, a 10-acre lease. This Swamp Oak line ought soon to yield good returns; I have no doubt of it proving payable, and if worked as well as it has been prospected profitable. Higher up the gully stands on the right, in the line of Fuller's Reef, a conical hill, 300 feet high, called "Fuller's Nob,"

On the summit a good vein bearing gold has been prospected, and an 8-acre amateur lease taken up by Messrs. Creed and Farmer. The surface prospects on the Nob are quite good enough to warrant tunnelling, and no hill presents such facilities for that class of work. This reef at top is about 18 inches wide, and a trial crushing of the stone from surface went 10 dwts. to the ton, with poor gold saving machinery. A lease north, held by Oliver, Saunders, and Co., has good stone in a shaft down 30 feet.

The "Blue Reef " runs about 200 yards east of the " Nob ; " here in a six men's claim, I saw a fine likely lender from surface to a few feet, about ten inches through. A six-men's claim is held by Verran, Levick, and Gregory ; they are tunnelling, 72 feet in have cut a leader, and from position expect to cut the main reef every day. Mr. Verran, late of the Braidwood district, is well known as an energetic prospector in gold, silver, tin, and other minerals. It is to be hoped that his reward, long overdue, will be found on the "Denison. "

Painters' Reef four years ago was worked to a depth of 60 feet, on a reef eighteen inches thick; this gave a result of one oz. to the ton, but influx of water compelled the party to give it up. The ground has recently been worked by M'Kay, Simpson, and Co. ; they have tunnelled in 120 feet, and cut the lode two feet through, showing coarse gold, that stone is now being grassed. NO. 1 North, Brown and party, have rich specimens in the surface.



"Kenneth's Reef" is situated on the Moonan Creek, a short distance from the township, on the Scone road. This reef, like all the rest, was formerly worked on the hill side, and forms a leader 10 to 18 inches wide, stone procured that gave 8 oz. to the ton, and one patch of specimens obtained were sold for £37 ; the same tale has to be told of this reef—water drove out the original proprietors. Three months since Messrs. Farmer, Drown, and Usher, with a strong party at their back, took up a claim for twelve men. Set in to work tunnelling with three shifts, and in less than twelve weeks have their tunnel in 160 feet; now they are crosscutting to the east, 20 feet in, expecting to cut the reef daily. The number of feet driven in a fair sized tunnel will give an idea how the party has worked; the stone is hard and all rock shifted has to be first shook by blasting.

Returning towards the township I had a look at some alluvial claims at work on the creek banks under a royalty of one pound per man per month. One party, the Denison Gold Sluicing Company, have their boxes rigged, and are about to commence washing. The names of the holders are Solomons, Collins, and Co. The stripping in the claim is about seven feet, the wash one foot. Two other companies have ground ready to set into, the "Jumper's Downfall" and the "Ancient Miner."

N. E. of the township a reef has been leased, known as "Simpson's." The men employed are tunnelling to cut a lode which four years ago yielded 1 to 5 oz. to the ton, the reef showing 18 inches to 24 through ; this lease I was informed has been floated into a company. The Welcome reef, N. E. of Usher's line, has recently been leased by Seriel, Shepherd, and Co. On this 10-acre lease a shaft is going down on a vein 1 foot wide, showing good gold. The "Sir Hercules Robinson" is a line of reef half a mile from the town. The prospecting claim was taken up by Messrs. Williams and Co. A shaft is down 75 feet; reef runs down all the way, averaging 15 inches, and looks well, as gold is visible in almost any stone broken. About 60 or 70 tons awaits the mill, expected to go 1 to 2 oz. to the ton. No. 1 North, eight men's ground, worked by Howard, Lee, and Co., are driving a tunnel on the course of the veins, averaging 8 inches to a foot ; from this they can obtain very fair prospects. They will soon command 150 feet of backs to stope. The lode has every appearance of being a lasting one, and this, with others on Martin's creek, ought to prove payable.

I was more fortunate in my return to "Scone," as I was blessed with a fine day, and almost a dry road. Once in the township I lost no time, but had a look around the various objects which appeared to me interesting. The railway station is neat and commodious, as all the stations on the line are. Mr. George J. Ferris is the station-master. A large mill stands not far from the line, a four-story building as good as any I have seen throughout my tour. A 10-horse power engine works two pairs of 3½ feet stones, and in a day 100 bushels can be put through. The silk and smutting machines are of their class somewhat superior, and the boiler setting and engine fittings more substantial than those usually seen. This mill is now the property of Mr. James Little, whose store, a handsome building, stands close by. The district is a good wheat producer : an average of 30,000 bushels per year is the return.

The churches in the town are neat brick edifices, and are well situated. The Rev John Shaw is the Church of England minister, the Rev F O'Hagan the Roman Catholic, and Mr Hugh Hossack a catechist holds service in the Presbyterian. The Public School is held in the Presbyterian Church. Mr Donald Gregg is the master, with 38 on the roll, and an average attendance of 28 children, small attendance mainly due to the existence of a Church of England Denominational school in the town, where, in a fine brick building possessing two large school rooms. One 20 by 18 the other 21 by 18; 90 children attend daily the roll shews 122. The master is Mr John Cole assisted by Miss Ledger. A dwelling is attached, and the school furniture and ulterior fittings are really excellent

The Court house is a neat brick verandah building where Courts of Sessions are held twice in the year, and in the building the Savings Bank finds accommodation when required. Mr John Garrett is the Police Magistrate the Clerk of Petty Sessions, J J Thithire (?). The police quarters OTC good, the lockup is rather a substantial one, as it was originally intended for a gaol. Senior Sergeant Hynde is stationed in the township. He has two troopers and one lockup keeper under him.

The School of Arts is situated at the south end of the town the building was originally a store, kept or owned by Mr Dangar An historical tree (a box) grows or stands close to this building. When that tree was a sapling in the year 1840, the notorious bushranger known as the Jew Boy with his mob of seven entered the town, and drove the entire population under or around this particular tree. This was the free and easy style adopted in those days by the bush ranging fraternity Times are more peaceful now, and on the spot I found a School of Arts, with papers, pens, pencils and a library of 600 volumes. President, Mr Wm Dumaresq; Vice President, Mr Alexander Johnston; Secretary, Mr J F Wilshire

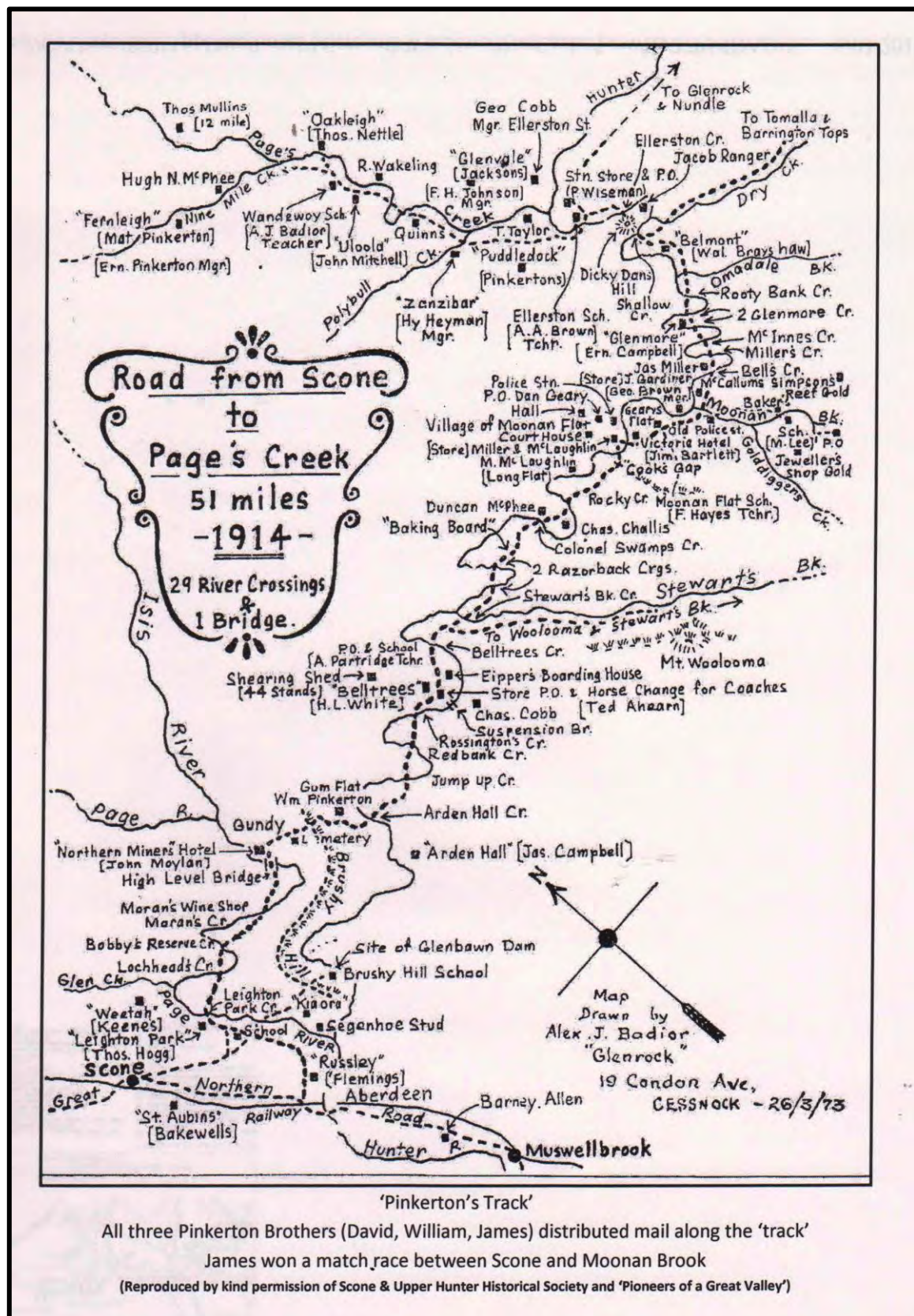
In reference to the School of Arts, tenders have been called for a new building so Scone will shortly be graced with another ornament in the shape of a structure. The Post Office is presided over by a very old resident and his surroundings are all in keeping with himself -compact- for he is low in stature, but great in design Mr Trancia Isaacs possesses close to his Post Office and Store a garden that is the envy of his neighbours, and the stock of grapes raised yearly on this well nurtured soil must be considerable.

A few statistics of Scone will close this rather lengthy article. The village was first formed in 1837. The town is backed by the Kangaroo Range on the one side and on the other the Middlebrook (?) water supply is generally raised from wells for domestic purposes, for stock the Kingdom Ponds or Creek provides a never failing supply.

Scone is, I believe, the nearest or best point to the turnoff for Mudgee, and as £700 has been put on estimates for the formation or clearing of the track to Merriwa, it is expected that a deal of traffic will fall to the town. The road will have many advantages, such as water and good camping grounds on the way. My attention will next be turned to the town of Muswellbrook, as it lies on my way to the city of Newcastle.

Digitisation generously supported by Vincent Fairfax Family

# "Pinkerton's Track"



Featured Image: 'Pinkerton's Track'



William Pinkerton arrived aboard the ship 'Lloyds' on 4 September 1856 and married Elizabeth Dunbar (born in Scone) in 1863 at St Luke's. Elizabeth was the daughter of Samuel Dunbar who arrived with the Millers and his wife Elizabeth (nee Parsons) who lived at 'Gum Flat', Gundy.

William was sponsored to Australia by William Dumaresq of St Aubins. William selected a 'Conditional Purchase' of 40 acres, near Gundy on 15 April 1862 and built 'Gum Flat', his family property. The farm was eventually resumed and 'drowned' when Glenbawn Dam was constructed. Like his brother David, William acquired the mail contract from Scone to Moonan Brook twice weekly between 1869 and 1875 'to be conveyed on horseback' with a stop at Gundy from 1875. At this time Gundy was a thriving village with three churches, a school, Literary Institute, two general stores, post office, hotel, baker, butcher, blacksmith and wheelwright. It would have been self-sufficient. William and Ann produced at least 11 registered children and there may have been two others? Both William and Ann survived well into their 70s and are buried in the Church of England cemetery in Scone.

James Pinkerton had married Mary MacCallum on 8 August 1844 at Barakell in Ireland and they had a family of nine children when they arrived in Australia in the early 1860s. James' exact arrival date is unknown but Mary and the children arrived on the 'Fairlie' on 29 April 1863. James had come ahead of them and they settled in the Gundy district. James built a small cottage before acquiring 'Tanborough' on the Hunter River east of the village of Gundy under the 'Conditional Purchase' system which became the family home. Like his younger siblings before him James acquired the mail contract from Scone to Moonan Brook in 1868. James was a renowned horseman and once at age 64 won a 'challenge race' between Moonan Brook and Scone when he may have substituted one pie bald mount for another fresh one? A 'ring in' at the races began very early! Both James (84 at Gundy) and Mary (90 at Moonan Flat) lived to a great age. Both are buried in the Gundy General Cemetery. James and Mary had eleven children. The Pinkerton dynasty is an expansive one in the Upper Hunter Valley and many direct descendants still call the district home.

## Pages River Races @ MURRURUNDI 1844



**Featured Image: Acknowledge Murrurundi Community Portal**

The bustling town of Murrurundi has always had a relationship with race horses. In its heyday there were four racetracks which have subsequently been swallowed up by events. Here are the results of an August race meeting in 1844.

The Page's River Races came off on Wednesday and Thursday, the 14th and 16th Instant. The weather was very wet, and the course in bad condition for racing. The following is the result of the races:-

### WEDNESDAY

**The Page's River Purse of £15, for horses of all ages, weight for age, heats, two miles,**

Mr Clarke's Tam O'Santer	aged 1 1
Mr Wightman's Dan O'Connell	3 2
Mr Loder's Flirt	4 2 3

**The Ladies' Purse of £10, for horses of all ages: heats one mile and a distance.**

Mr Haydon's Coquet	aged 2 1
Mr Rundle's Jack's the Lad	aged 3 2 2
Mr Evans's Toss	5 1 3 dr
Dr Milner's Snowball	aged 5 dis
Mr Martyn's Sir Robert	5 5 dis

**The Bushman's Purse of £10, for horses of all ages, carrying 10st. one heat, three times round the course.**

Mr Clarke's Tam O'Shanter aged 1

Mr Evans's Jerry 6 years 2

Mr Single's Bolly aged 3

#### THURSDAY

**The Beaten Purse of £5, with a sweepstakes of £1 each added; heats one mile; to be handicapped by the stewards.**

Mr Evans's Jenny 6 years

Mr. Loder's Flirt 4 years 8st 0 0

**A sweepstake of £1 each, for all horses added; carrying 8st; heats, once round and a distance.**

Mr Loder's Kitty 3 years 1 1

Mr Single's Bolly aged 4 2

Mr Wightman's Dan O'Connell 2 3

Mr Milner's Snowball aged 8 4

**—Maitland Mercury August 24, 1844**

#### Murrurundi's Links with Racing

<http://www.scone.com.au/murrurundis-links-racing/>

July 23, 2016

By Harley Walden

Harley Walden, racing columnist

ALTHOUGH there have been many discrepancies' regarding exactly how many racecourses there have been in the Murrurundi – Blandford area and where they were located, records dating back as far as the early 1840's state there were as many as ten different racecourses operating between the years 1832 and 1922.

The first race club in Murrurundi was formed in late 1841 by a number of men including Thomas Haydon of Bloomfield, Adam Stuart Wightman of Glengarry, Ian Ellis a publican, J.H. Atkinson licensee of the Marlow Inn, Dr J.H. Gail and the Singlet Brothers of Cresswell Park.

Starting and finishing near the Marlow Inn and running out towards St Joseph's Chapel, the first racecourse in Murrurundi was on the property known as Maybyn Vale. The exact date of the first race meeting is not recorded, however the Hunter River Gazette reported on January 8, 1842 from Scone that "the Chief Constable had gone to Murrurundi, where the races are being held," which indicates that a meeting, possibly on January 1, was held in Murrurundi.

It is not known how long the first race club continued to operate, but regarding the economic depression which befell the colony in 1842, it is likely that the club came to an end no later than 1843.

The men who ran their horses at Mayben Vale were Thomas Haydon, Ian Ellis and “Big Bob the Blacksmith” from Murrurundi, Halstead of Singleton and Hardcastle of Scone and Charles Persons, who later trained for Andrew Lader of Cully’s Creek.

Two of the more prominent jockeys of the time were Joe Woods and “Yellow Dick” a half-caste who rode for Thomas Hayden.

“Dover”, an imported stallion owned by Thomas Haydon was the winner of many principal events.

<https://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/past-stallions/1840-young-dover/>



Young Dover 1840

In 1840 Thomas Haydon purchased Young Dover from Robert Scott of Glendon, Singleton.

He was by Dover who was imported by Robert Scott and the details below are taken from the stallion advertisement at the time;

***A Bright Bay Horse  
Of extraordinary Beauty and Symmetry,  
great Bone and Substance,  
without White or Blemish,  
Sixteen Hands full.***



Dover was foaled in 1832, bred by Mr J Edwards, by Patron out of Maid of Kent. Prior to leaving England he founded the Marquis line of thoroughbreds. His sire Patron won the Two Thousand Guineas on 5 May 1829 in a “walk over”.



Dovers Grandsire, Partisan, 1811

Dover was so popular he had a full book in 1838. His daughter Marchioness won the St Ledger and he brother Marquis was the sire of the famous colonial taproot C1 mare Sappho. He proved a great sire with many of his son's being successful including Marquis, Young Dover, Pelham, Hector, Prince of Wales, Carrington, Panther, Sinbad, Planet, etc.

Young Dover sired excellent stock at Bloomfield and records show he was repeatedly ridden the 94 miles to Maitland where the family banking was undertaken. The family are now the oldest continual clients of the ANZ Bank.

On other occasions he competed at the Maitland race meetings, being very successful, usually involving three races of two mile each before being ridden home the following day. He was such a good horse he actually won the Maitland Cup in 1843.

It is recorded that at the first race meeting, George Ingle gave the blacks water laced with julep, a stimulant and they provided much amusement on the course.

In the evening as Thomas Haydon was riding Dover near the boundary post, Phillip Callaghan, later an influential squatter in the north-west, shouted 'Oh' and Dover covered the course before he could be stopped.

As prosperity returned to the district, the race club was reformed, although the year of the first meeting is unsure, it may well have been 1847.

Haydon records indicate that Thomas Haydon had considerable influence in the reformation of the club, although he did not race any leading horses.

Soon after the club was reformed a new course was used by local racing enthusiasts.

The course was located in Mayne Street where the Royal Hotel now stands.

The course extended northward to out beyond Little Street and eastward to Mount Street.

At the time races were usually conducted in heats and drew large crowds.

After a number of years the land was sold and a new course had to be found.

The leading sportsmen who raced this course were Andrew Lader of Cully's Creek, George Sipple of Werris Creek, William Wightman, whose mother owned the White Hart Hotel, P.Ward, Jock Rose, a formed publican, Jim Newland who operated Mr Gill's coaches at the time, W.Schofield, George and William, the latter erected the hotel at Murrurundi and Alec Johnston of Scone.

Horses which raced at that time included the Egg, Lord Raglan, Don O'Connell, Tarantula, St Helliers, Quondong, Discount and Logic.

Racing them were "Yellow Dick", George Thompson, Teddy Baker, Ted Cummings, Sam Eldwell and Shore.

Two very young men who rode around that time were Peter Adam Haydon, who did not turn 20 until 1862 and his brother Stuart Alexander Haydon, four years younger, both sons of Thomas Haydon who died in 1855.

George Ingle's Ben Bolt became famous at the time winning every race from Muswellbrook to Homebush and beating the noted race horse Lauriston.

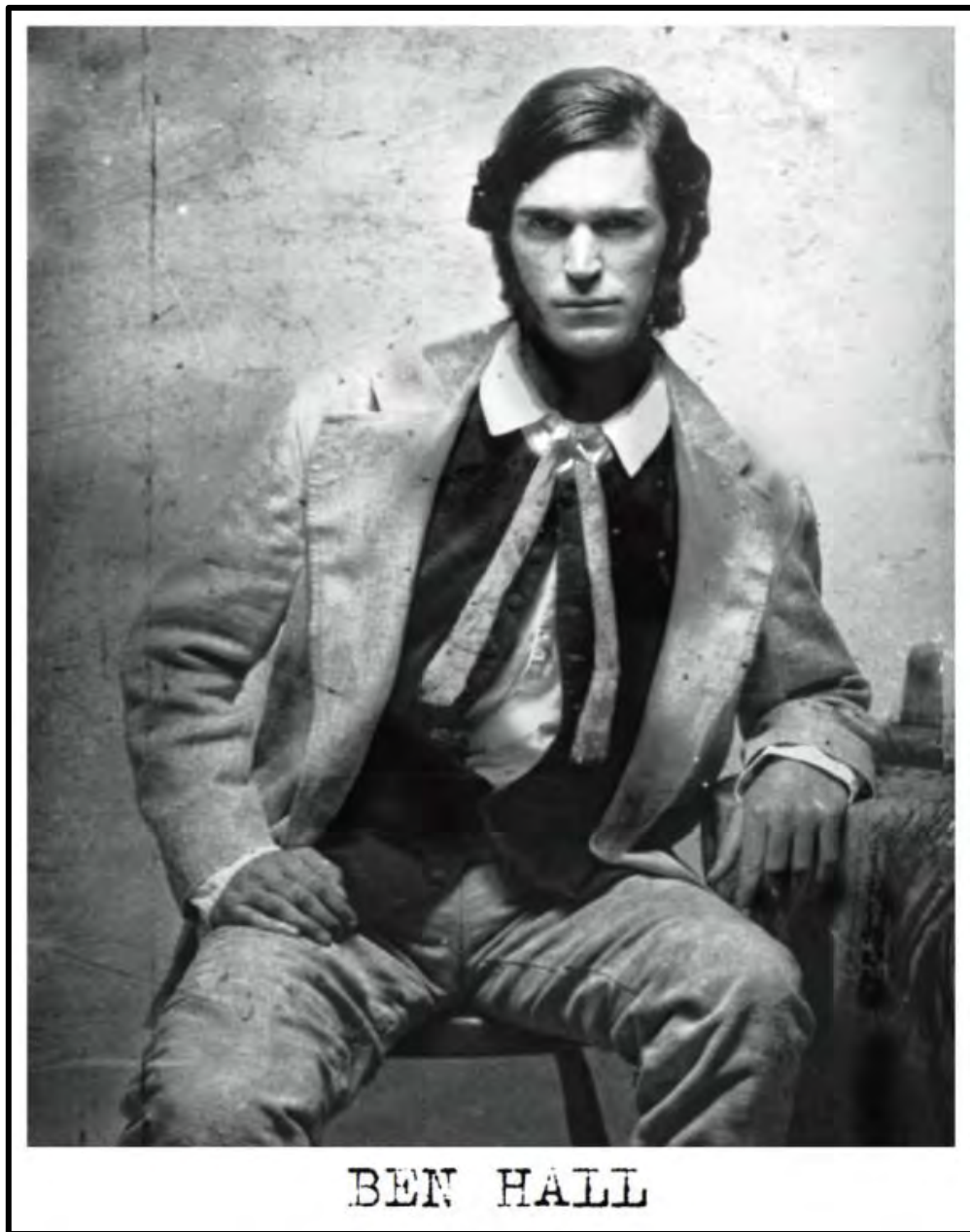
Ben Bolt ran three miles in five minutes 51 seconds at Windsor.

Around 1863 the paddock in which the racecourse was located changed hands and the course was again relocated – this time to the site of the showground in the Police Paddock.

On this course W. Wightman's Firestick; Dr Garden's Grey Steel; Peter Adam Hayden's Sardine; Bernard Brodie's Baddy; Ed Stein – publican of the Golden Fleece Hotel in Scone – Bobby and Jack and Joe Sydney's Little Mick were among the best performers.

Part of this course was acquired by the railway after 1868 and somewhere around 1870 racing ceased in Murrurundi until March 17, 1875 when a meeting was held on White's Glenalvon property.

## Ben Hall (Bushranger) @ Murrurundi



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben\\_Hall\\_\(bushranger\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Hall_(bushranger))

There must have been something about early Murrurundi which engendered free-spirited entrepreneurs with a proclivity for making acquisitions independent of reliable and/or proven original ownership? Maybe it was simply a sign of the times? It must have been tough. In the mid-1800s Murrurundi was the northern limit of settlement; genuine frontier territory. No wonder the likes of Edward Davies and others headed for Nowland's Gap at the top of the range possibly believing themselves beyond reach of the law? Most were eventually disabused of this notion and paid the ultimate consequences. Ben Hall was such a person raised into this environment. He probably believed anything was worth the risk? Some of his relatives still survive around **Murrurundi** and are both prominent and most worthy citizens. You have to tread warily in any dialogue.

## Early Life

Ben Hall was born on 9 May 1837, at Maitland, New South Wales, Australia now East Maitland, New South Wales (though there was an 1865 newspaper report incorrectly naming **Breeza** as his birthplace). His parents were Benjamin Hall (born in Bedminster, England, in 1805) and Eliza Somers (born Dublin, Ireland 1807). Both of Ben's parents were convicted for minor stealing offences and transported to New South Wales, and first met each other as convicts. Benjamin received his ticket of leave in August 1832, but it wasn't until 1834 that Eliza was granted her freedom. They were married the same year and moved to the Hunter Region. The couple had numerous children; **Ben Junior** was the fourth child and third son.

Benjamin Senior found work as overseer on the Doona run near **Murrurundi**, as an employee of **Samuel Clift**, while Eliza was employed as a domestic worker at Clift's home in Wallis Plains, East Maitland. Clift also had country at **Breeza** possibly giving rise to the anomaly of Ben Halls' birthplace. Following a severe drought in 1838-9, Clift had to move all his stock back to the Hunter, so Benjamin lost his position at Doona. However, during his time working in that area, he had discovered an isolated valley north of **Murrurundi** with permanent water and good grazing. Here Benjamin built a rough hut and began collecting any wild cattle and horses he could find in the hills. Then in mid-1842, he bought a small block of land in the newly created village of Murrurundi, where he established a butcher shop and also sold fresh vegetables. It was at **Murrurundi** that Ben Junior attended school. As a Shire Councillor I once had the pleasure of presenting trophies at the Murrurundi Public School speech day in celebration of 160 years. Ben Hall was pointedly not listed among their most distinguished alumni!

About the end of 1850, Benjamin Senior moved down to the Lachlan River area, taking with him the children **Ben Junior**, William, Mary and his stepson Thomas Wade. It appears that Ben Junior never returned to **Murrurundi**, although his father did in 1851. Young Ben spent his early years working with horses and cattle, developing his expertise in stockwork and bushcraft, skills which would later serve him well.

In 1856, at the age of 19, Ben married Bridget Walsh (1841–1923) at Bathurst. Kitty, one of Bridget's sisters, was married to a Wheogo stockman named John Brown, but in 1862 she became the mistress of Frank Gardiner and eloped to Queensland; another Walsh sister Ellen married John Maguire. On 7 August 1859, Ben and Biddy (as she was called) had a son, whom they named Henry. In 1859-60, Ben Hall and John Maguire jointly leased the "Sandy Creek" run of 10,000 acres (40 km<sup>2</sup>) about 50 km south of Forbes.

### **Ben Hall** (9 May 1837 – 5 May 1865)

He and his associates carried out many audacious raids across New South Wales, from Bathurst to Forbes, south to Gundagai and east to Goulburn. Unlike many bushrangers of the era, Hall was not directly responsible for any deaths, although several of his associates were. He was shot dead by police in May 1865 at Billabong Creek. The police claimed that they were acting under the protection of the *Felons Apprehension Act 1865* which allowed any bushranger who had been specifically named under the terms of the Act to be shot and killed by any person at any time without warning. At the time of Hall's death, the Act had not come into force, resulting in considerable controversy over the legality of his killing.

Hall is a prominent figure in Australian folklore, and has inspired bush ballads and films. A memorial called Ben Hall's Wall is located in **Breeza**, south of Gunnedah. Ben Halls Gap is a small section of State Forest named after the bushranger's father, and is located south of Nundle.



## **When Tester Had His Day; a Sire That Left His Mark**

### **Racing on the Old Tracks – And More Recent Times; Celebrities of the Periods**

Taken from the Scone Advocate dated 24/3/1939



Featured Image: 'Haydon Tester 1888 - 2004'; gratefully acknowledge Haydon Family (Bloomfield) website <https://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/the-stallions-and-bloodline/>

See: <https://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/>

Picking up the threads, or concluding lines, from the last article under the above heading, dealing with the Merv/Kotoroi gelding, Kinetic, Scott Johnston, who had him, promised to supply particulars of others of the many gallopers he had in hand. This information has not come to hand, so the writer, again relying on his memory, continues his memoirs.

He (the scribe) was a very small boy when George ("Sappie") Campbell led Kotoroi in a winner of the Flying Handicap on the old St Aubins track. She was a beautifully built chestnut mare, and great was the excitement and jollification when the judge declared for her.

It was a Manchester Oddfellows' meeting, and the late Alf Fleming, for years on the staff of "The Advocate," and subsequently at the helm of "The Murrurundi Times," was the guiding hand behind the fixture.

The mare was mated with the imported sire, Merv, who was secured by one of the Hanna family. There was a fault in the lineage of the horse, which prompted the Thompson family to turn him down, and the late John Vigers, of Scone, who turned out a good one or two, notable Molly Butler, could have had him for the proverbial "song," as it were. However, he let a fortune slip when he missed his chance. Merv went on to sire many hundreds of winners in all company, including some of the greatest weight-carriers in the land.

Strange as it may seem, Merv's stock were of the hardy sort, and came to hand early. Kinetic, for instance, invariably gave of his best six weeks from the paddock. He was bred, by the way, by the late Mr G. K. Clift, who had a penchant for the strain, his second choice being the get of the imported Prudent King.

Kinetic was not only a brilliant galloper, but he produced useful performers in Bush Kate, Benita and Miss Benita. The sire of the trio was running on "Cliftlands," and little better than a yearling, jumped the dividing fence and foaled three mares on the property. With Miss Benita, Scott Johnston won no fewer than 32 races, taking out three with her on one afternoon at Gunnedah.

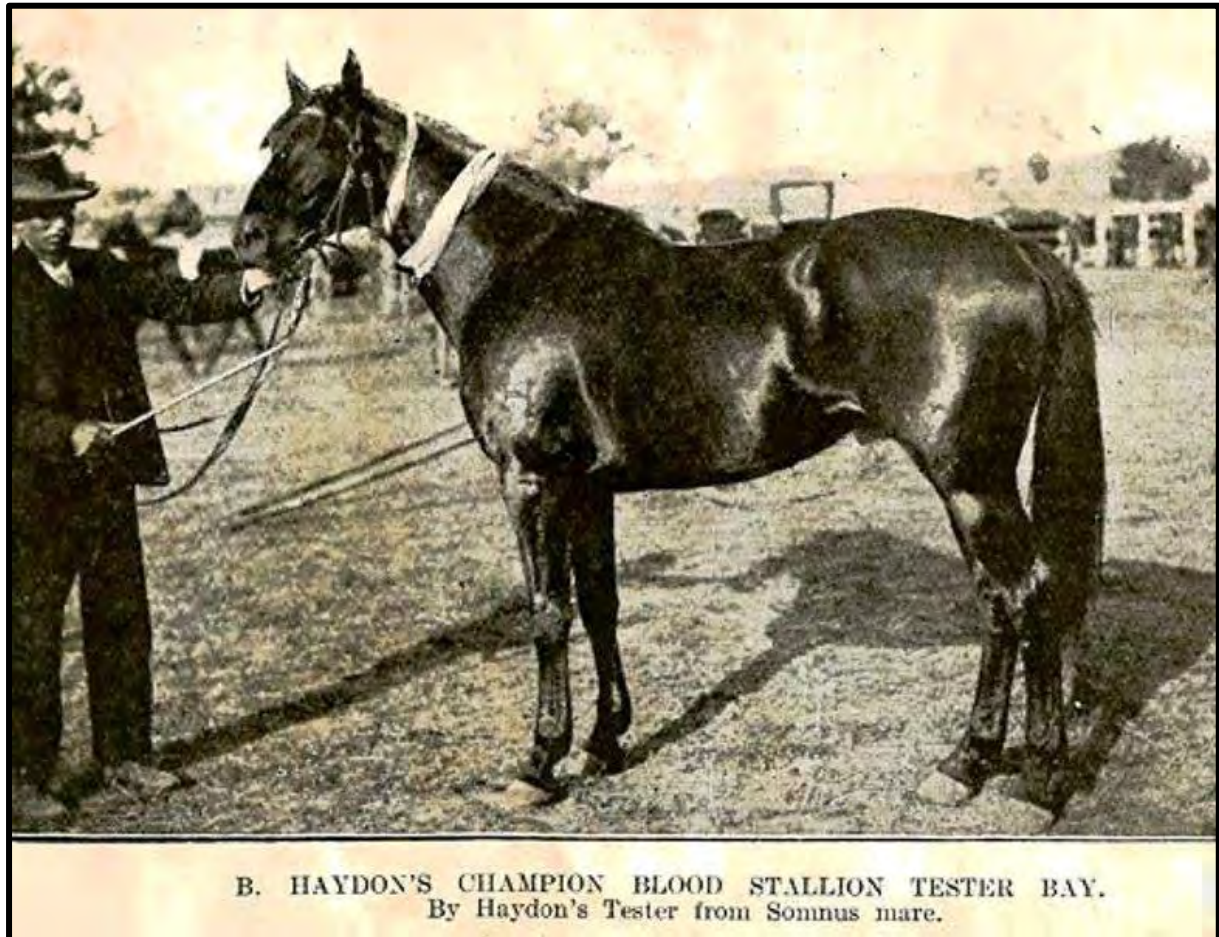
But more outstanding successes were destined to come the way of the young Scone owner-trainer. He lifted a power of races with Ruby Queen, Willie Ploma and Blue Tilly, all out of the great mare Thelma, bred by the late Silas Rose, of Parkville. The first named as Renoric, and the remaining pair by Merv. Scott really got hold of Blue Tilly after she had been placed on discard, or scrap heap, as it were, but he patched her up and scored with her on practically every provincial course between Armidale and Newcastle. At one stage of her remarkable career she won six on end, commencing with a double at the Armidale Cup meeting, two more at Tamworth, and another brace at Wallsend – six races in eight days.

It was at Wallsend that Lord Nagar was favourite at a prohibitive price, but Blue Tilly left him standing at the end of ten furlongs. Such a burst of brilliance did she reveal that at least one astute judge on the course contended that the mighty Woorak would have had the job in front of him running her down. And within a short week, Lord Nagar, bred at "Kelvinside," or was it "Russley," Aberdeen (?), fairly bolted with the Villiers Stakes at Randwick.

Willie Ploma, a rich chestnut colt, was however, probably the pick of a fine string held by the Scone-ite. He won in every direction and in all company, capping a fine sequence by taking out the Denman Stakes, six furlongs, at Randwick, with any number of lengths to spare in a field that included the great Balarang, who started at even money. Then there was Aberdonia; a gelding that came into his hands when it was thought the best had been seen of him. A flat-footed horse, the hard tracks did not suit him, but in the softer going he troubled the judge on at least thirty occasions. Then there was Dalmeny King and Electric Bullet, both bold gallopers, who picked up their full share of races. Mersina, another of the Merv tribe, and cast-off at the time, gave the lie direct to his former when he landed races at will almost including, including an Armidale Cup. With St. Rosaline, he also landed quite a few races, including a Corinthian Handicap at Scone under the steadier of 14st 2lb.

At this particular period, a trio of wonderful speedsters comprised Winsome Lady, Malt Mary and Lady Maltster, and many an epic struggle they figured in. Winsome Lady was by Merv, and the other two by Maltster. Malt Mary and Lady Maltster were sisters, the former owned by Mr F. B. Haydon and the latter by Mr. Andy Stewart, of Muswellbrook. Lady Maltster was a chestnut mare, with a black spot on her rump, and if the writer is not confusing her with another speedster, galloped in an ungainly and peculiar manner, swinging her near foreleg, the aftermath of a fracture, which yielded to treatment.

But let us get back to the earlier, “the roaring days,” when there were no padded and comfortable floats, no turned tracks, when the horses were roadbed or overloaded to fixtures separated by the space of hundreds of miles. It is here that Tester is re-introduced and let it be said in those days that any prad produced with an infusion of Tester blood was to be respected, and there were good reason for doing so.



By The Tester (imp) from Phillis, by Yelverton (imp), this black horse was foaled way back in 1882, and he passed on at “Bloomfield,” where he had been sheltered by the late Mr. B. Haydon for many years, in 1905 – 23 years of age.

From 1888 to 1905, he produced for the public 250 foals and for his owner 190, a total of 440. The blood was very much in demand, just as the Cecil strain of breeding makes the sale of horses intended for stock work or camp drafting today. Strange to say, the public was belated in their waking up to the value of the blood. One reason may be that the horse was never really trained for racing, yet he won on score of occasions, and in sprint events had his colours lowered on one occasion only.

He produced many of the best stock horses in Australia, but unfortunately, very few ell bred mares were mated with him. (*\*Amanuensis note: The original writer might have meant pure-bred thoroughbred mares?*). Despite his limited opportunities, he begot such well-known winner as Harvest Home, Gentleman Jim, Patty Brown, Santa Claus, Peg Leg, Betsy Bay, Pearl Bay, Vixen, Broken Bay, T.S., and numerable sprinters capable of holding their own in all parts.

Mr. F. B. Haydon, now a prominent figure at the many different Bushman's Carnivals in the State, won two races on Tester on the old Murrurundi course when he was but nine years of age, and let it be known that most of the horses on the station to this day track back to the black sire.

Hardy, intelligent, and endowed with stamina, some of the get have been ridden as far as 102 miles a day, whilst a seventy mile ride was just an ordinary days' work. Mr. J. H. Doyle, of "Merawah," Boggabilla, had a mare by hi that stood up to years of hard work, and which he frequently rode to and from the Goulburn River, "Drummond Flat," 70 miles, and with a days' spell, the 70 miles back. Promise, the black mare with which he won an Open draught at Murrurundi, was produced by the mare in question, while Witchery, another fine mare in the same ownership, traces back to Tester.

In a previous article, mention was made of the meteoric rise of the Ruenalf gelding Rue Victoria. From a humble beginning, he rose to great heights, capping his success by taking the Brisbane Cup in 1915. Actually the first man to handle this fellow was Jim Rose, of Aberdeen, and the writer was present one July afternoon when Jim placed him in a "Kelvinside" paddock prior to a grass-fed meeting billed to be held at Aberdeen. It was Jim who knocked him onto shape, and, ridden by Alley "Sloper" Smith in his first race, could have toyed with his field had he been allowed to do his best. But Jim, like Will Stephens and the late Fred Chaffer, who prepared him for more serious business that was to follow, were overlooked when the sovereigns were plonked on in the Maitland district, where he led two fields a merry dance to land a double.

And the closing chapters of the horse's life were not in India, as already stated in these columns, but at the head of the Rouchel, where Les Hoad gave him a life of comparative ease in the role of hack and packhorse.

Of racing in Aberdeen, when the amateurs and grass-feds held sway under the AJC rules, Mr. T. H. Fleming was most invariably in the judges' box, and the writer of these notes, more often than otherwise, was with him, cannot recall one instance where he erred in giving his decisions.

At the present time, with the urge of the magic-eye camera to assist judges, because of a disgruntled section of the public, it is here contended that the man in the box alone is in the position to correctly place the horses as they flash through the last line of vision. On one occasion, Pabulam, a black horse by Master Grand, bred on "Kelvinside," was thought to be the winner at one such fixture. He was firm favourite and naturally the public wanted to see his number posted in the semaphore. The judge, however declared for a brown gelding, Arden Orr, who flashed up on the extreme outside. Arden Orr had actually won by a margin of three-quarters of a length! Still many believed the favourite had triumphed.

The late R. Steinbeck, of Moonan Brook, and of the Dungowan district, was one of the best sportsmen in the district in his day. He had quite a number of horses, with which he took on all-comers, not excluding the all-conquering Lagoon. One of the best of his prads was Stranger, and with him he picked up not a few races, but Dame Fortune rebuffed the popular Upper Hunterite time and again. Still he never deserted the game.

Then there was Mr. Will Worrad – by the way, the old gentleman celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday a few days since – who invited all and sundry to the meetings conducted on the now almost forgotten Tooloogan track.



The Cloud and Slumber were two of the best hoes he possessed. Mark you, they had good days on the Dartbrook in the years, and the piles of the old grandstand were still standing a few years ago. And they put on a high jump, too. With a mere pony, Erin's Isle, W. W. took the popular event one afternoon when the bar had been raised upwards of six feet, and Len ("Maori") Morris, then a stripling, was in the saddle.

Then there was the late Albert Worrall, one of the greatest characters and wags of his time. He owned a niddy, which he called Socks, an appropriate appellation, by the reason of the fact that his charge had stocking forelegs. There was the time when Albert had his place on the market. "Good grazing country, area under wheat, and well-watered by creek," the description ran. A prospective buyer was making an inspection, "Where's the wheat?" was one of his first enquiries. "You'll have to dig for that, it hasn't come up yet," was the quick reply.

Albert was one evening in charge, temporarily, of the old Crown and Anchor Hotel. Presently a bagman happened along. His roll was placed near the bar entrance. "Any chances of a feed mate?" The temporary keeper not only gave an affirmative answer, but introduced the rum bottle as well. "Now what about a decent camp?" The veteran of the road could not understand the warmth of the welcome thus offered. He only took a "tumble" later that night when the very irate wife of the licensee bundled him out of her bedroom, swag and billy can in wake. Fact.

Are horses doped? If so, what is the effect? An instance of a horse being thus "livened" came under the writer's notice one afternoon on the Denman course. A certain brown gelding of the Don Reynaldo line was saddled for the opening event, and well backed too. He finished well back, much to the disgust of the tall owner-trainer, who was in business out Gundy way. It was a disagreeably cold day. "We'll get our money back in the big 'un," said the lanky son of Ireland with emphasis.

The contents of a square bottle, gin-size, were forced down the gelding's neck. An evil smelling concoction it was. The gelding stepped out for the principal handicap, ears pricked, as if given a new lease of life. He was meeting, in addition to the horse that finished ahead of him earlier in the afternoon, quite a number of others. When the judge was reached, his ears were still standing out, kangaroo fashion, and lengths ahead of his nearest rival!

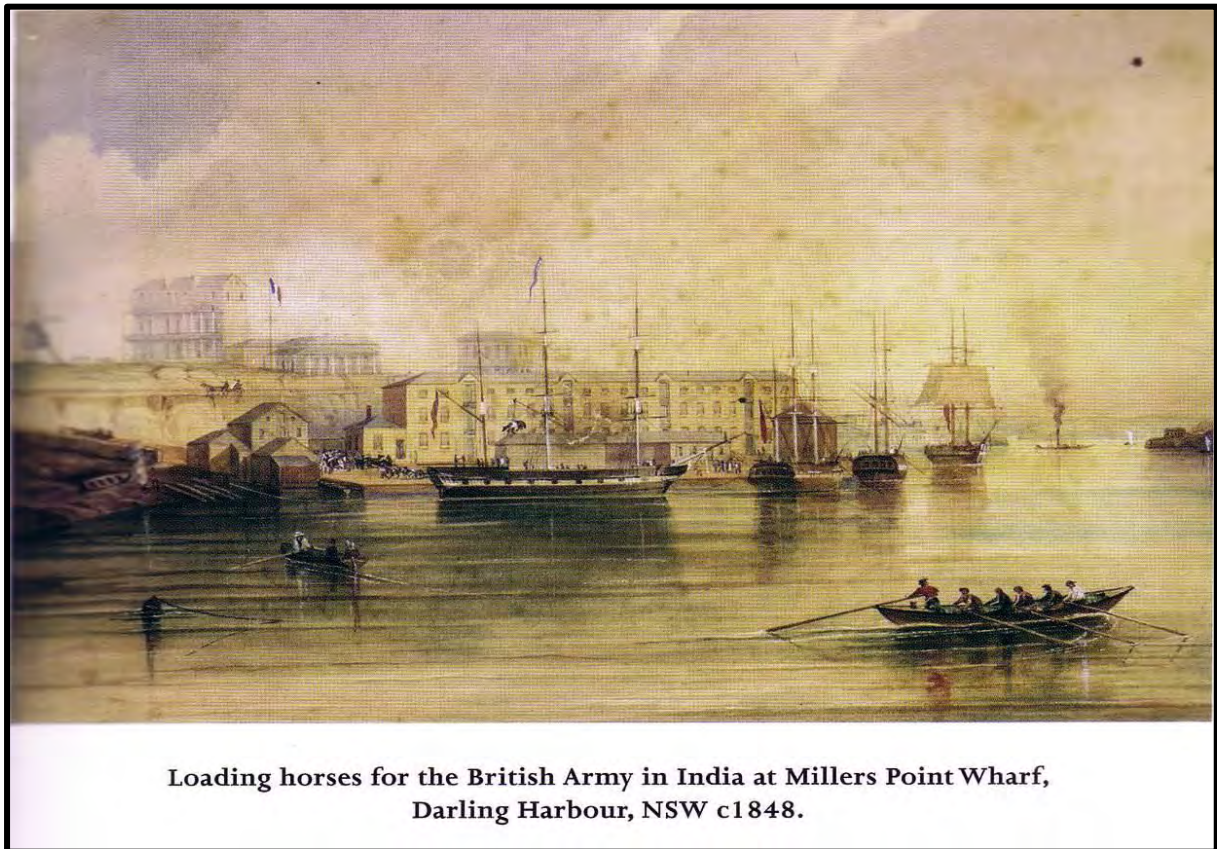
A week or two later, this scribe had hired himself to the Muswellbrook track. Just as before the commencement of the big event, a certain bay horse that should have been pensioned off years before if age counted for anything came under notice. It was not altogether the horse that attracted the attention. One sniff of the liquid preparation still adhering to the hair of its throat was the magnet. And yet another old stager won with his neck stuck out, after being backed from 10 to 1 to a quarter of those odds.

## **"Right You Are"**

### **Australian Remounts for India.**

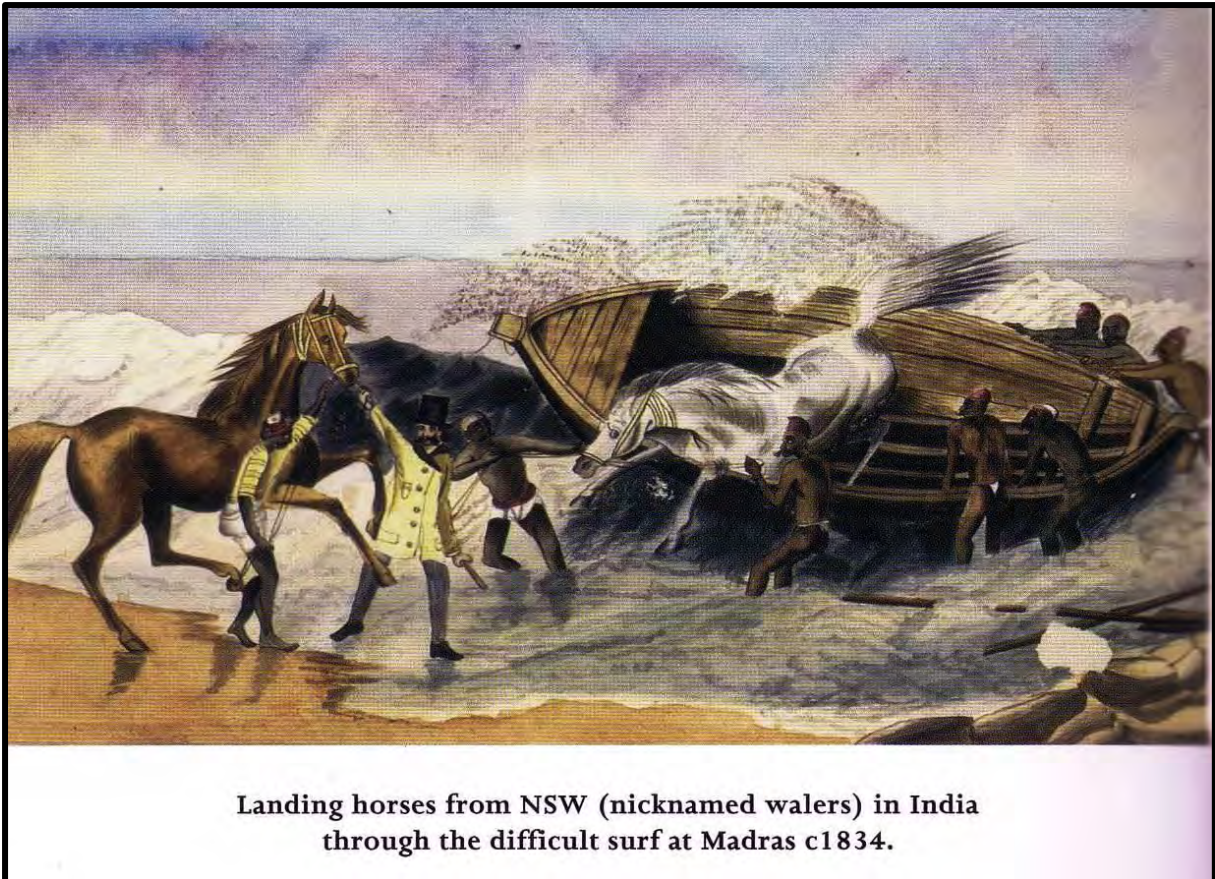
John Gilder has written a poignant and fascinating history about his family and his late father Ted Gilder in particular. He called the book: **"Right You Are"**. It's a most apposite title. I commend it to you. John may have been partially motivated to do this following the publication of my 'The Infinitive History of Veterinary Practice in Scone'? John would certainly have wished to 'put parvenu arriviste professionals' firmly back in place? He succeeded; in spades! Perhaps I flatter myself.

The Gilder Family of 'Piercefield' between Denman and Muswellbrook were responsible for sending at least 10,000 horses to India as British Army Remounts. The late Danny Edwards worked in the export trade for 11 years in the late 1920s and 1930s. He had some incredible tails to tell! *'800 hundred horse in a paddock is a lot of horses'*. He recounted how an outbreak of strangles on one voyage led to the 'disposal' of 96 horses at sea. I saw one 'burial-at-sea' on my trip to the USA in 1970. He also told me about a mythical condition they called "Sea Lung". These were the horses he/they considered would not pass inspection on arrival in Bombay. They were also 'culled'. It might have been merciful?



Dr Judy White recounts a fabulous tale in her book 'Horses in the Hunter' about John's father Ted Gilder and his remarkable part TB/part pony mare "Swallow". Ted Gilder managed both 'Piercefield' at Denman and 'Murrumbo' in the Bylong Valley. They were 50 miles apart. Ted left Piercefield by 3:30am mounted on 'Swallow' and could be back for dinner at 9:00pm having traversed over 100 miles in 18 hours!

Australian Remounts for India



<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/59672265> 29 June 1905

Colonel Howard Goad, Director General, Army Remount Department of India, who was recently in Australia purchasing horses for the Indian service, has forwarded to the Premier of New South Wales a report on Australian remounts. He says "The Government of India, takes from two to three thousand horses annually for army purposes (last year 1904 four thousand) at £45 per head, landed and approved in India. The horses brought over for this purpose are nearly all unbroken. These horses are mainly horse and field artillery class, with more or less cavalry from time to time. These artillery classes are the pick of the horses of that type bred in Australia, and unfortunately the class is decreasing rapidly. I would not have bothered you with this subject were the matter not entering into an acute stage, but horses of the class required are now so scarce that they realise prices at which our shippers will not be able to continue the trade,, and I have this season had to export horses for army purposes from N. America, Argentina, and Hungary, in order to see how these horses do in India, and thus be able to turn elsewhere at once for remounts should Australia fail us.

It would be a matter of the deepest regret should I have to do so, for, as we stand, I believe that no other army in the world is horsed as well as His Majesty's army in India is with our Australian horses, and I sincerely trust that the supply may continue. The difficulty now experienced in obtaining the class of horse we require to arm in India is I believe (and I have looked into the matter), mainly due to the facts:

"(1) That many inferior stallions are being used.

"(2) That owners have sold many of their best mares for export.



"The remedy, if I may be allowed to offer an opinion, is:

"(1) A tax on all stallions, none being allowed to cover unless passed by a duly qualified official appointed to inspect them.

"(2) In Government providing really good stallions-thoroughbred Clydesdales, Suffolks, and Welsh ponies-for use by breeders at a nominal fee. This system obtains in all the great horse-breeding countries in Europe (I personally have had the advantage of visiting these countries for the Government of India, and studying the systems in force); or

"(3) In giving premiums to private individuals [as is done on a very small scale in England], who will stand approved stallions at a nominal fee for the use of breeders.

"(4) Steps should be taken to prevent the best mares leaving the country.



## Gundy Races



*Jack Davidson and his niece Mrs. Lorna Murphy. Taken at Gundy races about 1946.*

Featured Image: Jack Davidson and his niece Mrs Lorna Murphy taken at Gundy Races about 1946

Acknowledge: "The Davidsons of 'Spring Vale'" by Daphne Bryden

When researching potentially interesting historical vignettes occasionally a few 'gems' leap onto the page. Such was the case with the discovery of the Warialda Sires Produce Stakes in the "Tucka Tucka" Dispersal Sale. I had no idea there were races held at Warialda; or indeed Yetman.

Much close to home was the revelation of the existence of races at the village of Gundy to the east of Scone. Gundy was the birthplace of renowned 'feminist' author Barbara Janet Ainsleigh Baynton, Lady Headley (4 June 1857 – 28 May 1929).

The evidence for the story of Gundy Races turned up in an encomium to legendary local horseman John William 'Jack' Davidson of "Spring Vale", Gundy by Daphne Bryden. Jack Davidson (1875 – 1961) had earned his stripes in the tough school of horse breaking, buckjump riding, rodeo and racehorse breeding and training plus dairy farming. This long career took him from horse education at "Belltrees" to buckjumping championships near Redfern and the race tracks of Sydney. He competed with and against the legends of the showman and western style touring troupes. His contemporaries and competition were Arthur and Jack Dempsey, Lance Skuthorpe, 'Martini', Billy Waite and the American 'Bronco George'; quite a tough school! Later in life Jack succeeded in races at Sydney with the likes of 'Sirino' in the Ascot Flying Handicap 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in May 1928.

Bachelor Jack Davidson passed away in the Scott Memorial Hospital, Scone on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1961 aged 86 years.

Gundy Races 10<sup>th</sup> March 1886 See: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18884529>

By Wanderer:

To make St. Patrick's Day as much of a holiday as possible it was decided to have a day's racing at Gundy to celebrate the day.

A very meagre attendance saw the opening race, the Maiden Plate, 1½ miles. After a chestnut gelding run his spin of a quarter of a mile, Juan cantered away from him and won by 150 yards.

Mr. B. Houseman's b c Juan, 6st. 11lbs.(Dodds)	1
Mr. B. Houseman's b g Sovereign, 9st. 2lb	2

Second Race: Flying Handicap, 1¾ miles, was a walk over for Malta, 8st 6lbs.

The next, the event of the meeting, handicap, 15 sovs., 1½ miles.

Mr. R. Stewart's ch g Hunter, Bat. 71b.(Smith)	1
J. Ga'llmore's br g Malta, 8st. 7lbs.(Owner)	2
Faugh-a-Ballalgh, 8st 4lbs.	
Wallaby, 7st. 9lbs.	

After Malta made most of the running for about a mile Smith began to work Hunter up, and from the straight a good race between Hunter and Malta resulted in a win by a length for Hunter, thanks to Smith's clever piece of horsemanship.

The Belltrees Purse, 1¼ miles; weight for age; 6 sovs.

Mr. B Houseman's b c Juan, 6st, 9lbs.(Dodds)	1
Stewart's b m Eva, 9st. (Smith)	2
Faugh-a-Ballagh, 9st. 3lbs.	3

Only three starters. Smith brought Eva with a splendid rush at the finish, but could not quite overtake Goldsborough's fine son, who won by a length.

Hack Race, 1 mile; 3 sovs. ; weight, 9st.

Mr. J. Hardcastle's b m Wallaby. (M. Burke)	1
Campbell's br g Stranger (Hector)	2
Stewart's b m Eva	
Campbell's b g Chelsea	

This proved the best race of the day. Smith on Eva made the most of a good start, and lead Wallaby half a length past the stand; the other two well up. Up the hill Wallaby took command, and lead by a length in the straight, where she was challenged by Chelsea and Stranger; but Wallaby, coming when called on, won by a length.

Publicans' Purse of 6 sovs ; 1¼ mile.

Mr. R Stewart's ch g Hunter. (Smith)	1
Gallimore's br g Malta.	2

Malta ran with heavy iron shoes on, but the boy was merciful – he did not punish the horse with the whip.

The Forced Handicap wound up the proceedings, which resulted in a canter for Malta, Stranger second.

Scone, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1886

### Three Courses at Gundy

*By Leonie Walker, Scone 1983*

As there was an Inn at Gundy in the 1850s, and it was customary, in those days, for Inn Keepers from time-to-time to arrange race meetings on a course in the vicinity of their Inns, it is likely that racing at Gundy began as early as the late 1850s.

However, the first report of a race meeting which the writer has an advertisement announcing that the races would be held at Belvue (the early name for Gundy) on April 4, 1873, and that the races were organised by Duncan McPhee, then the licensee and owner of the Inn.

In those days Gundy was even smaller than it is now, as a report dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1876, described the village as comprising a Public School, a Public House, an English Church, a Presbyterian Church and two or three dwellings. Both a race meeting and a ball were held at Gundy on St Patrick's Day in 1877.

The Village had by 1879, when a newspaper correspondent described the small township as having: a Church of England, a Public School, a Presbyterian Church, a Hotel, a Post Office and a number of residences.

Races were held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1888, when J. J. Minch, the proprietor of the Northern Miners Arms was the promoter. It is also likely that the race meetings were had been occasionally held in this period. 1972 – 1888, but this has not definitely been established.

After 1888, though the next report of the races on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1890, it seems that an organisation had grown to hold annual races. The first reference to a Gundy Jockey Club appears on an advertisement on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1891, and as the same person's name is shown as Secretary of the club the name appearing in the report of the 1890 races, it is likely that this person, James Robertson, was active in the creation of the club.

It also appears that the annual race day was St. Patrick's Day or close to it. From at least 1892 Gundy Jockey Club appears from its advertisements to have been registered with the AJC.

The Gundy Jockey Club held annual meetings at least from 1892. In 1894 the Secretary was Thomas Jones, and after 1895 James Bruce until about 1900.

The horse racing was divided into classes as they are in racing today, with the size of the fields averaging around six to eight runners in each race. Hack races, the Flying, Forced, Belltrees and Gundy Handicaps were all popular races of the day. The prizes for the races varied, depending upon its importance. For Open and Flying Handicaps £15 was the usual prize money – a large sum for those days.

The main event of the day was the Gundy Cup. The prize was always a Silver Cup, presented at the end of the day by a member of the race club, usually James Campbell, prior to his death in 1913, as he was a well-respected citizen and owned the property that the races were held on. The Cup was donated annually by the race committee. Before the turn of the century the prizemoney was paid in sovereigns or gold pieces.



As race meetings were only one-day events, jockeys and their horses could be banned from the races for the day. As you can imagine quite a lot of “tom-foolery”, fun and unorthodox incidents were experienced. On many occasions a jockey would find a “wet corn bag” soaked in water, which as slung over the horse’s back before it was “weighed”. When covered with a horse blanket and saddle, a large amount of weight was added to the horse and the animal got into a lighter class. The corn sack would then be removed just before the race and replaced after it was finished, to be then “weighed-out.”

Even in those days “stimulants” were used. Jack Johnston can remember a horse being taken behind a tree and a half-a-bottle of whisky poured down its throat, and in Jack’s words, “Boy did he fly.”

There are memories of “ring-ins”, or substitutions, similar to the “Fine Cotton affair,” which occurred frequently but without the media coverage of today. Quite a lot of name swapping occurred when Sydney horses were brought to Gundy under new names. They would then be re-registered in Sydney after three months.

Sometimes races were “rigged” before the race began; perhaps for a particular horse to win, either for money or prestige.

Incident like these not only occurred before a race, but they happened on the racetrack as well. It may have seemed to the crowd that during a race a jockey managed to “fall off his mount, but if the truth be known, it was another riders fault.

“Babe” Singleton

Recalls that one trick was to put your foot under the other jockey’s stirrup and hoist him over the other side of his horse. Another trick remembered by “Babe” was to wave your riding whip in front of another horse’s head, while racing. Not only was the whip in front, but occasionally the whip “accidentally” found its mark on the other jockey’s back, arms and legs, which certainly acted as a deterrent.

As you can imagine, these incidents caused quite a stir amongst jockeys. All my informants heartily agree that rarely a race meeting passed without, as Jack Johnston said, “A coupla good fights.” They all vividly remember scenes of brawls between jockeys, “with skin and hair flying.”

Of course, none of this would be seen by the officials or the crowd, so jockeys could get away with almost anything, as long as it wasn’t too obvious.

The information Miss Walker obtained as to the lack of rigid control of events is corroborated by an indignant letter published in the “Maitland Mercury” on March 27, 1894, by J. W. Brodie, of Murrurundi Pastures Board – the ancestor of the Upper Hunter Pastures Protection Board.

He had entered horses in several races and claimed that in the hack race horses were allowed to start ahead of the starting post and that there faults in the running of bothy the Gundy Handicap and the Publicans’ Welter and claimed that he would never again start a horse at Gundy. The then Secretary replied, claiming that all vents were fairly run.

An incident recalled by Dick Singleton occurring in the 1930's was when a win by a Maitland horse was disputed and the eventual outcome resulted in the horse losing. The owner had instructed that the horse be left behind if he didn't win. So the committee were left stranded with an abandoned horse which they decided to auction.

I asked Dick Singleton if he remembered how much the horse went for. Dick replied, "Yes' I remember well, £25." I was surprised and told him I thought his memory was exceptional, and went on to ask if he remembered who bought it, he chuckled and said, "Yes, I did". He was not a racing man and gave the horse, "Big Boy," to his father to train and his brother, "Babe," to race.

The race club committee spent a great deal of time planning in those days. Advertising was carried out by the "Scone Advocate" and usually resulted on a good attendance.

According to Dick Singleton the women had their duties too. It was up to the ladies to provide a mid-day meal, which consisted of sandwiches and cake that were made in large quantities, and sold to families and groups from a tent. They organised the music and supper along with many other tasks. Without the help of these dedicated women the success of the racing days would not have been as successful.

The refreshment stand was supplied by Mr J. T. Aisbett, who owned a cordial factory in Main Street, Scone. It was Mr Aisbett, who owned the first lorry in Scone, which he carted refreshments to Gundy in. Along with the cordials and ice drinks (which were manufactured in the Scone factory), bottles of ginger beer and lemonade were sold for sixpence a bottle. Aisbett's lorry was such a novelty that the children would pay him to ride on it.

Bookmakers of the day were Ernie Marks and Jim Murphy. Jim was a jockey and a trainer of two horses. Murphy's horses were brown mares by the names of "Woods" and "Sunspeck." Jack Stephens was the owner of "Santai" and he was also a "bookie"

In the earlier days the "bookies" would stand in a circle, on a box, calling out the odds. Over the years they acquired booths and a much more organised betting system arose.

Ike Rossington, from Gundy, and Dave McKenzie, from Scone, were blacksmiths at the races, and even shod on the track.

The fancier jockeys were attired in coloured silks and riding boots, but most wore ordinary shirts while racing. All who rode were supposed to wear a skullcap. Jack Johnston described them as similar to that worn by the Pope, some wore proper jockey caps. Two sheds made from corrugated iron served as the jockey's changing room and official's room.

Some of the better known jockeys of the era were Roy Windred, Ernie and Frank McGoldrick, Roy McNamara, Archie and Wally Watts, Jim and Jack Wiseman and Albert and Hubert Jones.

Local horses that raced well at Gundy often went to Sydney where they ran at Randwick. A horse called Luana owned by H. Bell, of Bunnan, is evidence of this. Mrs Walter Singleton has a photo of Luana hanging, showing it winning at Randwick.

Frank Whyte, who owned and trained horses at Tooloogan Vale, called his horse Liang, after the new State Premier, Mr J. T. Laing. Frank called it Laing because, in his opinion, "It was no good as was the Premier."

Most horses and their owners, jockeys or trainers, would star out for Gundy, perhaps a week before the due date of the race meeting, depending on the distance they had to travel. By allowing themselves plenty of time to get to their destination, the horses would arrive without undue stress.

Some horses were led to Gundy tied to the back of a sulky travelling at about five or six kilometres per hour. They would walk slowly and rest whenever the horses began to sweat. As they walked the horses were allowed to graze, and by doing so, were both fed and exercised en route to the meeting. While travelling they would camp in stockyards or on the roadside. Whenever they'd pass through a town or village they'd buy supplies which they carried behind in a wagonette.

"Babe" recalls this time with fondness. He and his father, Walter Singleton' would spend weeks on the road travelling the so-called "circuit" from race meeting to race meeting. Nearly every community both large and small had their own racecourse by the 1930s. The circuit might start at Gundy, then on to Moonan and Stewart's Brook and back to Scone.

It was mentioned while interviewing Mr Esmond Ellery that a young girl by the name of Riley was killed at the races (or so his parents told the tale to him). During my research at Scone Museum I discovered an old "Advocate" that told of her death. It states that although the accident did not actually occur at the races, it happened behind the Gundy Hotel.

Miss Louise Riley (17) was riding a racehorse by the name of Abbott, when she jumped off and in doing so sustained concussion and died two days later. The incident occurred only days prior to the Australia Day race meeting then called the Anniversary Day race meeting in 1906.

There is some discrepancy between my informants' as to how the race venue changed from one place to another. So, I have sided with the majority and hope the following is correct.

All my informants agree that the first was behind the Linga Longa Hotel, before the turn of the century. During the late 1880's the course changed to James Campbell's property "Ardinhal", approximately one kilometre south of Gundy.

The racetrack was similar to that of the Linga Longa course, it curved following the contours of the land and was approximately six furlongs in length.

An extract from the "Scone Advocate" dated Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1898, is referring to Campbell's property when stating that "the course is rather out of the way, but if a little money was spent in making the road to it safer for vehicular traffic, we believe the club (Race Club) would be better patronised."

It wasn't until one New Year's Day race meeting, when the hot humid weather resulted in a storm, that anything was done to improve the road. On this particular day the rain came suddenly and in such torrents that a gully which had to be crossed to enter Campbell's property became impassable.

As a result of this unreliable gully and bad access, the racecourse was changed to Mackay's property, "Nabinabah", north of Gundy, presently owned by Mr David Archibald. This change took place in the early 1920s after World War I. Races were held on Mackay's for only a few years, for during this time repair work was done on the road and a small culvert or bridge was built from wood and stones over the gully; the remains of which can be seen today.

In 1913 James Campbell died and the property changed hands to the Green family and became known as Green's Flat. The Gundy Cup continued on Green's Flat for some years. The Moonan Road was moved away from the Hunter River to its present site, which meant that with the arrival of motor vehicles "Nabinabah" was easily accessible and once again became the racing venue.

During the 1930s race meetings became spasmodic. As Scone grew White Park was developed into the central venue for racing. With the advent of the Australian Race Club and Australian Jockey Club, racing became regulated and the minor racetracks faded out of existence.

Those I interviewed all felt sure that the last meeting in Gundy would have been in 1941, during the Second World War, presumably as a War charity function. I could not find any definite record: although I checked the "Scone Advocates" of this period.

*(Amanuensis comment: A photograph exists of Mr Jack Davidson at Gundy Races in 1946. See Gundy Races elsewhere on this site)*

Racing at Gundy reached its peak during the late 1920s and would draw crowds of 300 – 400 people. The annual race meetings became fixtures, which gave Gundy a reputation of fine horses, and country that was good for breeding.

Prior to New Year's Day, people arrived in droves, swelling the Gundy population to its extremes. On the day of the race meeting an almost continuous line of traffic headed for the Campbell's property.

The wealthy travelled in automobiles; some were hired from Oswald Cumberland's Hire Service, which in earlier days was owned by Pat McGruger. Families rode in sulkies, buggies and wagonettes, other rode on horseback, and more still, walked. The event, combined with the excitement and buzz of activity, brought to Gundy an annual atmosphere, which is still felt when picnic race meetings are held in Australia today. In the heat of the day, usually a scorching summer heatwave, the excited crowd gathered, along with the smell of horses, crying children, and, of course, myriad bushflies.

My informants remember that most of the crowd stood on the hill to watch the races and had to put up with the blistering heat, for there were few trees on the hill to provide precious shade and there were even fewer on the flat.

A typical race meeting began at about 11:30am, and continued until late afternoon. About 8 to 10 races would be held during the day, with an hour between each race.

After the presentation of prizes, the crowd would disperse some going to stay with friends and relatives. Those who lived nearby would go home to excitedly await the Gundy Ball, which was held in the Gundy Soldier's Memorial Hall. Prior to World War I, the Balls were held in a "hall" in Mr Ellery's words "a shearing shed with wooden poles down the centre that they danced around."



The Longa Longa, previously the Northern Miners' Hotel, which had two storeys, was always filled to capacity whenever a race meeting was held. The rest of the crowd who had too far to travel home or were only interested in getting their horses home safely, while there was still daylight, wouldn't attend the ball. They were the minority and usually the Gundy Ball was attended.

In the course of obtaining information as to racing at Gundy I discovered information that the Gundy Rodeo and Sports held on New Year's Day had a very long history. It may have originated in the Jubilee Sports which were held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1887, to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee of that year, for athletic sports were held at Gundy on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1890, which is the date up to which my present researches go. Athletic Sports were held annually on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

I also noted that in May 1883 a match race was held between J. Pinkerton, the best runner in Gundy and J. Mould, the Scone champion. J. Mould won easily.

It seems also that cricket has a long history at Gundy. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1881, Scone defeated the Gundy cricketers – this is the earliest record of a cricket match I have yet located.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May of the same year Gundy defeated Scone Schoolboys and on 15<sup>th</sup> October defeated Scone although the Scone side had only 10 players.

The Gundy team on this occasion was A. Hegarty, S. Street, J. Pinkerton, H. Clayton, J. Steinbeck, M. Moran, H. Hawkins, A. McColl, E. Oaks, S. McNamara and J. Campbell. On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1885, Rouchel defeated Gundy, but on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1888 the home side won over Moonan Brook.

## Tales of the Tops

Acknowledgements: Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society and the Scone Advocate 9 July 1920



Featured Image: Scenic view of Barrington Tops

“Peeps of the Past”: Back in the Sixties (1860s) written for the Scone Advocate by ‘Uandoo’

When we left Tomalla (which is on the Manning waters) for the wild cattle country, the first streams we passed were the Hunter and the two branches it receives a few miles from the head. Further on was Polblue, a swamp on the main waters of Omadale Brook. This was an oasis in summer, well covered with white clover and swamp grass, and we were always sure of finding a wild mob in the vicinity. The English clover had been introduced by Dr Gill, when the world was a good deal younger. Here was an old post-and-rail yard – a wreck, built by one of the Bowmans, who had cattle there in the fifties, from which most of the wild ones were bred. The scrubbers were not a fashionable colour, mostly yellow-brindle, some with black sides and white backs. Naturally, they varied in condition with the season, but ever on the richest pastures they could never be turned into “fats”.

After passing the dividing range between Omadale and Moonan Brooks, the country, which on the Hunter side was steep and full of brush, and in parts inaccessible, opens out on the watershed to , Colo, and although swamp in parts, gives good grass for cattle. The first stream is the little Murray, so called by William McPhee, another fine bush rider. Then comes Bean Bean Plain, with the creek running through it. Parts of the swamp in the late sixties were very boggy, but dry seasons have dried it up, very much improving the feeding ground, on which for about five months of the year stock do well.

Over the ridge at the head of the Brumlo is the yard (mentioned in the “Wingham Chronicle” by “Kyorie”) built by Jack Marshall and party. Jack was a wild rider, but I don’t think he ever caught enough scrubbers to make them scarce. Four miles further on are the Barrington waters, with miles of beautiful swamps. There is now a trig station at the highest point at the head of Stewarts Brook, overlooking the Mount Royal branch of the Paterson. A bridle track from Stewarts Brook leads onto Barrington Tops, going past the trig station, through Edward and Saxby holdings, and down into Mount Royal Creek, a tributary of the Paterson River.

The horses on Glenrock and the surrounding stations were, generally speaking, permitted to run wild, there being very little demand for them. A yearly muster was adhered to for a time, but later even that was omitted. This muster tested the horsemanship of the stockmen; it required a good deal of strategic skill to catch horses rather than cattle, as they are much faster.



'Brumbies' on Barrington Tops

On one occasion, on the rocky spur between Barnard River and Schofields Creek, one of our most experienced horsemen, John Corbett, was after a mob of nine, which took a wrong turning. Over the precipice they went, and were smashed to jelly. Fortunately the man behind managed to jump off and pull his round in time. Another time we had our coachers (quiet horses) on Boxtree Ridge to receive a mob that was being brought down the hill. One of the lot was trying to make a bid for liberty, and he came thundering down at full gallop, Mr Corbett went out to intercept him. When the brumby came near to the waiting horseman he fell, and sliding along struck the horseman's leg from under him.

For a time horse and man were mixed up, but apparently no harm was done, though the brumby got away. Some of the horses were of good type. Several adventurous spirits built trapyards in the places most frequented by the horses, and several were caught this way. In the last muster that I remember, after picking out the best to send to Maitland, we rounded up the culls (about 200) in a corner and shot them. Shooting was the last resort, but they ate too much grass to be ignored, and moreover they disturbed the cattle when we were mustering. Shooting brought to the fore some carckshots: George Aslin (then sheep overseer at Ellerston), William Morrison and the Eipper brothers accounted for a few hundreds. At the present time there are only odd lots on the Togolo holding.

The weather on these 'Tops' is very changeable, subject to heavy fogs and frosts and to snow in winter. I have known snow to lie without melting for three weeks. Although the land is now leased or selected, none of the holders live there all the year round. In summer, however, the climate is beautiful, and the water is the best in the world. An interesting feature of 'The Tops' is the animal and bird life. Wombats, harmless but very strong creatures, may often be seen near the holes in the evening. They live on roots and grass, and like the native bear (Koalas) carry their young on their backs.

There used to be great flocks of parrots of the Rosella, Lory and King varieties, but the most interesting bird was the Lyrebird, which is very shy and difficult to observe. Like the flying squirrel, it can only fly downward, but it can hop up a tree very quickly. Lyrebirds seem to delight in mocking all the birds of the bush; passing by the brushes in the evening one hears a great rehearsal. In summer the wild flowers are very beautiful. I have seen the Barrington Tops covered as a carpet with buttercups and everlasting daisies.

The Pibaimbarnie take their rise in the Tomalla range on three small tributaries above Tomalla Creek junction, some very good coarse gold has been found. In 1877, there was a small rush to this field, about 40 men being on the ground. Some good gold was washed out, all alluvial, but owing to the difficulty of getting tucker the miners gradually left. Until very lately, however, there has always been some fossicking in the vicinity, as within a four-mile limit one can get 'colours', at any time by washing with a pint pot.

Thunderbolt did not pay Tomalla station a visit, although he killed a heifer in the Gummi yard, taking away only the choice meat. He also took the Campbell's favourite old horse, 'Bradshaw', and Mrs Campbell's hack, 'Spider', also two horses from Mr John Miller, on the Hunter. They were all recovered again, not much the worse for their trip. About that time one of the hands found in a burnt out stump a set of shoeing tools, the iron top of a carpet bag and other fixtures that puzzled us going down the bridle track from Gummi to Polyfagal, leading a pack horse. Thunderbolt met two troopers, Ellis and Hogan. The police had their rifles slung on their backs, and the bushranger, taking in the situation at a glance, let the pack horse go, slewed his horse round, and made off, Ellis after him. What happened to Hogan is not stated, but the hunted was too fast for the hunter; the outlaw cut across the Gummi out to back Gunyah, where he may have had other horses.

When Thunderbolt stuck up Simpson's Hotel in the Dennison Diggings (Moonan Brook), he had men, women and children all covered in his hand. Neil McGuinness, who had come over from the Hunter with two horses to be shod, must have been overlooked in the round up, and rushing from the short end of the verandah, he caught the robber from behind by the arms, calling out, "Come on boys, I've got him!" The bushranger called to the boy Mason. "Rip him with the knife!" and when Neil saw the knife coming he let go and streaked down the verandah, dodging round the corner. Thunderbolt, who was both angry and un-nerved sent a shot after him. He helped himself to Neil's two horses, one of which was found, on being recovered later, to be shot through the ribs.



**'THEY'RE OFF'!**

**RACING WHEN THE 'NO. 9' MEN OPERATED.**

**SPURTS, SPURTERS, AND DOINGS ON THE BUSH TRACKS**

**'THEM WAS THE DAYS'**

The Scone Advocate, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January 1939



Featured Image:

"Babe" Singleton wins the "Snake Gully" Derby on "Ajax" at Gundy on New Years' Day 1939. Starters and riders in the 'Snake Gully Derby' included 'Babe' Singleton on 'Ajax', Bill Holmes on 'Socks' who ran second and Bill Phillips riding 'Static'. The 'ladies' in the race asked for no quarter and received none! 'Babe' and 'Ajax' won by half a lap, with 'two lengths of the paddock between second and third'! The journalist writes (in parenthesis) 'the third horse had not passed the post when this edition went to press'. The race took place on January the 1<sup>st</sup>; even the great Ken Howard would have had trouble describing the result?

When Babe Singleton was stallion groom at Widden there is a famous photograph of Babe 'boxing' with 'Brueghel' who is rearing on his hind legs.

Best boy riders at the Gundy Carnival were A Reid, J McInnes, N Watts, D Watts and R Wharton.

Memories of the old ARC days of racing in the district are revived with the consistent running of Mr. Frank Whyte's gelding, 'Our Voyage', who is by a Politic colt out of a Poseidon mare. Our Voyage has won at Newcastle, Tamworth, Armidale, etc., and on Boxing Day was narrowly defeated for the Wallabadah Cup, after trailing the field by many lengths before the run home in the short straight was entered upon. In the years gone by, Frank was a power to be reckoned with on the many district and inter-district courses — in the days quite a few of the 'No. 9' fielders settled if they had the ready cash. When they were short, punters just had to wait — some are still waiting. Needless to say, disputes were the order of the day, and at times it was Donnybrook over again. However, Frank had four speedy customers with which to try out the best. With honest old Sweet Voyage he collected no fewer than 37 races, and with his dandy little mare Ivy Graft he picked up 25 firsts. Then there was Miss Kinetic, who poked her head first past the winning post on 22 occasions. Flirt, a mare by Phil May, had her number hoisted, or chalked up, 17 times.

Yes, 'them was the days,' as 'Jimmy' Jones was wont to say when he was winning right and left with Cyrus Knight, a little brown bally entire by Cyrus. 'Her a dood 'un,' Jim would exclaim as he led the apple of his eye back to the enclosure — beg pardon, the wire fence, or shade of a tree — following still another triumph. But Frank and Jim did not have matters all their own way. There were many contemporaries and strong rivals. Of these, there was Tom Harney and his wonderful galloper, Ellimark, a grey, whose loping strides gave many a fielder a 'headache.' The old mare also measured paces on many tracks, suburban, Maitland, and Tamworth districts, as well as the dozen or so then in use in the Upper Hunter. Galloping in a stride, as it were, she took some running down, and it was almost invariably a case of 'bellows to mend' for most of her rivals before the post was reached.

On the old Aberdeen track one afternoon, she was saddled against a field, including a mare from the Skelton stable, brought up by two well-known local sportsmen, and who backed their 'importation' off the map, only to see her well and truly shaded by the old grey (10 to 1). Even after her retirement, she was taken to the scene of many of her best performances at Aberdeen between the shafts of a sulky. Ellimark was one of the versatile tribe. 'Billy' Hill was on the track and without a mount. He begged of the tall Mooby-ite to allow her to run in the 'big money,' a five furlongs event carrying a 'fiver.' Tom took a lot of persuading, but eventually yielded. The sweat was knocked off the mare, and before long she was nosing the starting tapes. Jack Tracey, Roger Whalen, and their confreres of the 'bag' were yelling themselves hoarse to get a little cash on her at 10 to 1. There was one solitary taker of £5 to 10/-. The field jumped away. At the judge there was only one in it — Ellimark. The prize went to the rider without any deductions. Tom also saddled quite a number of others, including two mares by Famous, Famouslike and Famous Pet, and with them had his full share of wins. Famous Pet was a slick customer up to half a mile. When in her heyday she was taken to Sydney with another galloper, O'Shea, The late Harry O'Neile had come into the kaleidoscope by this time. She was made favourite at Ascot, went like the proverbial 'scalded cat' for four furlongs, and then petered out of the picture. Two races later O'Shea was saddled for a mile race. The party by this time was 'on the rocks,' and had the mortification of seeing him take out with lengths to spare. And a generous betting ring failed to elicit any business at 33 to 1! Of course, Jack McGregor was one of the downcast party, and even the subsequent successes in the bush of Blue Peter failed to compensate him when the tide of fortune was against him.

Then there was the excitable Jim Murphy, who owned a chestnut, Blue Label, by Garlin, a Newmarket Handicap winner. Jim had a great run for a time, lifting a treble with him at Kars Springs one day. Incidentally, 'Kruger' (Dad) Dodds rode five winners on this pretty little track one day. His reward was 'thank you' 25 times and two half-crowns. And it was thirsty weather, too. 'Bill' Pinkerton, of 'Gum Flat,' Gundy, always had a decent galloper or two as a side-line from sheep and cattle raising. With old Brilliant Chiel, one of the most honest and consistent mares in the game, he won almost at will, and under crushing weights, at that. When he placed the mare aside following her couple of score of wins, he mated her with the Carbine horse, Sir Whitton, and the result was another cracker-jack, which he named Dark Whitton. Endowed with all her dam's speed and honesty, he picked up races in all company with her. But an incident on the old Nundle track one New Year's Day sickened him of the game. W.J.P. was no punter. He merely entered into the sport, as already stated, I as a side-line — relaxation. Dark Whitton had won the big event hands down, from webbing to winning post, but the race was awarded to another runner, whose owner, a true sportsman, refused to accept the judge's verdict. At Kars Springs, on another occasion, she was pitted against a good field, when the 'man who has last say' made an honest mistake in giving the race to another brown mare, Ina Eaton, from the Merriwa side. Dark Whitton had led throughout. The same owner had another great little mare, Diana, by Sir Whitton, one of the smartest gallopers up to four furlongs for her inches in the land. He likewise had a couple of other ponies which more than paid their way.

Syd Smith, of Aberdeen, had a little galloper, Dolly Grey, and she must have scored as many wins as Bradman has run up centuries. She was like a cat out of the machine, and simply toyed with her fields. The late Rupert Golledge, of Gundy, had another good little one in Maori Girl, I and one of the prettiest striders of her I time. Alan McLean, of Kars Springs, who has Marie Belle and College Lass, had a few slippery goers, and with Jack picked up a parcel of races. Of course Donald McPhee was well in the game, just as he still holds his own on the cricket field. Two extra smart ones in his care were Blarney Castle and Little Mag, and a third one, probably better than the pair mentioned, the name of which has, like the rainy seasons of old, slipped from the writer's memory. And Charlie Challis, not to be outdone, got hold of one he called Belford, with which he looked for bigger game farther afield, whither he transported the gelding on one of his lorries. Charlie, like many other contemporaries, was in the game for the fun he got out of it, yet he had a sequence of successes.

Racing verily makes strange bed fellows and rings in the changes. In his earlier days he drove teams of horses for a livelihood, walking tens of thousands of miles up and down the Hunter beside his steeds. In later days he transported horses in grandiose style to far-away tracks! The writer had almost passed over Harry Knight, of Lower Rouchel, who, like quite a number of others mentioned, has passed on from this mortal coil. The old man, who derived much pleasure from the sport, invariably had a tidy string of horses, and had a penchant for those of the Phil May strain. Did not Phil May win a Newcastle Cup in the days when that race carried as much interest to northerners as the big draw cards do at the A.J.C. and V.R.C. carnivals? One of his best candidates was Phil Grey, who popped up with a pleasing frequency to H.K. who at one fixture on the little track in the bend of the Hunter below "Kingsfield" saddled up all three starters in an event. 'You can back your fancy, boys; they are all going,' was this sportsman's advice to his friends. And the trio figured in a thrilling finish. Harry Knight was a man of big frame and heart, and when sovereigns were as scarce as hairs on Frank White's top-piece, he was wont to dredge a supply for these outings, and he put them into circulation, too.

Of course, there were many others who joined in and made the fun, but these notes are just made from memory, and, besides, the ink has given out in the bottle and must be re-filled. And not only the ink container, these torrid times.

These meetings naturally attracted the bookmaking gentry from all points of the compass, and many a trap they set for the unwary. False prices were called to draw business. If the horse lost, all was well. If it won, it was not uncommon to discover that the name on the ticket differed from that on the bag of the fielder who had issued it. These fellows would just 'blow in' and 'blow out' again, leaving many punters wiser, if poorer, men. But they would come again like a hardy annual, and the bettors, strange to say, would come at them again, only to be taken in again. The majority of the fielders, however, were like Ellimark, Brilliant Chiel etc., honest, and paid out with a smile.

Yes, 'them was the days' all right — the days when Ernie Marks got his start. It was at Aberdeen when a Dalmeny mare came home 'weight correct,' but without a 'bob' on her. On the roadside that afternoon, E.J.M. counted and had a re-count of one hundred and fifty of the best while the driver of the car was investigating some engine trouble or other. The arguments, 'ramps,' and reversals of form of some of the horses will keep for the rainy and cooler weather.

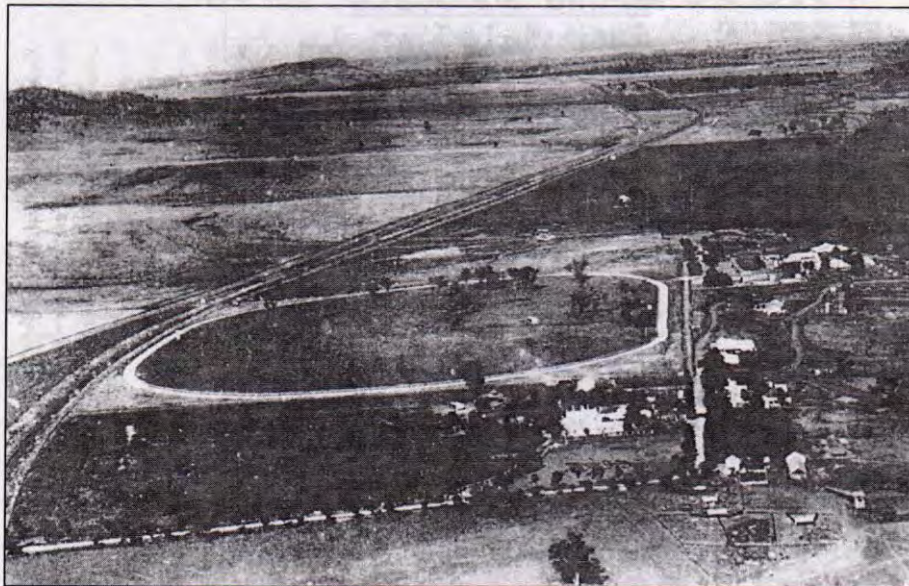


**Scone Amateur Turf Club 1895**

THE SPIRIT WITHIN



Scone Race Club's Anzac House race meeting held at St. Aubins Racecourse 2nd September, 1944.



St. Aubins Racecourse from the air 1948. Probably taken at about the time of the filming of 'Into The Straight'. Railway line and New England Highway are shown leading from left hand bottom to top centre - John A. Smith photograph.

Featured Image: The St Aubins Racecourse in September 1944 and as it appeared from the air in 1948 by which time it was defunct as venue for race meetings

The first recorded race meeting conducted in Scone took place on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1842. It was not the landed gentry who promulgated the meetings but rather entrepreneurial publicans who hoped to attract patrons and promote their trade. Mr J P Wilkie of the White Swan Hotel was by all accounts the inaugural proponent. A 'racecourse paddock' had been cleared to accommodate the participants; both equine and human. Between 1842 and 1887 there was a significant paradigm shift to patronage by the burgeoning district squatters and landed gentry. A New Committee of the Scone Jockey Club was established between 1887 and 1891 which promoted races at the Old Racecourse Paddock. The final meeting was held there on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 1891 and Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1891. The Satur Racecourse at Mr F A Parbury's property then became the home for the Scone Jockey Club from 1892 until 1900.

The Scone Advocate reports a meeting of the Scone Amateur Turf Club on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 1895 on the private St Aubins Course, Scone. St Aubins was then owned, occupied and operated by the Bakewell family. This represented a departure from the 'traditional' meetings of the Scone Jockey Club held around the Christmas and New Year break. *'The amateur meetings were held on Mr Bakewell's private St Aubins Racecourse. Only 250 people patronised the races, which reflects the select group that attended to witness the races restricted to members of the Amateur Race Club and the Scone Jockey Club'*. It appears this was a 'Members Only' function for the self-appointed and self-elected 'exclusives'?

It appears the Scone Amateur Turf Club may have imploded? By May 1899 the Scone Jockey Club ran a two-day meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 1899 and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 1899. The Committee comprised the 'social elite' of President Thomas Cook, Vice-Presidents J A K Shaw, H E White and Dr H J H Scott; Judge Dr Scott; Starter J A K Shaw; Clerk of the Course M G Kinnaird; Clerk of the Scales Mr J J Dodd; Treasurer Mr J A K Shaw. It was a very closely knit 'nepotistic' group who would also have dominated the Scone Amateur Turf Club. Most were established Masons.

Presumably racing still persisted on the private St Aubins Course; firstly as Mr Bakewell's Paddock and then W J 'Knockout' Smith's as late as 1944? White Park Racecourse was used for the first time in May 1947 under the auspices of the nascent Scone Race Club.



## Blandford Races 1900

**BLAKE'S RIVER** (*Co. Fitzroy*) is a small W. tributary of the head of the Nymboi river. Sandstone.

**BLANDFORD** (or **MURULLA**), 32° 48' S. lat., 150° 54' E. long. (*Co. Brisbane*), is a small postal township, built on private property, in the parish of Murulla, electoral district of upper Hunter, and police district of Murrurundi. It is situated on the Page river and Warland's creek, on the great Northern-road, between Sydney and Armidale, and is distant N.W. from the former, 186, and from the latter, 127 miles. Warland's, Scott's, Splitters', and Sandy creeks, the 3 latter dry in summer, all flow near Blandford; Warland's creek retains water in the driest seasons. The Murulla mountain, the highest in the district, is distant 3 miles W.S.W.; mount Wingen, or the burning mountain, a remarkable natural phenomenon (see **WINGEN MOUNT**), is distant about 7 miles S. The district is chiefly an agricultural one, there being a large number of free selectors settled in the neighbourhood; there is, also, fine pastoral country in the neighbourhood. The nearest diggings are the Denison diggings (quartz), about 20 miles distant. The nearest places are Murrurundi, 3 miles N.; Wingen, 7 miles S.; and Scone, 21 miles S. With these places the communication is by coach; and with Sydney, 186 miles S.E., by coach to Singleton, thence by rail to Newcastle, and thence by steamer. There is a township marked out on the opposite bank of the river Peel, called Murulla, but none of the allotments are as yet built upon. The surrounding country is very mountainous, the township being situated in a lovely valley. The geological formation is sandstone and shale.

**BLAND** is a county in the pastoral district of Lachlan, containing 300 acres of alienated land, and 1,359,700 acres unalienated. Its boundaries are, however, open to modification.

Featured Image: Blandford earliest documentation; Blandford today has about 330 residents and is situated astride the New England Highway north of Scone and just south of Murrurundi. It is bounded by many important thoroughbred studs and this is the major local industry. It has a public (primary) school which has produced a great array of talent covering several generations.



Blandford 2000

Excerpt, Letter to the Editor, Racing at Blandford in 1900, **Scone Advocate**, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 1961; Reprinted in 'Mac Bridge; The Man and his Recollections' by Heather Ashford and Margaret Ashford-Macdougall 1983, Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society, 1983 Bi-Centennial Publication No. 2

### Racing at Blandford in 1900

Easter Monday, 1900, was the first time I saw racing at Blandford. The main topic at the time was talk of a previous meeting, when a horse owned by Bill Greer, and ridden by Albert Hussey, failed to take the turn into the straight, and sprawled over the fence and finished up in the middle of the metal road. I do not know how the horse got along, the rider was hurt and badly shaken – no swabbing at that time! But it has been said caffeine would not have been found, but traces of something purveyed by Johnny Walker.

However, at the Easter meeting, 1900, the double was won by a horse named Trial, owned by the late Harry Hall, of Willow Tree, ridden by Dooley Sevil. One of the bookmakers on course was the late **Dan Lewis**, spoken of as Dismal Dan. **Dan Lewis** later became a trainer of some note at Randwick and led in the winners of five or six Sydney Cups and the winner of one Melbourne Cup.



'Foxzami' (NZ) trained by Dan Lewis wins the 1949 Melbourne Cup ridden by William Fellowes and owned by L G Robinson. Photo courtesy of Fairfax Media.

At a meeting on Boxing Day, 1900, the late Harry Kenny entered his horse Brolga in a race, but was so much under the weather he failed to get the horse ready and Brolga was still tethered to the fence whilst the race was being run. Brolga, later that season, was killed on the Murrurundi race-course whilst competing in a race.

At the Blandford meeting, I remember three satchel swingers, **Dan Lewis**, **Rufe Naylor**, who later took **Winooka** to America for a racing season, and Jim Kennan, who also ran a horse named Burdekin at the meeting.



During the Boer War, Ted Corbett, auctioneer of Scone, journeyed to Blandford for the purpose of purchasing remounts for the Army. A fair number of settlers turned up with horses for sale. The meeting place was the yard at the Plough Inn. Tom Gilshenan was there with a brown gelding by Tester (cannot just recall the name of the gelding), which was not for sale, but appeared to be there in the hopes of licking up a quid by running a quarter of a mile match race. Tom said "I'll run anything for a quarter of a mile for a pound". Charlie Hartman said "I'll have you on if you will wait till I get Quiver out of Bill Greer's Lucerne paddock". This was agreed. Charlie Hartman's brother, Mick, rode Quiver, but I forget who rode Gilshenan's horse. Ted Corbett acted as judge, and Bill Greer as stake-holder. In the run, Quiver, by Stockwell, was declared winner, and before the riders dismounted, Tom Gilshenan and Charlei Hartman were engaged in a bout of fisticuffs. A fair amount of gore was spilled, but no one badly hurt. When it was over Ted Corbett was heard to say "There's no doubt this is a good place to come for free entertainment".

At this time, Blandford boasted of a hotel, the Plough Inn kept by Mrs Dougherty, and three wine shops were kept, one each by Anthony Schumaker (known as old Shuey), one by Mrs O'Brien and the third by one Heiler.

I saw Jack Norvill ride his Tester gelding, Pardon, in a bridle race over a quarter of a mile. Jack was riding so vigorously and had such a lean-on, some said he wanted to reach the post before his mount. The answer was that Jack was emulating Tod Sloan and was forcing him all the way.

*Tod Sloan was an American, whose success in America and England, with the crouched-seat racing position, first introduced by Australians Tot Flood and James Barden, convinced the racing world of the advantages of the crouch style, and led to its general adoption. 'Tod' Smith, son of 'Advocate' Smith was given that nickname because he rode in the same style.*

## Beersheba & Midnight



Major Guy Haydon and 'Midnight'

This is a story too good to miss. It really resonates around the Upper Hunter leading up to the 100 years anniversary of the original charge in 1917. Peter Haydon from Blandford has been especially proactive with very good reason.

Peter Haydon was born in Scone, the Horse Capital of Australia, in 1955 a fifth generation horseman from Bloomfield Homestead, Blandford which was settled by the pioneering Haydon Family in 1832. Peter is the currently owner operator of Haydon Horse Stud with this wife Alison and sons Henry, Nick and David. It is one of the oldest continually run family horse studs and produces top quality horses which are performing on the world stage.

Peter has a Bachelor of Commerce, worked in business in Sydney and London, managed the polo stables for HRH the Prince of Wales at Windsor Castle as a professional player and was Scone Horse Festival VIP in 2009 in recognition for his services to the horse industry.

He has compiled a story about his great uncle Guy Haydon and his horse from Bloomfield, Midnight who died saving his life in the Charge of Beersheba.

## Midnight-the full story

<http://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Midnight-Warhorse2.pdf>

Guy Haydon rode Midnight in the famous Charge of Beersheba. Earlier they had been chosen to represent the Australian Light Horse against the British Calvary in the “Desert Olympics”, winning all three events and becoming heroes of the Light Horse.

The Charge of Beersheba was one of the last great victorious cavalry charges in history, which led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and changed the course of World War One. 800 mounted Australian’s from the 4th and 12th Light Horse charged across open ground to capture the precious wells at Beersheba from 4,000 well-entrenched Turkish soldiers. Described as “insanely courageous” they charged directly at the enemy artillery, machine gun and rifle fire with only bayonets in their hands. Due to the sheer speed of their horses they managed to get under the enemy fire, jump the trenches and take the town in an historic victory. A British Calvary Officer recorded it “as the finest thing that I have ever seen mounted troops do”.

The 31 October 2017 marks the 100 Years of the Charge of Beersheba with extensive commemorations to be held locally, nationally and internationally. At Murrurundi the 12th Light Horse will conduct a ceremonial parade on 28 October, followed by a luncheon and the showing of “The Waler” documentary, the Historical Society will have an exhibition of memorabilia, Mark Greenwood will have a book stand for his children’s book “Midnight-the story of a light horse” and Frane Lessac the illustrator will display her original drawings and there will be an exhibition of school paintings inspired by the book. Tom Thompson will display his new book “To Beersheba 1917”.

To get the full Midnight Warhorse story please [click here](#).

<http://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/news/midnight-the-full-story/>

Peter Haydon is a special guest author at the Scone Literary Long Week End (Writer’s Festival) 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017:

<http://www.sconewritersfestival.com.au/authors/peter-haydon>

Home: <http://www.sconewritersfestival.com.au/>

## Old Time Racing and Sport: And Those Who Contributed To It

Acknowledge: This article appeared in the Scone Advocate around the 1950s and was written by A. F. S.; possibly one of the Smith family who had control of the newspaper at that time.



Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Featured Image: The original Golden Fleece Hotel on its present site in Liverpool Street with the Thomas Cook Federation Fountain to the left in the centre of the Kelly Street intersection

Mention of Dan Lewis, a prominent owner-trainer, now nearing an age when memories are just that. He who has led in six Sydney Cup winners, a Melbourne Cup winner and hundreds of other winners all over the Commonwealth, getting his “kick” at the pigeon matches at Scone, then held near the site of the present Scott Memorial Hospital.

The writer, then a lad, is the last of the pristine trappers employed for the job by Dick Solomons, then the proprietor of the Golden Fleece Hotel, in whose backyard he had a pigeon loft and bred the birds for the sport, which attracted the best shots and back-markers in the land, but these visitors invariably had had it put right to them by Alick Campbell, of Scone, who actually pulled off the famous Monte Carlo in one year, and event open to world-wide competition.

At this time Dan Lewis was then laying (or taking the odds) – his brother Hyman, was his penciller – counted three hundred sovereigns after a day’s shoot. It was a big day for Dan, and he counted the yellow pieces again before finally snapping his bag. He cut even on the second day. One of the “big shots” to make his presence felt at Scone was the widely known McIntosh who at times fired from the 31 yards mark. He used the pseudonym “Lockley”.

But the biggest winner was usually the promoter. All unharmed birds returned their loft, to be used another day. And for many a bird that found its way to the loft, Dick Solomons had the trappers to thank. By clandestine means, the pigeons, before being placed in the traps, had their tails plucked. Result, the moment the traps opened, the birds, instead of rising to survey their surroundings, shot like an arrow from the bow in the direction of and beyond the boundary line. “Good bird, that” was the remark heard from shooters and patrons alike.





Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

#### Trainer Dan Lewis at Randwick in later years

Not even Dick Solomons himself ever account for the appendage feathers when he had a muster of the loft for the next day or days subsequent. Hence the writer and his youthful associates had unwittingly contributed to the wealth of Dan Lewis and Dick Solomons alike. And whereas at the end of the day the shooters “shelled out” most liberally for trappers; all the quartet ever received from the promoter for their day’s work was a paltry florin each. He promoter pocketed the balance.

Dan Lewis, a New Zealander, had a very humble beginning in the realm of sport, but success never went to his head, and he has never forgotten his friends of yesteryear, whether it be at Royal Randwick or on his periodical, but now less frequent, visits to the town and district.

He won his first race at Spring Ridge, near Quirindi, with Freddie Snell in the saddle, and later landed a double, at the Belltrees shearers', or picnic meeting with horses owned by James Poynting, that anything but impeccable publican who hung his sign from the old Willow Tree Hotel in Liverpool Street.



Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

The old Willow Tree Hotel on the corner of Guernsey and Liverpool Streets

The first street light in Scone hangs over the intersection

He went from success to success after he came into possession of Rue Victoria, a Ruenalf gelding bred at Belltrees which changed hands at auction for £5 because he was afflicted with a most pronounced stringhalt, which in no way deterred his ability to gallop, for he won many races from Brisbane to Randwick, taking the Brisbane Cup of 2 miles in his stride. But there was no paddock of lush pastures for the aged gelding to reflect over his past glories. Saw him leading a big draft of remounts passing through Aberdeen one afternoon, his probable destination being overseas to lump bigger burdens than ever given by the handicapper.

Ernie Marks, now hibernating out Merewether way, was one of the best known bookmakers of these parts during racings' past history in the Upper Hunter. Writer vividly recalls his first real "lift" when swinging the bag. It was at an Aberdeen meeting when the "bolter" came home in the principal event. It was Tea Leaf, a brown mare owned by Sid Smith, of Aberdeen, and by the Merton-owned Dalmeny. Ernie Marks bagged the best part of a couple of hundred pounds, and when the car broke down near Turanville gates on the way home, he was to be seen sitting on the running-board counting and re-counting his gain. More than likely Arthur Fox, still going nicely at Bunnan, was his penciller.

Then there were Jim Jewel and Jim Casey, of Newcastle, likewise James (Grafter) Kingsley, and “Jumbo” Barnett of Cetigne fame, from Sydney. Well remember the afternoon Casey landed the main double at Scone with his dandy mare, After Twelve, another Belltrees bred, by Ruenalf from After Six. And how she did win! Six lengths first run, ten lengths at her next start, with penalty up.

And harking back to Ruenalf, a son of Grand Flaneur, there was the occasion when his son Ruenalf II, mentored by George Hopper, who guided the destiny of the then Crown and Anchor Hotel (then the Empire, now the Thoroughbred), Scone, planned a great coup with his brilliant galloper.

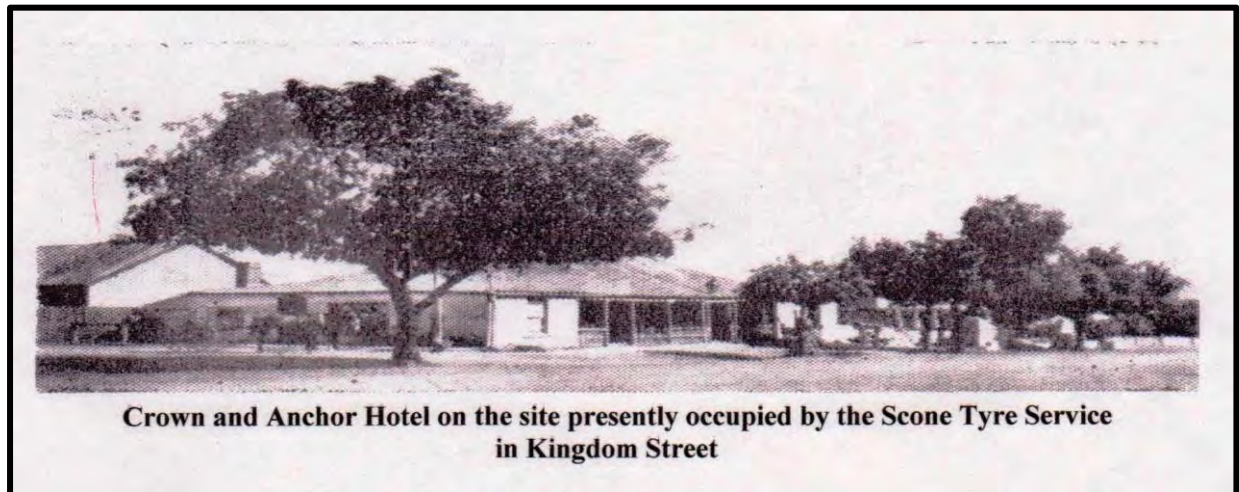


Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

He aimed high – the Caulfield Cup. The horse arrived in Victoria, and accompanying George Hopper was none other than Aldino Erranati, otherwise colourful character known as “Italian George”. Each supported the horse to win £10,000 at long odds.

The great day dawned, but the horse finished down the straight, George Hopper was not only disappointed but also chagrined. He told the rider, one of the best known in the game, what he thought of the run. He went further. He reported it to the stewards, who brushed him aside, advising him not to be a “squealer”, Oppor, as Italian George called him, offered to donate £500 to any charity named by the stewards if the horse failed to reduce the time taken to run the Cup on the same course next morning. This offer was likewise treated lightly by the officiating gentry. Ruenalf II, absolutely and unknown quantity over two miles had also been entered for the Melbourne Cup.

He was saddled for the premier race in the land, but with another rider up. The “boy”, who did anything but carry out the instructions given him, “went for the doctor,” so to speak, the moment the webbing ascended. The Scone horse was soon showing a clean pair of heels to the opposition, and did not surrender his lead until the last hundred yards of the race, with the gallant prad, still fighting on, going to the post just beaten out of a place. George Hopper was afforded every reason to assert his claim that Ruenalf II was a certainty beaten in the Caulfield Cup.

If any person should have made racing pay it was “Jumbo” Barnett, who almost invariably brought a full box (three horses) to the Scone outings. But they were usually given an “airing” and taken to Quirindi and Tamworth with the same ends in view. Eventually they were produced at Armidale, where the “big note” was placed. But by the time the horses had arrived back in Sydney, Barnett had smilingly collected full rebate both ways from all four clubs! When the clubs simultaneously resolved to put an end to his smart way of financing transport, “Jumbo” bypassed the meetings of all concerned.



## On the Old Tracks in the Days Long Past; Other Sporting Characters and Incidents

Taken from the Scone Advocate 10/3/1939



Featured Image: James 'Grafter' Kingsley

The identity of the chronicler of those notes, which have appeared in "The Advocate" from time to time, and which deal with racing and incidents on the many old tracks in the Northern districts in the days when black beards were in vogue, has been elicited from more quarters than one, and from far-removed places, too, thus indicating that they have been widely read. The author is merely one of the members of our literary staff, who has a flair for early history, whether it pertains to our pristine politicians, our first settlers, or the early-day sporting fraternity of which the district has every reason to point with pardonable pride of their achievements.

Of the incidents recalled, after a space of forty years, they have been largely penned from memory, with the result that the odd and largely unimportant inaccuracies in respect to details have inevitably crept in, as it were. For happenings of earlier periods, stretching back from half to three-quarters of a century, old friends supplied the facts. So that's that. Satisfied?

In previous articles there has been mention of that great old mare Lagoon, trained and ridden in most of her wins by the astute "Jimmy" Smith. She was actually owned by Harry Harper, doyen townsman now nearing the octogenarian "furlong" post on life's journey, and the late Harry ("Bandy") Houseman, who, in later years, came into possession of The Waif and other notable gallopers of the time, and whose sons figured prominently in the saddle in State and Queensland until increasing weight put them aside. The pair purchased the mare for £100, her sire, Mailtrain, was by Mailboy. If we have it right, she was bred by John Wiseman, father of Hanna Wiseman.

Her long sequence of wins opened at Rutherford, and we mistake it not, she annexed the first race to be held on the track in question. Mr Harper recalls with a chuckle how next they took her to Wallsend, nominating her in the mile race on the first day and the ten furlongs events on the succeeding day. There had been heavy rain, with the result that the track, somewhat uneven at the best of times, had been reduced to a series of menacing puddle-holes. On the trip out, Jimmy Smith was accompanied by Joe Brown, one of the best known identities of the period. On the way to the track, a number of Chinamen, in Indian-file, also had the rendezvous with their destination.

The leader of the sons of the East happened to be cross-eyed. Joe Brown was quick to discern this peculiarity, and without any comment turned and retraced his steps to the town. Joe was superstitious. The mare was running prominently, when she came to grief in the dangerous going, hurtling her rider yards. Fortunately, neither was injured. "What did I tell you?" was Joe's comment, uttered with emphasis, when the party returned to town. However, she was saddled the next day, took the lead early, and was never caught in the ten furlongs run to the judge. From that day she went on to score on innumerable occasions and in all company and under favourable and indifferent conditions.

Harry Harper ran the mail up the Hunter for many years in the days when floods were a real danger to the ordinary traveller, and tested the skill of the man handling the ribbons. Tradition had it that Her Majesty's mail must be delivered at all cost, and with no bridges and deviations along the route, the mailman's job was frequently a precarious one.

Our old friend still has more than a lingering admiration for Albert Widders, the great half-caste athlete-horseman of the Upper Hunter. On the athletic track, in a yard of scrub cattle, or on the back of an untamed horse, he was alike at home. He could throw a cricket ball with the best of his contemporaries, while in the cattle yard it was mere play to cross from one side to the other per medium of the backs of the wild-eyed steers. Widders was a great sportsman into the bargain, and had many admirers.

It was H. H. who interested himself in an oft-narrated foot race between John Pinkerton and John Mould, both of whom have since passed on. The Gundy pedestrian was in the hands of Sol Harris of Muswellbrook, who is also no more. Jack Mould, who had figured prominently in Carrington handicaps, effused point blank to settle down to serious training, and at least a number of his followers were perturbed. There was a side wager of £2, which was a mere bagatelle compared with the amount of other money on the match. On the day of the event, the parties assembled at the Belmore Hotel, the licensee of which was Mrs Gallagher. The Gundy representative was prevailed upon to rest on the couch. But not so Jack Mould, who amazed Sol Harris and his party by nonchalantly breasting the bar when drinks were called for and quaffed a mug of beer. However, the race, which attracted a large crowd, went to the Scone-ite, who caught his opponent at 60 yards, and thereafter had matters all his own way for the remaining 70 yards.

"To the races!" Where are all the old calico signs and conveyances today? The early sportsmen laid down a beautiful track at Satur; the generation which followed, had little or no time for it. And what motley crowds the train from Newcastle dropped when it pulled in at Scone! There were the genuine supporters of the game, supplemented by urgers, pea-and-thimble men etc. And the rush to the course and the rush back to town to get the second load – many of the latter had already set out on foot – before the first race.

Frank French, George Kinnaird, Tom Moran, and others were strong rivals. And for such occasions vehicles of a much earlier period were placed on the road to cope with the heavy demand for transport to and from the track.

Some of the trips were a precarious nature, because of the condition of the contraptions, and their re-appearance no doubt deprived sundry poultry of roosts and shelter, temporarily, at least. And the expletives of at least one well known driver when his load, just as the town approached, left in a body like young birds from their nest when danger threatened! The “scalpers” generally got their work in on the second day. Then who does not recall poor old “Todd” Falconer, itinerant printer’s compositor and race-book seller? The bespectacled and ubiquitous William was to be met on all courses following his calling. The youngsters were prone to bait the old fellow, especially after he had worshipped Bacchus. “Don’t be so damned supercilious” would be his first line of defence, but when properly warmed up he would fly into action in a manner resembling a bed of red ants when disturbed.

Then there was Mick Kelleher, a diminutive and doubled-up army pensioner, who would walk across country from Blairmore, followed by a pack of nondescript dogs, his jacket ablaze with replicas of medals in tin secured from the then favoured brands of tobacco, such as “Yankee doodle,” etc. These and other characters helped to make the days fun and to spin it out, and were, in a way, highlights of the fixtures.

One of the best performances ever registered on the Satur track was credited to Coruna, a dandy little galloper owned by Thomas Gardiner, of Aberdeen, and by the Belltrees sire, Ruenalf. When the post was reached, the writer happened to be standing alongside the old man Mitchell, veteran handicapper and gentleman in every sense of the word. Times were compared and the chronographs showed 1.12. Then the official time appeared – also 1.12. Many present chuckled to themselves. But next week Coruna ran similar time on the Newcastle track, and as at Scone, just played with the field. Incidentally this latter record stood for probably a decade until Scott Johnston came along with Kinetic, a chestnut gelding by Merv form Kotoroi, and lowered it in a field which included such brilliant speedsters as Renkerna and Malt Mary, the latter being acclaimed the best mare of her inches racing at the time.

Another prominent figure in later-day racing was James (“Grafter”) Kingsley, who passed on only a few years ago. He was carrying all before him until he earned the displeasure of the AJC over a certain incident, but having expiated his wrong, was reinstated after a lapse of twenty odd years. Even during the years of his disqualification he rarely missed an important country meeting. Sometimes he managed to see the first race run, but on the approach of one or other of the course detectives, he would pass out the gate just as furtively as he had entered. He usually brought his yellow Massey-Harris bicycle with him for transport to and from the tracks.

He arrived unheralded in a northern town in the years before the AJC placed its ban on him. A horse had been consigned to the town in question, arriving on the night prior to the races. The freight was to be paid at the “other end.” When Jim turned up to take delivery of the prade he struck an unsympathetic crowd of railway officials. Jim was penniless. “Well, there is no accommodation down town, so let him remain here for the night.” However, the horse mysteriously disappeared overnight, and irate officials were in a dilemma.

“Grafter” won the first race on the program, but had not invested a penny on him for the reason that his pockets were empty. When the winner, who went out at long odds came back to scale, there was short weight to the extent of one pound. Word to this effect soon found its way to the betting ring. A solidly backed favourite had run second. The wily Kingsley was not perturbed, and was in no hurry to rectify the matter. “You are on £15 if you can pull the weight,” came from a member of the betting fraternity. Other promises of from £5 to £10 poured in. Presently the bridle was removed and the “correct weight” flag was run up. Now with a tidy “bank” he backed the two succeeding winners, won with his own horse on the second day, and followed is run of luck by supporting three more winners for goodly sums. He left the course that afternoon £3000 better off. His next place of call was the railway station, where he squared his account and paid the return freight. Report had it that within the next few days’ two well-dressed young fellows in the subject town were displaying gold watches and chains. It soon became known also that the gold pieces came by registered mail from Sydney.



Photograph courtesy of the Daily Telegraph

#### James ‘Grafter’ Kingsley and ‘substitute’

Mention has frequently been made of bargains in the sale ring, those outstanding of quite recent years being Strephon and Wish Wynne, both bred in the Scone district, but who did most of their racing in Victoria. Strephon, by Saltash, was a champion, but failed badly in England, where he could not settle down under the altered climatic conditions. Wish Wynne was bred at Wingen, and was one of the speediest mares to grace the Australian turf.

The late John Moylan, of Gundy, secured a brown horse in the Scone saleyards for £10. He was by Projectile from a Lochiel mare named Nina. It was later ascertained that the purchase had been injured as a yearling, and therefore did not take his place in the offerings at the yearling sales.



Jack Cavanough, a shearer, got hold of him, and almost immediately started a winning sequence, taking in his stride races at Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Inverell, Maitland and Newcastle. He named the horse Locktile, and refused an offer of £500 for him. He dropped dead in a race at Wallsend when ridden by Danny McCarthy, with 10.10 up.

Patrovader, a rich chestnut by the Turanville sire Invader, annexed many races in all company. He was owned and trained by Mac Luddington.

Then there was Rue Victoria, a son of Ruenalf, who failed to change hands when the annual draught of Belltrees thoroughbreds was being disposed of in Scone saleyards. Because of a pronounced stringhalt, there was not a bid, but Frank O'Donnell secured him privately for £6. He made his first appearance on the track at an Aberdeen grass-fed meeting, and could have won by a neat furlong. He was next taken to the Newcastle district and landed a "double" in hollow fashion, and here later a reversal of form was questioned when he subsequently won over ten furlongs in 2.5¼.

Dan Lewis next got hold of him, and he went from success to success, capping a remarkable series by taking the Queensland Cup. The writer saw him paddocked for his first appearance and also at the end of a brilliant career, also at Aberdeen, out in front of a large mob of remounts which had been collected for the Indian trade!

Two full brothers, Rualma and Mount Alma, were bought in succeeding years by the late James Dunn, of Muswellbrook, for whom they must have won a score of good races. Rualma was trained privately by Sid Gore, and word had leaked out of his sensational trials. Northern sportsmen to a man were waiting his reappearance following his first outing at Wallsend. Jim Dunn, however, had quietly shipped him over to Victoria. (It must be remembered that there were no blue, yellow, green and pink tip-slinging papers at the time, and the daily press gave little publicity to outside Victoria meetings; and no broadcasting). The gelding stripped at Ballarat, and just walked away with the race, incidentally, a Scone-ite, whose hair was not black, but whose thatch was darkened for the occasion, was on the spot, and collected handsomely. The next heard of him (not the red-headed man) was when entries closed for Newcastle and Randwick the same day. Ruelma was nominated at both meetings. His whereabouts still a mystery. But he turned up at Royal Randwick, and in a big field, in which a Thompson-bred horse, Royal Parade, was all the rage, fairly toyed with his opponents. Two Scone punters, including one already referred to, emptied their pockets on the floor of their room, and divided the winnings, each re-pocketing a sum well over the four-figure mark.

**“They’re Off!” – When the Spurters Spurted; and Old Palliah Plugged On**

**“Them was the Days”**



Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Featured Image: J F Poynting’s Willow Tree Hotel, Scone: It appears publicans played a very large part in promoting racing, betting and gaming events!

*Taken from the Scone Advocate 7/3/1939*

When the scribe, a few days ago, in his moment of leisure, “knocked” a couple of columns of “copy” together, dealing with the doings and incidents on bush tracks, no small section of our readers, like Oliver Twist, passed their, as it were, for a second helping – asked for more, and more.

Penned wholly from memory, the reminiscences of happenings are asked to be accepted in the spirit in which they are presented.

Most of the tracks which attracted crowds in the days referred to have long since disappeared. In any instances closer settlement, with the introduction of the plough, have been responsible, and then again, there are too many present day counter attractions – mechanical coursing for example, has magnetised no small proportion of those who made the smaller race meetings possible – and other reasons that caused clubs to haul down their flags, never to be raised again.

Some of the clubs brought about their extinction, for one and only reason that certain officials could not resist the temptation of having their modicum of their choice, and even went further in settling the chances of other fancied candidates when the webbing went aloft. Yes, it was frequently a case of ascertaining which horse the starter fancied. This was not a difficult task. It was not an uncommon, and galling, spectacle to see certain horses fairly catapulted from the machine, or, in the case of a walk-in, or flag start, to discern the fancied candidate well into its stride before the riders of the remainder of the field realised what was happening.

There were, of course, occasions when it was only too obvious to the “boys,” as well as to the spectators, not to mention the callers odds, who were awake to what was doing.

For instance, there was a track near the head of the Peel when a race was delayed for upwards of half an hour, and by the time a start was affected the crowd and betting ring had moved almost over to the barrier.

Despite the vigilance of the other riders, however, a chestnut mare left the machine with an advantage of twenty lengths, and even then only scrambled home, with bare half-length to spare, from a diminutive brown mare (a daughter of Sir Whitton, and therefore a grand-daughter of the illustrious Carbine) from the Hunter watershed.

It was on this very trysting-ground that the chronicler of these notes ran across the late John Stephens, of Moonan Flat, a well-known sporting character, and a good fellow into the bargain. John bred and raced Hollywalk, a mare by the Belltrees sire, Cakewalk, also another handy mare named Nadi, and later on, among others, a Cressfield-bred mare, a brown with a hogg mane, Dixie, a sprinter of no mean order. Incidentally, Hollywalk fairly walked away with a handicap at an Armidale Cup fixture in her day.

Getting back to the day out near the Peel, the genial John was very much in evidence. Not only was he represented by a string of horses and interested in others from the Hunter, but there he was, bag suspended from his shoulders, the real Joe Mathews of the ring.

Luck was right against him, and he was “shot at” from all angles. Horses whose names he had not written were either hopelessly left at the machine or “strangled” in the running. He went for a recovery in the last. He laid the field against Dark Whitton, another of the Sir Whitton tribe, who, by the way, is now rearing a beautiful filly at “Gum Flat” by the Tracery horse, Dunnottar. Dark Whitton appeared as big a certainty as Ajax would loom up at an ordinary city mid-week meeting. As fast as the money came in his direction Jack would pass it on to his friends, who would plonk it on the mare, irrespective of the price offering. But Nemesis was also to deal a severe blow to John. The mare, capably handled by Jim Wiseman, led from starter to judge, and never left the issue in doubt. She was merely cantering when the last post was reached. The judge, however, austere, and in dictator fashion, had his own ideas, and, without the slightest compunction, placed the second horse first. John Stephens, however, paid out by the handful. He showed his disgust but did not protest.

It was in the same direction, midway between the Hunter and the Peel, that probably the most remarkable incident went into racing history on any part of Australia. And it was not associated with unregistered racing, either.

There but two starters in the event, and the riders were ignorant of the fact that the respective connections had supported not their own, but the other fellow’s horse. The riders, however, had their specific instructions. When the starter sent them on their way, neither showed any inclination to take the lead. Something had to happen. It happened. One of the two left the saddle and was greatly precipitated to mother earth. No. 2 had to do something, and do it promptly. He did it. He pulled his mount up, wheeled and went back to ascertain if No. 1 had been injured in his fall! Life disqualifications followed.

Possibly the most colourful, picturesque and hard-boiled identity of racing in the North of the State was old Jim McGiveney, of Blandford. Jim was a character in private life, and a bigger character with horses. Nat Gould himself missed his greatest opportunity here. There was a store of material here that would have kept the famous writer burning the midnight oil for days on end.

“Mr. J. J. McGiveney’s g h, aged, by Charge – Unknown; Red jacket, red sleeves”. Thus ran the nomination in scores of race books over a period of not a few years. Charge won the AJC Blue Riband (the Derby) for the Belltrees people. Hence Piallah inherited his sire’s stamina. Bred, trained, raced and at times ridden by his leant and be-whiskered owner, the horse always invariably bore the emaciated appearance of Jim himself. Underfed and always leg-weary from long treks from meeting to meeting, always on the hard roads, he was as hard as the metal itself, and stood up to a power of racing under all conditions.

All handicappers were, however, lenient on their treatment of the grey. The veteran would take him, say, to Wallabadah, or Nundle, thence to Tamworth and Manilla, on to Scone, and from there to Maitland. He would generally ride a hack and lead the grey, which, however, carried the gear of the stable, and mostly his own feed.

Woorak was the champion middle-distance horse in the land at the time, but put Woorak up against Piallah at Blandford on Boxing Day, and the populace to a man almost would be on the local idol, for such he was. There was a time when Jim was dissatisfied with the manner in which the old horse had been handled in an earlier race, the outcome being that he himself plied the whip later in the afternoon – and won.

Just as Piallah was taken to different towns by road, so also was he more frequently worked on the same hard going, owner-trainer up, with watch in hand. It happened on more than one occasion when Jim was short of the “ready” with which to defray nominations and other expenses, his old plug, an entire, had to earn it, and sometimes on the morning of a race fixture.

On the old Satur (Scone) course one afternoon, the late Jim Hardcastle, who had a cracker-jack in Potassium, one of the few mares by Positano to possess speed, and Cyanide’s Daughter, brought Albert Wood, then leading jockey in Australia, and who by the way, served his apprenticeship with him, to Scone to ride a mare, Vellum, in his stable. It was a good field of proportions, the race run over a mile, and there were some good performers engaged.

Piallah, nothing short of a bag of bones, had established a good lead, and when appearing all over the winner well inside the distance faltered. He quickly recovered, but the post was too near for him to make up the leeway. A little later on the old Aberdeen track, when up against a couple of handy gallopers in Anne Boleyn and Jingo Joss, and others, he was jumped out from the mile barrier, Albie Chaston, up, securing an early advantage, and stayed there, winning with anything up to a dozen lengths to spare. He did the bag merchants a good turn. He went to Maitland, performed creditably and was induced by some of the southerners to nominate him for the Randwick Plate. What a sensation old Jim and his horse would have created at Royal Randwick! Strange to relate, the grey was subsequently leased by two would-be Peter Riddles, who got him into excellent shape, but he could never raise a gallop for them. Jim McGiveney had two other horses in Piallah’s time Piccaninny and General Jackson, but the owner could well-nigh have raced them on foot himself.



In the days referred to, Tom Callinan, now a resident of Murrurundi, was mine host of the now de-licensed Plough Inn, Blandford. Needless to add, the annual gathering was a sort of throw-in for him. The five-event bill of fare was spread over the afternoon, with the "Opening" synchronising with, or prior to, the luncheon hour. Tom was generally the best winner at the close of the day, and was not begrudged his share. He was the club and village itself, and always conducted a good "house". There was nothing that savoured meanness or pettiness about this tall son of Erin's Isle. If Jim McGiveney, who passed on years ago, happens to be in Elysian Fields, his first and foremost thoughts will be for the son of Charge-Unknown.

The same air of "battlers" who had Piallah for a term also secured a St Aubins-bred mare, Miss Beulah. He took her to Aberdeen in the good old days when 'Deen ran really good meetings. The trainers were amateurs, 100 per cent inexperienced.

The mare did her part of the contract in fine style, but on returning to scale it was discovered that she had carried 17lb overweight, which had not been "declared". And the party had supported her well at double-figure odds. They had the mortification of seeing the number of the second horse hoisted.

On the St Aubins Track, which had been reconditioned and fenced by Mr W. J. Smith, who is vying with the big stud masters of the State, many atop-hole meeting was held. It was later used for unregistered racing, but an incident, or happening, led to it being closed.

Some of the old "lads of the village" had secretly taken possession of Miss Beulah from one of the distant paddocks. They, in seclusion, not only knocked her into shape, but also had transformed her chestnut mane and tail with the aid of, say cosmetics. She was a different mare that stepped out in the "Opening" – different in appearance only. She just cantered in from the smart field. The folk of the estate got to hear of the ramp. Result: Locked gates leading to the course.

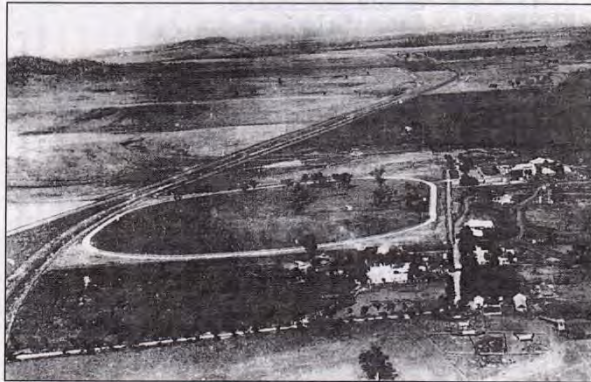
Getting back to Aberdeen, in the days when it ran its meetings for grass-feds, which drew large fields, racing was at a height in the district. There was more than suspicion that a few of the prads were lined with grain, given furtively, whilst in the paddocks. Vic Parkinson (not to be confused with V. P. of the stock and station line of Muswellbrook), led in many a winner, most of them by the "Nandowra" sire, Phil May. Vic's colours, blue and white, were actually sported one day by the three placed horses in a field of approximately twenty.

Who doesn't remember Tom Gallan and Ogo? Both were part and parcel of the club, with the old bay a near approach to perpetual motion so far as horses go. He raced all the year, in all seasons, and must have known every blade of grass on the track. Jimmy Meredith also was always handy with a useful galloper or two. And the same applies to Les Haigh, of Rogilla fame, a good horseman before he entered the rank of trainers.

THE SPIRIT WITHIN



Scone Race Club's Anzac House race meeting held at St. Aubins Racecourse 2nd September, 1944.



St. Aubins Racecourse from the air 1948. Probably taken at about the time of the filming of 'Into The Straight'. Railway line and New England Highway are shown leading from left hand bottom to top centre - John A. Smith photograph.

Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

The late Arthur Hopkins, of Jerry's Plains, and more recently Merriwa, had a good string in hand, including one Bulga, who could not be weighted out of races. He would carry his 12.12, put up his 7lb penalty and win an even greater margin. Bulga was subsequently put over the timber with similar success, and later on was secured as a galloper companion for the mighty Trafalgar, whose trainer often remarked that he wished he had received this son of Merv, whose dam had no lineage, a few years earlier. At a meeting at Jerry's Plains, about the same time, the same owner-trainer won the entire program – a record which may stand for many more years, if not all time.

Before passing, however, it must be mentioned that prominent trainer Dan Lewis received his introduction to the game when he won a "double" at Belltrees with the first and last horses owned by "Dad" Poynting, who ran the Willow Tree Hotel in Scone for a number of years. "Danny," who has since saddled up four Sydney Cup winners, and hundreds of other winners, mixed bookmaking with training, and is always pleased to see folk of the old town when visiting from the city. In the days referred to, Belltrees put on an annual fixture to commemorate the conclusion of the shearing, and they put through up to 150,000 sheep in those years. But back to the "mackers," patrons mostly got a spin for their, if not one way, another way. And at times there was fair money to be won – and lost.

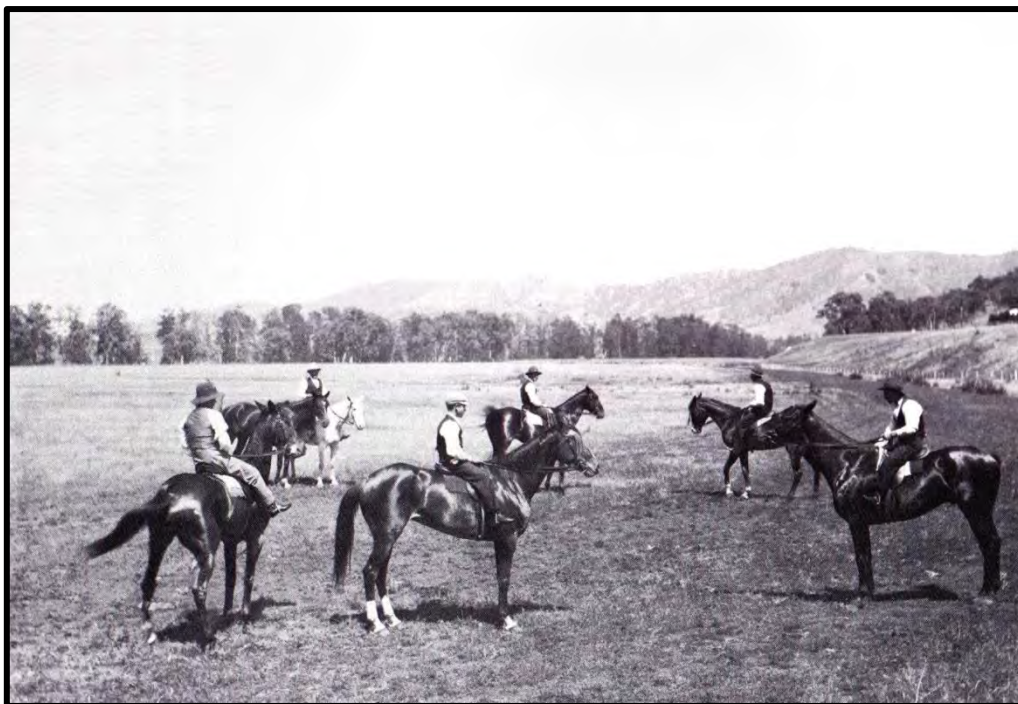


Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

#### Belltrees Racetrack and horses in training

There were dashing punters then as now; but the Eric Connelly of the bush was probably Tom Sullivan, of Moobi, who now leads the quiet life, with the weight of a young family adding a few grey hairs to his thatch. Ken Campbell, of "Arden Hall" ilk, now spending his time to with an eye to the C.7 cattle of the old estate out Tomalla way, likewise made his presence felt. Ken was a good sport, but what deductions for riders, "strappers," etc., he retained but little of the prize-money won by himself.

One of the best ponies he had was Eileen, a chestnut, capable of taking stride for stride with the best of them. In the show ring, he owned Joe, a grey pony, one of the most versatile in the State and a winner of more than a hundred ribbons and cash prizes. He subsequently passed the pony over to Jim Gleeson, of Wingen, and the change in ownership did not cause a break in the sequence of successes.

Stan Felton, of Gundy, "knocked" the dust off a number of horses for different owners, and possibly the best prepared was old Blarney Castle. And, unlike most of those associated with the game, he cheerfully let his friends on a fancied candidate. Stan acted as a stipendiary steward for quite a number of clubs in the district. Jack Davidson, also of Gundy, fed several more than useful sorts, and later on had his fair share of success on city and other courses, taking out some of the big handicaps on the A.R.C. courses, as also did his brother Jim. Jack, by the way, was one of the best rough riders of his time, and when Martini and other proprietors of the travelling shows put in an appearance, showed his capabilities as a horseman, as he also did on occasion when he had a recalcitrant horse nominated for racing. He had one fiery customer in particular, which had the boys duffed. It had shaped unsatisfactorily in an earlier race at Aberdeen. Despite his weight, John weighed out himself in the principal race, jumped his mount away well, obtained a break, and maintained it.

Of course, the present generation of roughriders, like their contemporaries in other branches of sport, stands on a pedestal of their own! The formidable and brilliant participants of the past are soon forgotten, but not by all.

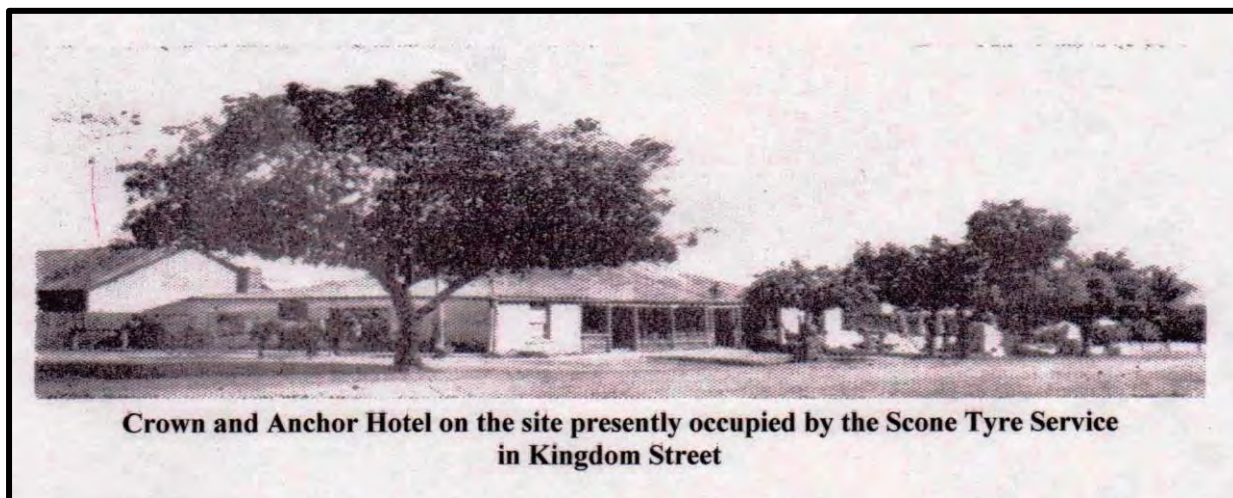
Needless to say, there were starters, good and bad, who pulled the levers, and they frequently “pulled the strings” as well. Many a heated argument ensued following unsatisfactory dispatches from the machine. It is worth narrating that the barrier used on all courses was patented and constructed by Joe McCue, who was proud of his invention, and no person dared adversely criticize the machine. It was not uncommon for certain wags to blame the barrier for the unsatisfactory starts. And wouldn’t Joe roar and stamp his feet like an old wether defying a dog. Of course, if Joe had his way, all races would have started from the, say, four of five-furlong disc. He couldn’t see the necessity for shifting it after each race, and then re-erecting it in its former position.

Of course the meetings attracted a cosmopolitan crowd, a section of which paid more than expenses by diverse means. They were spinning boards, dart throwing, etc. Who does not recall the clarion cry, “Evens Esmeralda, 20 to 1 the The Bolter,” etc. The late George Buckland, who also had a horse or two, ran a board as a sideline, and was known to be richer by £50 as the outcome of his operations at the meeting. Of course, money was more plentiful in those days, and it circulated more freely.



## Doings of the Old Tracks – In the days long since

### Celebrities of the Period



**Featured Image: George Hopper's 'Crown & Anchor Hotel; the start for the match race between Archie Hall of 'Nandowra' and W. Grogan of the Commercial Hotel, Aberdeen**

*Taken from the Scone Advocate 3/3/1939*

Apart altogether from the annual and picnic fixtures which eventuated in the days long since, many matches were run and it was not uncommon for these latter events to end unsatisfactory.

With but two horses, and, of course two riders facing the starter, it was quite an easy matter to "get at" one of the riders, the outcome being that the winner would virtually have a walkover.

In the days referred to there would be meetings held in almost every little locality. Distance was no object to the old-time sportsmen, and hundreds of miles were covered along the bush tracks.

The late John Corbett, for instance, apprised the chronicler of these lines that he and his companions thought nothing of taking their horses from the head of the Hunter across country to the New England districts. How conditions have changed! Today the prads are whisked north by train or in floats, a matter of a few hours travel. And they had their outings on the old Rooty Bank track, with the "darnce" at night, and the attractions had a following from the far-removed Paterson, Tamworth, Nundle and the coastal districts generally. Who could have predicted in those dim and distant days that the many logs scattered about the landscape which were used as plants for bottles of the strongest brew would in time become a refuge and harbour of countless rabbits.

Just to deviate from the subject of racing, it is worth that the district in question possessed athletes of more than ordinary ability. Take Albert Taylor, of Belltrees, for instance. Clean-limbed and solidly built, was known to ride to Tamworth overnight, and only an hour or so out of the saddle next morning pull on his spiked shoes and show the way to the tape in fields comprising the best athletes in the North. And with prize in pocket, the long trek back to Belltrees would commence.

Many matches were run with horses on the Aberdeen track. One memorable contest was between Bob Neeley's Mailboy, who was carrying everything before him, and another, The Waif, owned by Tom Flanagan and trained by Harry Houseman. The Waif had many trips up the Hunter, hitched to a wagon, before it was discovered that he had plenty of pace. Herb Luddington was aboard The Waif and Jack Sinderberry rode Mailboy. It was a £20 match, run over four furlongs. There was money to burn, bags full of it, and George Hopper and party covered every "tenner" produced. The Waif lowered Mailboys' colours, and continued his long sequence of wins.

Another match about the same issue was a trot between a bay mare owned by Archie Hall of "Nandowra" and a one-eyed horse in the ownership of W. Grogan, a remarkable character, and mine host of the old Commercial Hotel, Aberdeen. The course chosen was from George Hopper's Crown and Anchor Hotel, to the bridge spanning the Hunter River at Aberdeen, approximately seven miles.

Hundreds of interested spectators waited at the finishing point, and presently they caught a glimpse of Grogan, seated in a heavy sulky, well out in the lead and waving his hat and urging his rival on. It was great afternoon at the Commercial, Grogan celebrating his victory in traditional style. One of the carnival party actually rode his horse up to the bar counter and called for drinks for all hands. A second horseman essayed to go one better by trying to ride his steed up the stairway of the house.

Grogan was a great sport, and although 60 years of age had a standing challenge to run any man his own years over 50 yards. He was never beaten, and the events were decided in bare feet in the gravel road in front of the hotel.

Grogan later got hold of Don Juan, a Thornthwaite-bred mare by a horse called Master McGrath, owned by George Vine, and one of the smartest sprinters of her day. He pitted her against a grey mare, by Tester from a half-draught mare. The £20s were soon forthcoming, and to the surprise of the followers of Don Juan, the grey mare showed a clean pair of heels.

Another much discussed match was between Grogan's Ivory and Jewell's Negress, £20 aside, four furlongs. Sid Elwell, of Maitland, was specially brought up to ride ivory, but after the pair had traversed two furlongs, Elwell came to grief, offering as an explanation that one of his stirrup leathers had broken. But the leather also broke during the running of the subsequent match! Stan Felton's Abbot, a winner of 32 races, next accounted for Dick Jones' Osborness. Again the distance was four furlongs and the stake £20. Abbot never let his supporters down in a match. The galloper won five races in one week – two at Blandford and Moonan and one at Aberdeen. He was saddled three times in one day at Moonan, his victims including Little Jim, a bold galloper from Quirindi, whose arty issued a challenge for the next morning, but when Pat McLaughlin dredged £50 from a wallet, the Quirindians kept quiet.

There was good money to be won at the "Harben Vale" shearer's meetings in those days, and John Perkins (now President of the Warrah Shire Council), who was one of the best men with blades, got hold of Abbot, won the principal with him, and then downed a good field in the all-comers event, in which a station-bred gelding named Barney figured. Bob Ward rode Abbot, while a black boy was entrusted to the handling of Barney. When the coloured lad dismounted, he explained, "By cripes, boss, if I hadn't lost my plurry whip I would have won." The reply of the "boss" was to the point. "Not if you had two whips".

Stan Felton later did a fair bit of handicapping, and was stipendiary steward at a number of places. There was an outcry at Rouchel one day when he gave Homo, an ex-city performer, 13 stone. But the horse won by the proverbial street, and could have carried the grandstand as well. Years later, then an old horse, with his winter coat still in evidence, he was produced on the old track. Two persons knew his identity – the one who brought him from Muswellbrook, and his rider, Nat Cherry.

The “Sons of Israel” were calling him at 10 to 1, a quotation, which they increased to 20 to 1 when they saw him shuffling his way to the barrier. The webbing of the barrier flew skywards, and Homo, another name, of course, sped on his way. He won by the half the length of the short straight. The committee of the club then realised that the winner was a “ring in”. They acted promptly, a “no race” was declared, with all bets off, and the field sent back to the starter. The books asked 10 to 1 from punters! The veteran won just as easily again, but his rider did not bring him back to the enclosure. Instead, he kept him going, made a beeline for the entrance gate and then home to Muswellbrook.

On the same track, Harry Knight, who was the monarch of all he surveyed in build as well as sportsmanship, had three horses, Phil Grey, Rose May and Thunderbolt, all going in one race. Form pointed to Thunderbolt, but the old man was investing his sovereigns on Rose May. Some of the lads were in the know and did not wish to see Harry disappointed spirited Thunderbolt to the nearby river and let him drink his fill. Rose may duly won, and the “old general” let his younger friends know in no mistaken manner that his opinion of the mare had been vindicated. “You’ll listen to me in future” was his parting shot.

It was Boxing Day on the picturesque Dungowan track, the creek fringed with oaks, that “yours truly” ventured one morning while holidaying out Nundle way. There had been no publication of nominations for the meeting. Still a quarter of a mile away from the “paddock”, a little black mare was seen on her way to the barrier for the first race. It was Will Pinkerton’s dandy little galloper Diana. Jim Wiseman was aboard. When he caught a glimpse of the car, and still more important, its occupants, he suddenly discovered something was wrong with the gear and lost no time dismounting. The few minutes break gave the party ample time to reach the betting ring. “8 to 1 Diana” was called in a stentorian voice. All bookmakers, with a solitary exception, had her at the same price. There were horses from Tamworth, Manilla and even one from Narrabri in that field, to say nothing of local talent. The little black mare was first out, and what a procession she made of the event – and at 8 to 1, too.

It was to one of the old-time that a leading Sydney jockey had been enticed to come along for a couple of special mounts. It was not uncommon to see the Judge’s stand only slightly detached to the pub and the pub yard itself used as the saddling paddock. Luncheon had been served in the good old style, first in first served, and the catering in relays; corned beef and pickled pork, a couple of spuds, and an ill-shaped chunk of pumpkin with a mug of tea to wash it down. What more did the average bush racegoer want? However the city lad was obviously disappointed when his plate was plonked down in front of him, or maybe it had been there for some time. “No pickles?” he grunted. The veteran inn-keeper then piped in, “This is not a banquet. Suppose you blokes want a beer with our porridge?”

A thrilling race often referred to by those of much earlier generation had its setting on the old "Nabinabah" track, on the Page, north of Gundy. "Three starters or no race," was a hard and fast condition on the program. It was 62 years ago, and the late James Campbell, of "Arden Hall," had his day's racing with the next, and best of them. Scratchings had reduced the field to two – two greys. To ensure a race, the G.M.O. of the Hunter nominated a third, also a grey. They were Emily, Tarquin and Charlie, the last named from Paterson, and raced by George Crowley, father of Ernie Crowley, who made his presence felt in the ring events at the opening Bushmen's Carnivals in Scone. "Jimmy" Smith rode Charlie and "Billy" Bristow was aboard Tarquin. In one of the best finishes witnessed for years, Charlie prevailed.

Scone's original course was on the eastern side of the now residential area of the town. Were it possible for many of the early habitués to emulate Rip Van Winkle, what a surprise would be in store for them! At least two hundred buildings blot out the old track, the scene of many hectic meetings and incidents.

The mile course had its beginning in Oxford Road, near the residence now occupied by Mr. H. E. Garside. From there the field ran in the direction of Gundy Road, turned and came in a westerly direction to Park Street, near the home of Mr. A. J. Chalkley, ran along the street and swung towards the Golf Links to the site of the Scott Memorial Hospital, where the straight was entered and finished in close proximity to the home of Mr. A. S. Davies, and nearby stood the unpretentious grandstand and booth.

Here was the scene of the many triumphs of Lagoona, a chestnut mare bred by John Wiseman, by Mail Train, and prepared and ridden by the astute "Jimmy Smith", who had as neat a pair of hands that ever handled the reins. Lagoona was the idol of the followers of the game, and residents of today claim when fit she was capable of pulling off some of richly endowed handicaps at Randwick. She was tackled from all points of the compass, but without avail. She was the Ajax in her domain. "Jimmy" went to scale at 8.7, but his mare had to carry up to 12 stone, and won as far afield as Maitland.

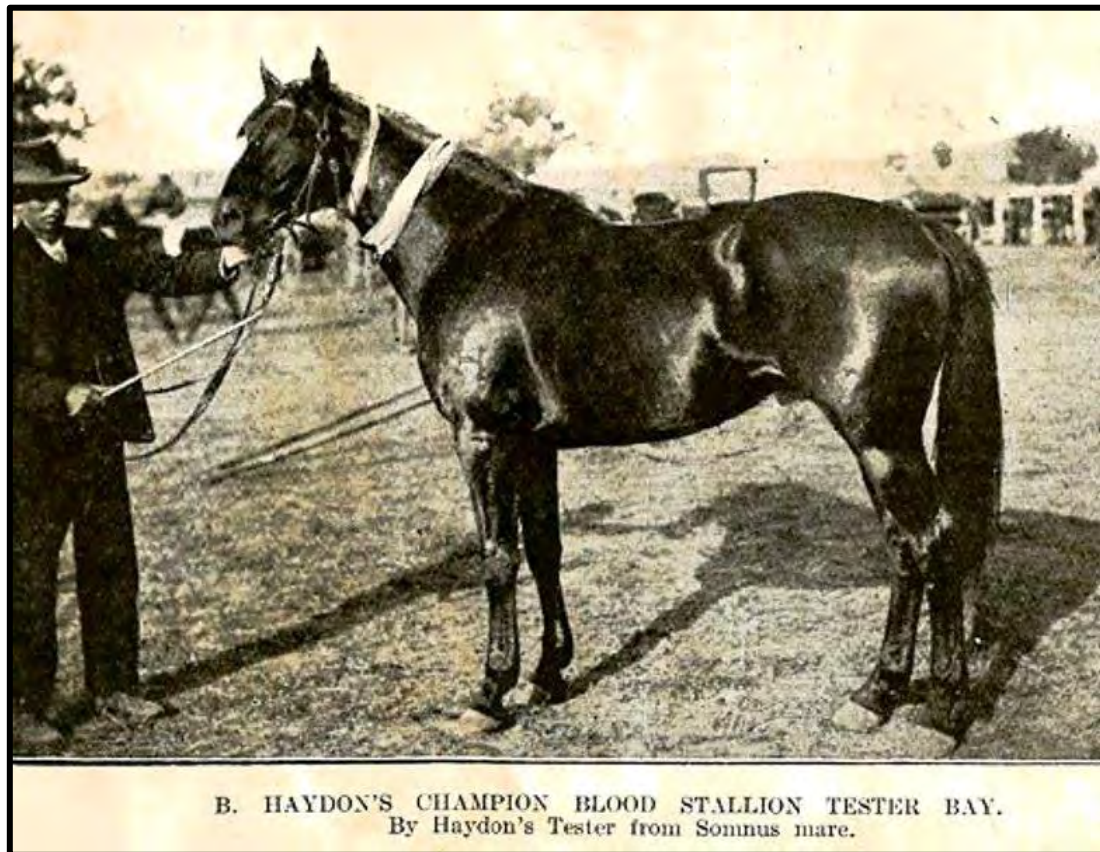
There were other good horses to pass through his hands in later years, those of district interest being T. S.; a Tester entire bred by the late George Hopper. T.S. scored on many northern district courses, as far afield as Maitland, and when taken in hand by "Jimmy" was practically broken down, still he managed to patch him up and continue the good work. His last horse was Kingo Lad, which won a double on the Satur track despite the fact that he was on three legs, as it were, at the time.

Tuck Holmes, another well-known sporting identity of his generation, made frequent trips from Quirindi, and always had a good following. He brought a mare named Music down to meet Lagoona, but she was no match for the dashing Scone mare.

J. Epstein, a hotel keeper in Scone – he had the "Fleece" – came into possession of a handy mare which he named Idalia. James Hardcastle, up the street, who subsequently bred two top-holers in Potassium and Cyanide's Daughter, had a bay gelding, bred at "Grampian Hills," which he named Huggamugga. The pair met in a race on the old town course, and a dead heat was the verdict. The pair ran off half an hour later, and the gelding proved the better. By the way, it was "Jimmy" Smith who always argued that a good horse did not need the dandy brush, and a bad one was not worth one.



Another great clash often recalled was between the two Testers. In the days to which these notes have reference, anything bred by Tester had the same hallmark of breeding in the provincial districts as any of our leading imported or colonial sires of today. Harvest Home, one of the tribe, and a great galloper, too, and a 'gelding', met his superior when he encountered T. S., but it was an epic struggle to the post.



In the days of half a century since the starter was Mr. F. S. North of Singleton; but the latter was a mere toddler when his progenitor first officiated with the flag, and had no thoughts of selling millions of pounds worth of business for A.M.P. Society. In fact, he was not old enough to sell a race book, yet he celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday a few months ago.

Two great gallopers came the way of the late George Hopper in later years. They were Tinagroo and Ruenalf II. With them he won a power of money, and with a little better luck of fortune would have come up to his ménage through the agency of the brilliant son of Ruenalf, who was sheltered at Belltrees for many years and turned out hundreds of good winners.

Ruenalf II was a most tractable fellow, with almost human understanding and habits. He was never known to foul his box. Such brilliant form had he shown that he was taken across to Melbourne for the Caulfield Cup and back at long odds for a fortune. George was accompanied by Aldino Erranatti (better known as Italian George). One of the leading horsemen of the time was given the mount, but the horse ran indifferently, George Hopper was disgusted, and expressed his opinion openly. On the Sunday, he took his horse to Caulfield and gave him a trial against the watch. It was a brilliant run, being only a fraction of a second slower than the time occupied in the Cup race itself.

With another rider in the saddle, he let the horse run unbacked in the Melbourne Cup, where he registered a sterling performance, only being caught and beaten in the last furlong after practically leading all the way. (Any other enlightenment on the incident will be willingly proffered by “Italian George,” who frequently recalls the tilts of the betting ring, with varying luck, by “Opper” and me).

## Our Forgotten Racecourses

John Ryan: AJC Racing Calendar 1991

*“The universal love of horseracing in Australia is shown by the large number of meetings every year. There is scarcely a township in any one of the colonies, which has not its annual event. The principal reason for this is the abundance of good horseflesh and the number of good riders as there are few persons residing in the country who cannot mount a saddle. Under such circumstances a love of the turf is natural.” Australian Sportsman 1881*

Looking out of a plane window when on a flight over inland Australia the wide open landscape is here and there dotted by towns and settlement linked by a ribbon of road or railway. While it is hard to distinguish particular features from the high flying aeroplane, one feature that does stand out on the perimeter of these inland settlements is a circle of open space marking out the racecourse.

In Australia’s early history, as population extended into the inland the signs of early settlement, the Church, school and pub, were often followed by the racecourse – evidence of advancing civilisation as one Governor wrote to his superiors in London.

By the second half of the century after the land had been taken up and the gold discoveries had brought a new population into the bush, horse transport was the means of lining these settlements with the larger towns and the city.

Along with the horses came the sport of horse racing which soon became the focus of social life, sport and entertainment in those scattered communities. By the end of the first century the racecourse was part of the topography of every town of any size and some of the larger grazing properties and sheep stations laid down their own racecourses for their annual or picnic race meetings.

Sais the **Australian Sportsman** in 1881 commenting on the ‘national sport’:

*“The universal love of horseracing in Australia is shown by the large number of meetings every year. There is scarcely a township in any one of the colonies, which has not its annual event. The principal reason for this is the abundance of good horseflesh and the number of good riders as there are few persons residing in the country who cannot mount a saddle. Under such circumstances a love of the turf is natural.”*

Just how many race meetings were held in the colony of NSW a hundred years ago is difficult to know as there was no official calendar to record them. Notices are found in local and district papers or in such sporting publications as the **Australian Sportsman** or **Bells Sporting Life** giving long list so meetings “To Come Off”, or the Race Card and Results of meetings held up country, or down the coast, or in the mining, river and timber towns. One way to celebrate such occasions as the Queen’s Birthday or St Patrick’s Day was to hold a race meeting. Clubs were formed to hold Annual meetings, or a race meeting was put on for such occasions as the end of the shearing, the arrival of the railway, or for Easter or Christmas holiday.

Commenting on the widespread popularity of the 'national sport' the Sydney Morning Herald in 1887 reported despite the hot dry summer conditions, "in this colony no less than 66 fixtures appear on the lists for the Christmas and New Year holidays, besides numerous meetings in less popular parts". Just as some comparison the AJC Calendar for the last year lists the number of meetings in NSW over this holiday period as 46.

Although it may come as a bit of a surprise to some, there seems little doubt that there was more racing in the colony of NSW one hundred years ago than there is today. Looking through the early lists and notices we come across many racecourses and clubs no longer appearing in our present Calendar and are led to wonder where have they gone: Barmedman – Tinonee – Belimpopina – Monaro – Bokhara – Cannonbar – Nettelgo – Moombi – Wombat – Ivanhoe – Murrumburrah – Adelong Crossing – Patrick Plains – Rutherford – Carcoar – Marsden – Hillend – Berrima – Clarence Town – Macquarie Fields – Mitchell – Sunny Corner – Lower Manning – Breeza or Peel River.

The lost racecourses listed in the Racing Chronicle were not all bush settlements or country courses. There were racecourse in our cities and larger country towns that are no longer there today. Besides the Sydney courses now gone, notices appear for meetings at Liverpool, Parramatta, Windsor, and Wollongong, while larger towns such as Albury, Goulburn, Wagga or Tamworth may have had four or more courses in the surrounding district each with its own club.

How do we recapture now that world when a trainer set off on the road to walk his horses to the course, when the women got dressed up in their best, and when the publican put up his booth to keep the kegs in the shade on the morning of the races.

What has happened to all these departed racecourses many of which are now simply traces of a past left behind by a few panels of railing, a furlong post or a judge's box left standing in a paddock. Many have disappeared from the landscape altogether and are now the present site of a housing development, a school, or public estate in an extending town perimeter. For some their fate was sealed by drought or floods, some went out in wartime or in the economic dry creek bed of the Depression. Some were also victims of the human condition when the club lost its energy or money or broke up in feuding rivalry. And some were simply part of the larger process of change in Australia's history itself when the gold mines cut out, when the railway bypassed the district, or when the town went into decline. If it was not for an old newspaper notice or surviving Race Card we might never know that back in the past the starter once dropped his flag on a race meeting at Sunny Corner, Piper's Flat or Bimbi or in years to come at Wallabadah (*still going strong*).

One such town caught in this billabong of Australian history is Trunkey Creek, on the road from Goulburn to Blayney was a hundred years ago a thriving gold and horse staging town. The gold discoveries in the Turon District brought miners and their suppliers to the town. As a stopping place for horse traffic from Goulburn to Bathurst, Blayney and Abercrombie there was plenty of business for the inns and hotels which in Trunkey's heyday numbered 23, of which 7 held licences. All the inns had horse and grooming services, which along with the other town services saw Trunkey in its balmy days, grow to a population of 2500. That a racecourse would be set-up and race meetings organised for such a population of itinerant and gambling spirits was as inevitable as a prayer meeting for pilgrims. The racecourse was situated out of town along the Blayney road and on a property now known as "Tara" and notices of race meetings at Trunkey Creek began to appear in **Town and Country Journal** in the late 1880s.





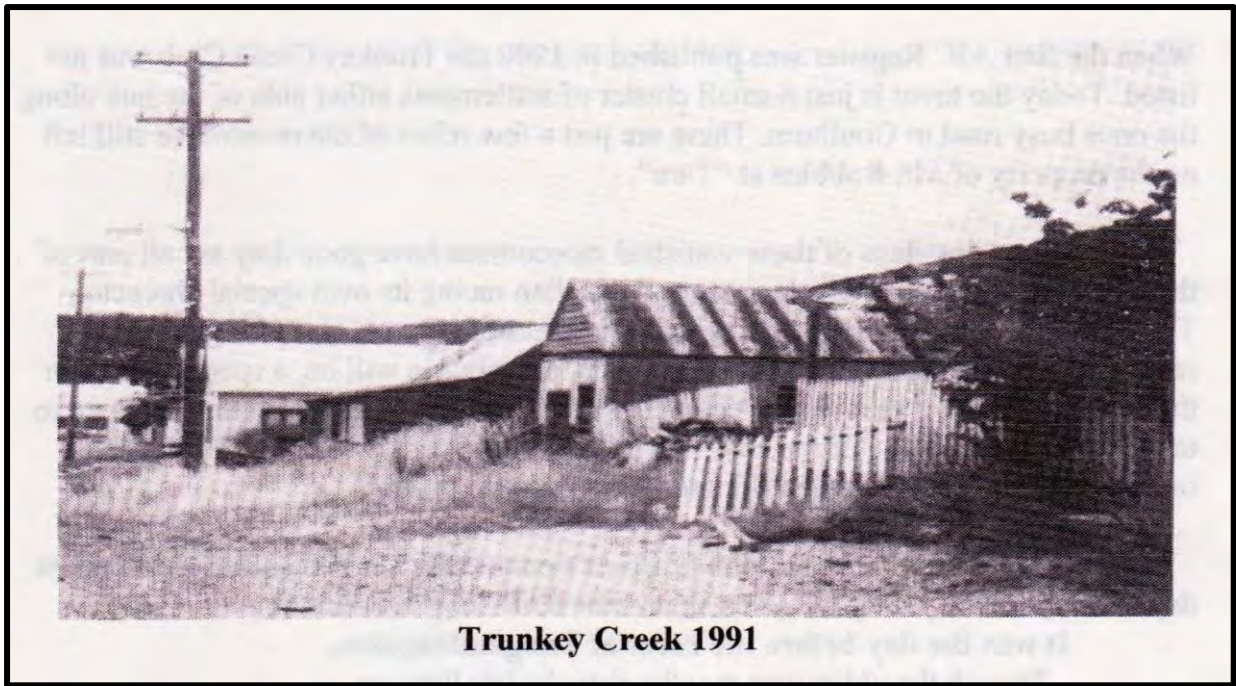
Golden Age Hotel, Trunkey Creek by J C Merriman

In 1888 when the Centenary of the Colony came round, most towns organised their own celebrations. Trunkey Creek's celebration was to put on a Centenary race meeting. This was to be no local hack meeting for its 2-Day Centenary Meeting headed the list of Centenary races in Bells Racing Life in the Sydney Mail. On the card for the first day were 5 races including the Centennial Handicap of 30 sovs, and the Prince of Wales Stakes and on the second day another 5 races with the feature event The Trunkey Jockey Club Handicap of 20 sovs. The rules under which the Club raced were AJC rules as far as practicable. Just how this was interpreted at Trunkey Creek may be left to our imagination.

Like most country towns around that era there was always a character of sorts and the Trunkey Creek lot fell to one Mathew Ryan.

Mathew Ryan, an Irish immigrant from Tipperary had taken up land at Long Swamp near Trunkey where he tried to make a go of it with his wife and 8 children. He was no farmer however but a man with horses and travelled with horse transport to Sydney and up country and rode around the district as a jockey. Another who was probably there was Paddy Crick the future MP for West Macquarie. Paddy was a renowned racehorse owner and punter, (Banjo tells of riding one of Paddy's horses at Randwick and the size of the wager). Paddy was courting the Irish voters of Trunkey for his coming election.

Mathew Ryan as a boy groomed his black thoroughbred, which in his election campaign he promised to the local priest if he was elected. As it turned out it was shrewd election promise, W P Crick was returned, as the Member for Trunkey Creek, with I should think, a very strong return from the residents of the heavily endowed Catholic community.



The 1888 Centenary Meeting may well have marked the zenith in Trunkey Creek's fortunes for within a few years the town was on the road to decline. The railway line to Newbridge cut Trunkey out as travellers' stopover and horse staging town and when gold ran out so did the life and fortunes of Trunkey Creek.

When the first AJC Register was published in 1900 the Trunkey Creek Club was not listed. Today the town is just a small cluster of settlements either side of the pub along the once bust road to Goulburn. There are just a few relics of the racecourse still left on the property of Mr Robbins at "Tara".

Though the racing days of these vanished racecourses have gone they are all part of the history and tradition which gives to Australian racing its own special character. They too are art of our national legends and literature. It was at the Bogolong racecourse that Pardon won the Cup. There is, and always will be, a special place for the "bush" whether it be a bush meeting, a bush horse or a "bushie" coming to town to take on the racing world of the city. It is all part of the past, which has formed not only the tradition of our racing life but Australian life itself.

When asked by the Bishop in John O'Brien's poem why Christmas was the greatest day of the year the youngster gives an answer no Bishop ever knew:

**It was the day before the races at Tangmalangaloo.**

Though the old course may be gone its life lives on.

***An Idyll of Dandaloo***

***On Western Plains, where shade is not,***

***'Neath summer skies of cloudless blue...***

***The yearly races mostly drew***

***A lively crowd to***

***Dandaloo***



## Racing Reminiscences along the Glenrock Track



Featured Image: 'Echo Flat' racecourse at Belltrees

### Gundy Races

Gundy Races 10<sup>th</sup> March 1886: See: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18884529>

By Wanderer:

To make St. Patrick's Day as much of a holiday as possible it was decided to have a day's racing at Gundy to celebrate the day.

A very meagre attendance saw the opening race, the **Maiden Plate**, 1½ miles. After a chestnut gelding run his spin of a quarter of a mile, Juan cantered away from him and won by 150 yards.

Mr. B. Houseman's b c Juan, 6st. 11lbs. (Dodds) 1  
Mr. B. Houseman's b g Sovereign, 9st. 2lb 2

Second Race: **Flying Handicap**, 1¾ miles, was a walk over for Malta, 8st 6lbs.

The next, the event of the meeting, **handicap**, 15 sovs., 1½ miles.

Mr. R. Stewart's ch g Hunter, 8st. 7lb. (Smith) 1  
J. Gallimore's br g Malta, 8st. 7lbs. (Owner) 2  
Faugh-a-Ballalgh, 8st 4lbs.  
Wallaby, 7st. 9lbs.

After Malta made most of the running for about a mile Smith began to work Hunter up, and from the straight a good race between Hunter and Malta resulted in a win by a length for Hunter, thanks to Smith's clever piece of horsemanship.

**The Belltrees Purse**, 1¼ miles; weight for age; 6 sovs.

Mr. B Houseman's b c Juan, 6st, 9lbs.(Dodds)	1
Stewart's b m Eva, 9st. (Smith)	2
Faugh-a-Ballagh, 9st. 3lbs.	3

Only three starters. Smith brought Eva with a splendid rush at the finish, but could not quite overtake Goldsborough's fine son, who won by a length.

**Hack Race**, 1 mile; 3 sovs. ; weight, 9st.

Mr. J. Hardcastle's b m Wallaby. (M. Burke)	1
Campbell's br g Stranger (Hector)	2
Stewart's b m Eva	
Campbell's b g Chelsea	

This proved the best race of the day. Smith on Eva made the most of a good start, and lead Wallaby half a length past the stand; the other two well up. Up the hill Wallaby took command, and lead by a length in the straight, where she was challenged by Chelsea and Stranger; but Wallaby, coming when called on, won by a length.

**Publicans' Purse** of 6 sovs ; 1¼ mile.

Mr. R Stewart's ch g Hunter. (Smith)	1
Gallimore's br g Malta.	2

Malta ran with heavy iron shoes on, but the boy was merciful – he did not punish the horse with the whip.

The **Forced Handicap** wound up the proceedings, which resulted in a canter for Malta, Stranger second.

Scone, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1886

See: <http://sconevetdynasty.com.au/hunter-living-histories-i/> .

### **Belltrees Racecourse "Echo Flat"**

#### **See featured image**

Return now to opposite the 21 mile peg the Belltrees Race Course. It was on this course shearers' races were held. It was within the course the Belltrees cricket ground was located. It was here at the time where the Belltrees Polo Team did their practice. I believe it was Banjo Patterson wrote of them thus – "Belltrees played a heady game and forced the pace alright". A family team, Alf Ebsworth, Ernest, Arthur and "Dick" White (the "Dick" would be Victor, Dick being his nickname).

Next along the river the old Belltrees homestead occupied by Henry Luke White and wife nee Ebsworth and two daughters. One of which later married cricketer "Ranji" Hordern who played in international cricket and introduced the style of bowling known as googley bowling and was called the googley bowler. At the old home also lived the bachelor brothers Ernest and Victor White. The latter along with his brother Arthur made up the quartet H E A and V White owners of the station.

### **Rooty Bank Racecourse**

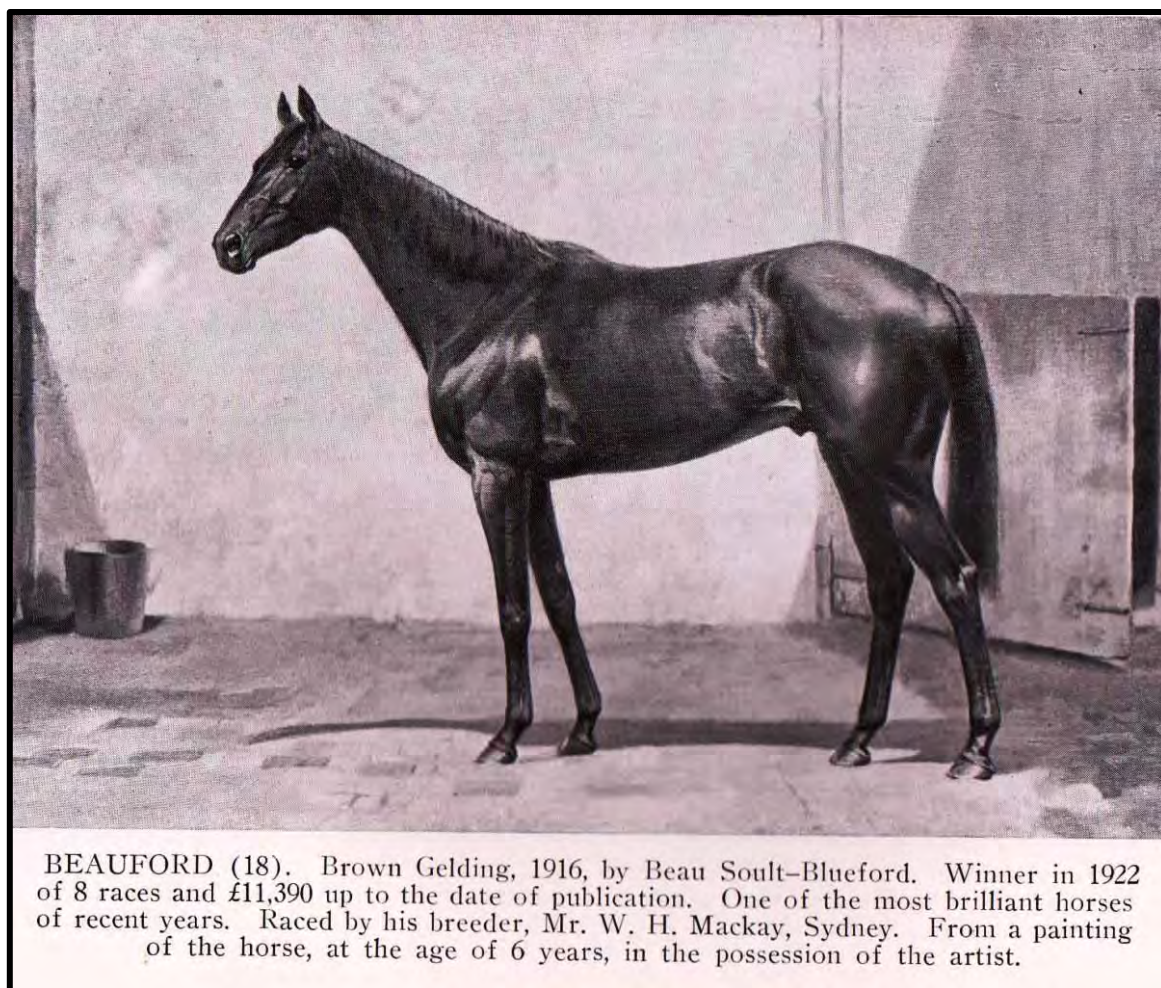
After crossing the river near Millers, the road crossed the Rooty Bank Race Course where horse races were held periodically. Then again across the river the latter two crossings were called the two Rooty Bank Crossings. The Rooty Bank Race Course was in the first paddock belonging to Ellerston which was the property of H E A and V White of Belltrees.

After leaving the second Rooty Bank Crossing about a mile on the right of road was Blumenthal, ownership at the time unknown to the writer. Present owners and occupiers Granville Budden and wife nee Ivy Challis



## Beauford Supplement

Acknowledgement: 'Mac Bridge: The Man and his Recollections' by Heather Ashford and Margaret Ashford-MacDougall



'Beauford' by Martin Stainforth

### *'Horses of an Earlier Day'*

*"A good horse, Beauford, was also brought up in a hard school. He was foaled and grew up in a sheep paddock known as Gin's Creek, on Albano Station, Sandy Creek, near Rouchel Brook. At the time, in the teens of the present century (1900s), Albano was the property of the late W H Mackay, Senior, who bred and raced Beauford.*

*In his younger days, whilst still in the sheep paddock, Beauford was involved in a mishap which may be worthy of mention to show what a tough youngster he was. A man by the name of Dews, whilst engaged as a trapper at Gin's Creek paddock, one morning had his attention drawn by the mother of the foal. On investigation he found the foal had fallen over a steep bank and was on his back in a water hole in one of the gullies in the paddock.*

*Being alone, he could not do anything to help the foal out of his difficulties. So he set off to the homestead to report the mishap.*

*A draught horse was then harnessed and taken to the spot and hooked up on to the foal, and in this manner the youngster was extricated from his precarious position.*

*From this somewhat hard living, Beauford grew up to be what I call a great horse. I use the word great because he was one of the very few horses who beat the wonder horse Gloaming, and to prove it was no fluke, Beauford beat Gloaming on more than one occasion.*

*According to Miller's Guide, Gloaming's record reads sixty seven starts, fifty seven wins, nine seconds. That would leave him once unplaced, so the Gin's Creek bred horse really beat what could be called a champion. Gloaming won nineteen successive races, equalling Desert Gold's record. Gloaming won thirteen races as a three year old.*

*Beauford won nine successive races. Unfortunately, the earliest guide at hand, 1956, lists very few races of Gloaming and Beauford's time. Gloaming won the AJC Derby in 1918. Beauford won the Epsom Handicap in 1921."*

## Great Clashes of the Past



Featured Image: 'Gloaming' with acknowledgement to 'Century of Champions' by Mark Taylor

September 17, 2016

By Harley Walden

Acknowledge: <http://www.scone.com.au/great-clashes-past/>

My late great friend and colleague Harley Walden was virtually the 'Bert Lillye of the Bush' when it came to writing about racing with a bucolic flavour? He excelled with this contribution on Scone.com. Thank you also Liz Flaherty of Scone'.

Harley writes:

THE Australian and New Zealand turf is studded with memorable and heroic clashes between champions, yet there is one that stands alone and 82,000 people who were at Randwick on September 30, 1922, would vouch for that.

The horses were **Gloaming**, of Christchurch, and **Beauford** of Newcastle.

They met four times in 25 days at weight-for-age in Sydney and the score was two each.



Testimony to their greatness and the excitement of their tussles in that spring of 1922 at Randwick and Rosehill is found everywhere closing in of nearly a century later both in Sydney and no doubt New Zealand, too.

Looking down on patrons at the top of the Members' Stand escalators in the Canterbury track are framed pictures of the finish of two of their races—the Spring Stakes and the Craven Plate at Randwick.

Gloaming won 57 races from 67 starts.

Agitated jockeys probably never notice and stewards are usually too busy to look at the pictures on the wall, but the stipes inner-sanctum at Randwick is adorned with poses pictures of two plain looking geldings, Beauford and Gloaming.

The two old champs seem to stare down on everyone and everything, including the video equipment which did not exist in their day.

What makes this pair the pick in the history of Australian racing?

What makes them so mighty and how did they attract 82,000 to Randwick for their decider in the weight-for-age Spring Stakes (12 furlongs) on September 30, 1922, when the Australian population was five million?

There is a heap of candidates for the best of the great clashes in major weight-for-age classic and handicap events in New Zealand.

Not the least of them the Bonecrusher and Our Waverley Star, the two New Zealand geldings who fought it out head to head, shoulder to shoulder, with whips cracking in the \$750,000 W S Cox Plate over 2040m at Moonee Valley on October 25, 1986.

The public did not seem to mind that this an all-New Zealand finish, that the two geldings from across the Tasman annihilated the Aussie opposition, and that in fact the third horse, the Filbert, was also a New Zealander.

Who could ever forget the finish of the 1956 Melbourne Cup, as Bart Cumming's two champions Light Fingers and Zieme went to the line locked together and the Prince of race-callers the late Ken Howard declaring a dead-heat, and then! "No I'll give it to Light Fingers".

That one was one of the many in a list of hundreds with New Zealand horses, jockeys and trainers playing a major role, from the days of Carbine in 1888 when he was a three-year-old, over from the Dominion to take on Australia's best.

Phar Lap did not engage in any notable clashes for the good reason that he was in a class of his own and the same applied to Tulloch when he was at his peak as a super three-year-old. And it was a pity that Bernborough never met Shannon.

Kingston Town's amazing finish to win his third W S Cox Plate in 1982 put him in the history books forever, yet the King did not have many great weight-for-age struggles as he was usually too good for his opposition.



The modern generation will remember the enthralling bouts between the big grey mare Emancipation and the compact bay three-year-old colt Sir Dapper in the Sydney autumn of 1984.

They started off in the Expressway Stakes (1200m) at Randwick on February 11.

Sir Dapper (Mick Dittman) was first by 1-3/4 lengths from Emancipation (Ron Quinton).

Emancipation finished the race with blood oozing from a wound on her hind leg.

She had an excuse.

The stage was therefore set for round two in the George Ryder Stakes over 1400m at Rosehill on April 7.

This time, Emancipation (Quinton) led all the way to beat Sir Dapper who was pocketed, Dittman having no room fore or aft as the wily Quinton held Sir Dapper in.

Sir Dapper started favourite for their third clash in the All Aged Stakes (1600m) at Randwick on April 22.

Emancipation led all the way, holding Sir Dapper's challenge, but the courageous colt was badly stripped in the run, blood pouring from a sickening-looking hole in his hind leg.

Emancipation had won the three round contest 2-1 and the two Sydney horses had outclassed their rivals.

Sir Dapper did not get his chance for revenge as his trainer Les Bridge and owners – Mr and Mrs Peter Horwitz, Mr and Mrs Morrie Macleod, Mike Willesee and Robbie Porter—retired him immediately to the Trans Media Stud at Cootamundra.

Many of these clashes are fresh in our minds, but the real big start came with the meeting of Cruciform, a New Zealander, and Wakeful, a Victorian, in 1903.

Mr G G Stead set the ball rolling by practically challenging Mr Leslie Macdonald of Melbourne to pit Wakeful, the champion of Australia, in the Spring Stakes against Cruciform the champion of New Zealand.

Mr Stead bought his famous mare across the Tasman and the newspapers did the rest.

This distinguished pair duly met in the Spring Stakes and they were received by a crowd which old hands declared doubled the biggest ever previously seen at Randwick.

Cruciform (Les Hewitt) beat Wakeful (F Dunn) by a head after a dour head-to-head struggle over the Randwick 1½ miles. Wakeful was trained in Melbourne by Hugh Munro, the father of the champion jockeys Darby and Jim. Cruciform was trained by Dick Mason who was to return with Gloaming.

If half of what one read in the Melbourne papers was correct, it was fair to assume that double as many people went to Flemington as to Randwick.

The day Carbine beat Abercorn in the Champion Stakes there were certainly double as many at Flemington as at Randwick a month later when Abercorn downed Carbine in the Autumn Stakes.

But the sporting enterprise of Messrs Stead (owner of Cruciform) and Macdonald (owner of Wakeful) transformed comparative sympathy into keen interest and, people have since enriched racecourse proprietors beyond the dreams of avarice.

These great clashes virtually founded racings' appeal to the public.

It was of course to become the nation's number one spectator sport until the birth of the TAB which has encouraged the masses to bet but not attend the track.

If Carbine, Abercorn, Wakeful and Cruciform were the first to draw the crowds after the construction of grandstands, then there were memorable contests to follow.

The stands got bigger.

Some of these horses are legends, not merely by virtue of the history books of the turf, but by pub and club differences of opinion.

Shannon never clashed with Bernborough, one of the great contests that never came off.

Kindergarten had one run here, failed and went back to New Zealand where he remains a legend.

And yes Todman did beat Tulloch in the Champagne Stakes in the second of their meetings, Tulloch won the other (conclusively) in in the Sires' Produce Stakes of 1957 at Randwick.

Gunsynd and Tails revived memories of the greats of the past at Randwick on April 4, 1972, when they had a ding-dong battle down the straight in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes over 1 ¾ miles.

Tails (Sammy Howard) beat Gunsynd (Roy Higgins) by ¾ of a length.

This was one of the best races of the modern era, two personality horses of character and fighting spirit going stride for stride and the crowd roared its approval for Tails even though Gunsynd was the hot favourite.

Chatham, Rogilla and Winooka—three of the greatest horses ever to grace Randwick—ran first, second and third in that order in the 1932 Epsom after Rogilla and Chatham had dear-heated in the Tramway Hcp leading up to the Epsom.

They were almost certainly the top three as a group ever to fill the placings in a major Group one handicap over a mile at Randwick.

Gunsynd, Tails, Comic Court, Emancipation, Sir Dapper, Chatham, Peter Pan, Rogilla, Carbine, Abercorn, Wakeful and all the others included could not match the sustained excitement of the four Beauford-Gloaming bouts of 1922.

This is how they finished—Chelmsford Stakes Sept 9, 1922 won by Beauford, the Hill Stakes Sept 16, 1922 won by Gloaming, the Spring Stakes Sept 30, 1922 won by Beauford, the Craven Plate Oct 4, 1922 won Gloaming.

The cold results cannot tell the story.

The score was one-all going into their third meeting in the Spring Stakes which Beauford won by a neck after the two geldings singled out head to head over the last furlong before an 82,000 crowd at Randwick on Derby Day.

The Craven Plate, their fourth clash, was no anti-climax.

Maybe it was a record for a Wednesday meeting at Randwick on October 4, 1922, when an estimated 50,000 watched them do battle with Gloaming strolling away to an easy three-length win on a wet, windy day.

The reports were that Beauford was weary and wouldn't eat and that is why Gloaming started favourite at even money.

Beauford was a big, gangly gelding bred by his owner W H Mackay and trained at Newcastle by Sid Killick.

The Newcastle-Maitland and Hunter districts has always been proud of its sporting champions—Les Darcy, Jim Pike, Stan Davidson, Wayne Harris, Beauford, Rogilla, Luskin Star and Dave Sands for example.

Darcy was fresh in the memories when the Coalfields fraternity had another hero—Beauford.

W H Mackay bred him at his property Albano, near Maitland. The big fellow was by the imported Beau Boulton from Blueford.

Bert Griffith, a resident of Scone (grand-father of Mudgee based trainer Mack and Luke Griffith of Scone) whose father Bob worked for W H Mackay for 40 years, said Beauford was big and nervous, a horse who hated noise.

Recalling his father's recollections of the horse Bert Griffith once said: "Long after his retirement Beauford bolted and took to the bush. Dad couldn't find him for a week or so."

"He had swum the Hunter River, then gone to the top of the range near Mr Mackay's property. The horse was content to be out there on his own. He was a loner, highly strung, a one-man horse. He used to go off his tucker and everyone use to say that Gloaming would never have beaten him only for that. Beauford was eventually put down by Bob Griffiths at the Mackay property Anambah outside Maitland on the banks of the Hunter River."

Gloaming was bred in Victoria by Earnest Clark who sold him to G D Greenwood of Christchurch, NZ, as a yearling for 230 guineas.

Gloaming eventually won 57 races from 67 starts.

The only time he did not finish first or second was the day he fell in a race at Trentham.

If he was not the greatest gelding ever to grace the Australasian turf then there have been few better.


Racing's history will be further enriched in the years to come if we can produce another Beauford or a Gloaming.

# The Scone Advocate

## Peep into the past

*Today's peep into the past takes us back to the Advocate of November 1925.*

**AMUSEMENTS.**



**KARS SPRINGS RACES**  
(In aid of Scone Hospital).

**Saturday, 21st Novem.**

OPENING HANDICAP, £8, second horse £1 from prize. 3 fur.  
MAIDEN HANDICAP, £5, second horse £1 from prize. 2 fur.  
ARRAGLIM HANDICAP, £5, second horse £1 from prize. 2 fur.  
HOSPITAL HANDICAP, £12, second horse 30/- and third horse 10/- from prize. 3 fur.  
CONSOLATION HANDICAP, £5, second horse £1 from prize. 3 fur.  
FORCED HANDICAP, £5, second horse £1 from prize. 3 fur.

**TO STAND THE SEASON AT TURANVILLE, SCONE,**  
The Thoroughbred Stallion,  
**GRIST.**  
By Maltster from Egale.

**FREE ... 5 Gns.**

GRIST was a good performer, and is the sire of a number of winners.  
Mares will be run in the rich Turanville paddocks at a charge of 2s 6d per week.  
All mares must be removed and paid for at end of season.  
All care taken, but no responsibility incurred.  
For further particulars and pedigree apply,  
**GEO. S. BROWN,**  
Scone.

**Ribbonwood Trotting Stallion,**  
**John Henry.**

Limited number of FREE Services available.  
Apply by telephone.  
**H. G. RAYMOND,**  
"Sledmere."  
Phone, Scone 134.

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**TO STAND THE SEASON AT PARKVILLE,**  
The Draught Stallion,  
**Young Prince Royal (imp.).**  
New Zealand Horse, by Prince Royal from Dawn.

This Sire, locally known as "Guy's," has proved himself by his progeny.  
Holds Government Certificate for soundness, and ribbons gained at Shows. Pedigree on application.

**FREE: 50/- per Mare; two or more same owner, reduction. Agistment free.**  
**C. & S. BROWN,**  
Parkville.

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**TO STAND THE SEASON AT SCONE AND TRAVEL THE DISTRICT,**  
The Draught Stallion,  
**Windermere Proud Knight (imp.).**  
By Lord Armadale from Proud-Beauty.

Bred by Robert Kay, Esq., Fifeshire Scotland.  
Registered by the Clydesdale Horse Society of New Zealand.

**FREE ... 3 Gns.**  
For further particulars and pedigree, apply,  
**GEO. S. BROWN.**

Image courtesy of The Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Featured Image: The Scone Advocate; 'Peeps into the past'; November 1925



For approximately 150 years the Scone Advocate has been the 'eyes, nose and ears' of the Scone and district community as well as its historic reliquary and knowledge repository. To its great credit it has established some remarkable and lasting initiatives. One of these was the 'Peep into the past' series it launched to look back with nostalgic fervour and perhaps even romantic ardour on times long gone.

It's fascinating to compare the events and horse related advertisements with what prevails almost one hundred years later! Guy Raymond of Sledmere advertised a Trotting Stallion 'John Henry' with free services available. Since the sad demise of the late Barry Rose of Camyr Allyn I don't recall another Standardbred stallion in the Upper Hunter? An eponymous John Henry was later to rule as one of America's all-time great thoroughbred racehorses. Guy Raymond later relocated to St Albans, Geelong where he bred and owned the 1948 Melbourne Cup winner 'Rimfire'. His great niece Catriona Mackay/Murphy now owns and runs Sledmere following tenure and stewardship by his own daughter Miss Anne Raymond.

A thoroughbred stallion 'Grist' by Maltster was advertised for Turanville at a fee of 5 guineas and paddock agistment at 2s 6d per week! Two draught horses were offered; one being an imported Clydesdale who would 'stand in Scone and travel the district'. Service fees were advertised at 3gns and 50/- with free agistment. This resonates with me as my late grandfather was similarly committed; albeit one hundred years ago and in another country!

Perhaps most interesting of all were the Kars Springs Races on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 1925. I've heard and read about other similar race meetings including the Belmore Heights Races on a track near my present home on the eastern edge of Scone. Elsewhere these meetings are often referred to as the 'Spurts'. It's a most apposite title. The races are 'about 2 or 3 furlongs'. Presumably they lasted for between 24 secs (2 furlongs) and 36 secs (3 furlongs)? You'd need to be watching very carefully. The judges would have had to endure extremes of scrutiny? Nonetheless it was a popular pastime. There must have been upwards of 20 'tracks' scattered throughout the Upper Hunter Valley; perhaps even more?

I won't even begin to 'compare and contrast' with the super-inflationary standards prevailing on all the thoroughbred stallion stations scattered throughout the Upper Hunter today!

## Homes of Hope

September 24, 2016

By Harley Walden

THE year was 1935, Peter Pan had just come off his second Melbourne Cup win (1932-34) the Great Depression rolled over the lives and hopes of millions, an Anglican minister came up with a plan to house some of the families evicted from their homes, often with no means of financial support.

Robert Hammond was archdeacon at St Barnabas' Anglican Church in Sydney's Broadway.



Rev Robert Hammond at Hammondville (State Library of NSW, hood\_12739)

Wondering what he could do to alleviate the suffering he saw all around, he invited married men to a meeting in February 1932.

His idea was what he called a 'consolidated settlement', a residential development on new land where families of unemployed would help themselves and each other to build, rent and eventually purchase their own homes.

Each would use their skills to help others and after around seven years would have paid sufficient rent to own their houses outright.

To qualify for the scheme a married couple needed to be unemployed, have at least three children and possess a skill useful to the community.

They had to show that they had been recently evicted and make a commitment to joining the community in growing its own food. Rents were very reasonable and did not need to be paid by those who continued to be unemployed.

The 'Pioneer Homes' scheme, as it was originally known, received 800 applications and began with 13 acres near Liverpool. Although the initiative received little official support, donations from the public enabled a start to be made.

Now comes into the picture, Mr Rodney Dangar.

After his great horse Peter Pan had won his second Melbourne Cup, he learned that Canon Hammond had an option of purchase over ground which added 150 acres to Hammondville. That made a total area of 210 acres.

Mr Dangar knows good land from bad. He went out and had a look at the soil. "It is good," he said. "Here men could get something out of the land they tilled. "How much?" "£3,750" Canon Hammond answered. "I'll let you have it!"

"The option expires tomorrow!" the Churchman mentioned, but Mr Dangar works like his horse raced, without thought of tomorrow. The ground was made available for closer settlement, the scheme had justified its existence,

Peter Pan, the one horse of the entire world's horses, had been responsible for a thriving community. Every furlong Peter Pan galloped in the 1934 Melbourne Cup built two cottages at Hammondville for the unemployed; a world record!



Image courtesy of Fairfax Media

Peter Pan wins his second Melbourne Cup in 1934

It was a great record of which Mr Dangar was immensely proud.

One hundred and forty pounds put up another house and enabled another poor family to be transported from the hell of dismay to the paradise of hope. Five pounds will give the settler the essential seed and manure for his first year's work.

Some big men of the turf helped immensely, they helped like gentlemen do, without ostentation, without publicity, giving without hope of reward.

Mr Arthur White of Belltrees, Scone erected a cottage in the early settlement; that was £100.

He went to the settlement and believed in the scheme, he sent five tons of wire netting, which proved of inestimable value to the settlers who kept poultry.

Later he added two rooms to his cottage, great work from the pastoralist-sportsman.

He at least knew what he had done was far greater than charity.

He had given down-and-out brothers opportunities to rehabilitate themselves, he had helped men with nothing to help themselves to economic security, and in helping themselves they had helped others, because to that date the present settlers had repaid £800 of their obligation, which was put into new houses to enable other men and women submerged in economic damnation to make a new start, where every penny they repay is credited to them to make their improved acre their own.

They were the prayers of actions, which made barren fig trees bear fruit for the benefit of the community.

Twenty six homes were completed in the first year. Another 40 homes were built the following year, and another 160 acres was purchased with a generous individual donation.

By 1937, 110 homes were housing families.

Hammondville, as it came to be called after its visionary founder, had a church, post office general store and school by 1940.

A senior citizens facility was developed in later years and Hammondville continued to thrive.

The community grew even further during the war, and many of the men served in the armed forces.

By the end of the war in 1945, most families had already paid off their properties and now owned them along with the acre of land on which they stood.

Hammondville tradition was full of stories about individuals who made great contributions to a unique community.

They included Constance Jewell and her 'Depression recipe' cakes, so popular at dances and fundraisers.

Shopkeeper Alf Morley was known as the 'Mayor of Hammondville' because of his popularity.



Alf opened the town's first shop with a 100-pound loan from the founder and provided generous terms of payment as well as free ice-creams for the kids.

Other notable people from the community included property developer Jim Masterson and politician John Hatton, Reverend Bernard Judd and his wife Ida, had a long connection with Hammondville and were prime movers in establishing various local institutions, including the Girl Guides and the Senior Citizens Home.

Robert Hammond's vision and energy were recognised in 1937 when he was awarded an OBE, he died in 1946 at almost 76 years of age.

Note: In 2017 Strathearn Village Aged Care in Scone was taken over by 'HammondCare'; itself the new iteration and successor to Hammondville.

## Rodney Dangar and Peter Pan



Peter Pan (J. Pike) going out for the Autumn Plate at the 1935 Randwick Easter meeting, in which he narrowly defeated Rogilla. He won 3 races at the meeting and had never been in better form. His attendant, George Phillips, is just removing the bit in which he led the stallion.

### Featured Image: Peter Pan at Randwick 1935

#### Dangar, Rodney Rouse (1871–1950)

Mr. Rodney Rouse Dangar, well-known Australian pastoralist, prominent philanthropist and racehorse-owner, died in Sydney last Friday, aged 79.

Mr. Dangar, a former A.J.C. committeeman, owned and bred Peter Pan, twice winner of the Melbourne Cup.

He turned down an offer of £50,000 by American buyers for Peter Pan. The horse won £34,938 in stakes money.

Mr. Dangar was a director of the National Bank of Australasia, Ltd., and of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, an ex-president of the Union Club, and a councillor of Cranbrook School.

He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. D. V. Ritchie, of Edgecliff.

Mr. Dangar contributed freely to dozens of charities, founded the Peter Pan Kindergarten, and endowed many hospital beds.

The funeral will be at South Head Cemetery to-day after a service at All Saints' Church, Ocean Street, Woollahra, at 11 a.m.

**Peter Pan** (1929–1941) was a chestnut thoroughbred racehorse and stallion.

Peter Pan was sired by Pantheon (GB) out of Alwina by St Alwyne (GB). He was foaled at the Baroona Stud at Singleton in 1929. His sire, Pantheon was an outstanding racehorse winning 10 races from 44 starts in England and Australia. Alwina did not race, but was a good broodmare. Peter Pan was known for having an unusual colouring for a Thoroughbred. He was chestnut with a blonde mane and tail. Frank McGrath's wife loved Peter Pan for his colouring and racing beauty.

Conditioned by future Hall of Fame trainer Frank McGrath Peter Pan raced early in the 1930s during the Great Depression with Phar Lap, Chatham and Rogilla all household names at the time. Frank McGrath, Sr. and some others considered Peter Pan to possibly be a better horse than Phar Lap?

Peter Pan was famous for winning the Melbourne Cup twice, in 1932 and 1934. In the running of the 1932 Melbourne Cup, Peter Pan, carrying Billy Duncan, was travelling at the rear of the pack when he clipped the heels of the horse in front and fell to his knees. Running behind him was his stablemate Dennis Boy, who bumped the champion back onto his feet. From there, Peter Pan raced past the pack to take out the race by a neck. When he was led into the winner's circle, a grass stain was clearly visible on his face. In 1933, Peter Pan fought a near-fatal viral disease that swept Sydney's racing stables and did not contest the Melbourne Cup. Frank McGrath Snr. personally nursed the horse back to health. Peter Pan won his 1934 Melbourne Cup carrying Darby Munro at 9 st 10 lb on his back and from an outside draw on a heavy track, hence his long odds of 14/1. In 1932, he also won the VRC Derby and the MacKinnon Stakes.

To win two Melbourne Cups is a rare feat, and this with his fine record gained him a place in the Australian Racing Hall of Fame. In 1935, Peter Pan suffered a recurrence of the illness that nearly killed him in 1933. Once again, Frank McGrath Snr. nursed him back to health but the horse was not his old self. Out of loyalty to the enormous public following that Peter Pan had gained, Rodney R. Dangar and McGrath agreed to start Peter Pan in the 1935 Melbourne Cup. The horse carried 10 stone 5 lb (the weight carried by Carbine to win the 1890 shed 13th. He was immediately retired to stud.

Peter Pan stood at Rodney R. Dangar's country property Baroona, Whittingham, Singleton, New South Wales where he exclusively covered his owner's mares. His stud career was cut short when he broke his leg in 1941 and was destroyed. Peter Pan is buried at Baroona, Whittingham, Singleton, New South Wales. Peter Pan sired the stake winners Grampian, Peter and Precept, who won the Moonee Valley Stakes and VRC Derby. Peter won the Williamstown Cup and placed 2nd in the 1944 Melbourne Cup.



## A Century of Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Excellence

By Brian Russell

Two of the colts walked from Percy Miller's Kia Ora Stud in the Segenhoe Valley near Scone to the railhead at Aberdeen in 1943 for shipment to Sydney for the Inglis Easter Yearling sales were the Midstream Colts Shannon and Murray Stream. Shannon ranks as one of Australia's greatest milers and overseas exports. After winning races in California in world record times he went to stud and sired good winners before premature death at 14. Shannon and Murray Stream were among hundreds of winners bred by Miller in thirty years in the first half of last century. At the time Kia Ora challenged as the biggest and most successful source of winners in the world and on occasion they took over 100 yearlings to the Easter sales. Sent down several months before the sale they were either led or driven to the rail station and loaded in special horse boxes on trains. Off loaded at Sydney's Darling Harbour they were then led in the early hours of the morning out to the paddocks then encompassed by the Inglis sale yards at Randwick. Besides Shannon and Murray Stream the horses bred on Kia Ora at that time included Windbag (won the Melbourne Cup in Australasian record time), Delta (won Melbourne Cup, Cox Plate, Victoria Derby), Hydrogen (won the Cox Plate twice) and Amounis (won 33 races and for a short time was Australia's leading money earner).



SHANNON

Bay horse (1941) by Midstream (imp.) from Idle Words. Shannon was the greatest Australian-bred stake-winner, and one of the fastest middle-distance performers of recent years. He was a record-breaker in both Australia and America and later at the stud in the latter country.

One historic galloper who wasn't sired on Kia Ora although they often get the credit is Peter Pan, winner of the Melbourne Cups of 1932 and 1934. He was bred by Rodney Dangar of Singleton from a mating with Pantheon, the import who finished third in the 1926 Melbourne Cup and stood initially at the Kingsfield Stud. Moved next door to Kia Ora the next year Pantheon got Peter Pan from his one season at the Kingsfield Stud, one which subsequently had much of its country swallowed up by Glenbawn Dam. His dam may have been railed to Aberdeen and then walked to Kingsfield.

Kia Ora was part of a 10,000 acre grant in a valley served by the Hunter and pages Rivers provided to English businessman and politician Thomas Potter Macqueen in the early 1820s after it had been surveyed by Rodney Dangar's grandfather Henry Dangar. Established for him by Peter Macintyre the valley was called Segenhoe after Macqueen's birthplace Segenhoe Manor. In 1826 they stood the first thoroughbred sire in the Hunter Valley, and England bred stallion named Crawford. As they were very likely a few mares in the region as early as 1820, the Hunter Valley is on the eve of 200 years as horse breeding country.

One of the greatest Hunter Valley bred horses of early last century was the 1916 foaled Beauford, winner of 17 races. He ran four times against the icon performer Gloaming and beat him twice. He was bred by the Mackay family, owners for over half a century of the Tinagroo Stud northwest of Scone. It is then owned by a branch of the Macintyre family and latterly acquired by locally bred David Paradise. Another branch of the Mackay family produced in the Upper Hunter Royal Sovereign winner in 1964-65 the AJC, VRC and QTC Derbies and second in the Caulfield Cup. One of their properties joined the Sledmere Stud at Scone, the one on which Sailor's Guide was raised. He followed up wins in the Victoria Derby and Sydney Cup by being awarded the Washington DC International in America after being second across the line to Tudor Era. In the same year that Beauford was foaled a horse produced on Camyr Allyn on the southern side of Scone went on to be a giant of Australian racing. He was Eurythmic and he won 31 of his 47 starts including top races in Perth and Melbourne.

A rival of Eurythmic and Beauford was Poitrel a winner of the Melbourne Cup under 10 stone (63.5 kgs). He was bred by the Moses brothers then owners of Arrowfield now Coolmore near Jerrys Plains. They were leading breeders for 20 years early last century and included among the horses they bred was Heroic, an outstanding galloper and seven times champion stallion. Bred on Widden one of his sons Ajax won 18 races straight. One of the early champions raised by the Moses on Arrowfield was Poseidon (1903) but they bought him as a foal at foot with his dam off Rodney Dangar when he broke up the Neotsfield Stud near Singleton in 1904. As a 3-year-old Poseidon won 14 races including the AJC Derby, Victoria Derby, Caulfield Cup, Melbourne Cup and VRC and AJC St Legers. He backed up to take the Caulfield Cup again at four but could only manage to finish eighth under the burden of 10 stone three pounds in his second Melbourne Cup.

In the same decade that Poseidon won the Melbourne Cup the great staying test was taken out by four other Hunter Valley bred horses namely Lord Cardigan (won at three in 1904 and a close second to another Hunter runner Acrasia in 1905), Lord Nolan (1908) and Prince Foote (1909). Lord Cardigan and Lord Nolan were both bred and raced by Maitland identity John Mayo and were by Dangar's imported sire Positano a son of the world's leading of early last century St Simon. Positano also sired Piastre (won the 1912 Melbourne Cup) and Mooltan (second in 1907).





‘Poitrel’; painting by Martin Stainforth

The biggest source of winners in the Hunter Valley in the quarter century 1950-75 was the Woodlands Stud. In that era it was under the stewardship of George Ryder, father of the Golden Slipper, and good sires including Newtown Wonder and Pipe of Peace. For 20 years to the mid-1980s Woodlands in the ownership of the Ingham brothers, became one of the biggest breeding operations in the world. One of the horses they bred and raced was Lonhro, an Australian Horse of the Year and a champion sire.

Several years ago the Inghams sold out their thoroughbred empire to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a ruler of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and one of the world’s leading stud, broodmare and racehorse owner for a price reportedly close on half a billion dollars. He had already established the Darley Stud near Aberdeen and is now a huge force as an owner with the former Scone horseman Peter Snowdon as his champion trainer for a while. Darley is one of the big players in a revolution in horse breeding and racing that has elevated the Hunter Valley in the current century into one of the world’s greatest thoroughbred regions both in the quality of the products and the showplace appearance of the studs. They include two of the world’s biggest ever thoroughbred operations, Darley/Godolphin and Ireland headquartered Coolmore, John Messara headed Arrowfield, Vinery (formerly Segenhoe), Emirates Park (also Dubai owned), Widden and newcomer Newgate Farm.



'Lonhro' at "Kelvinside", Aberdeen

The Hunter Valley's use of visiting sires took off in 1990 with the debut appearance of Danehill, a champion European 3-year-old sprinter who went on to be the Australian champion sire a record nine times and to become the biggest force in Australian thoroughbred breeding history.

Dedication:

I wish to also dedicate this modest tome to my good friend Brian Russell as well as 'Bim' Thompson



## 1937 – Percy Miller and the Kia Ora Stud

BY IAN IBBETT ON APRIL 1, 2018

[HTTPS://KINGSOFTHETURF.COM/1937-PERCY-MILLER-AND-THE-KIA-ORA-STUD/](https://kingsoftheturf.com/1937-percy-miller-and-the-kia-ora-stud/)



FAIRFIELD HOUSE, known in 1907 when Percy Miller purchased the property as Fairfield Stock Farm, still stands today by the side of Windsor Road and is passed regularly by racegoers en route to Hawkesbury--- meetings.

### IN 1930'S

In the story of Australian bloodstock breeding during the first half of the twentieth century, one man and one stud stand supreme. The man was Percy Frederick Miller; the Stud was *Kia Ora*. Born in 1879, the youngest of eleven children, Miller started life in rather humble circumstances in the inner Sydney suburb of Leichardt. When only a boy he set out on man's estate to earn a living by purchasing a few calves, slaughtering them himself at the old Glebe Island Abattoirs, and then selling the meat to Sydney's retail butchers. From such modest beginnings, he eventually prospered to become one of the largest carcass butchers in Sydney, founding the firm of *Miller Bros*. It was in 1902 that Percy Miller married his childhood sweetheart, Mabel, and the couple were to be blessed with only one child – a daughter, Marjorie – born three years later. Happy in a secure marriage, as his fledgeling meat business burgeoned in the early years of the century, Percy Miller began to race a few trotters, retaining the brothers Bert and Peter Riddle to prepare and drive the horses. If the standard-bred was to be his first love, the thoroughbred was to supplant it and become his lifelong passion.



Peter Riddle after winning The NZ Cup with champion pacer Sheik; his wife holds the trophy. Peter Riddle died after suffering a stroke two months after Shannon's sale, his will stating that the champion should be sold

His first thoroughbred was a colt by Maltster from Red Flag, which he purchased as an Easter yearling in 1910. Registered rather unimaginatively as Malt Flag, Bill Kelso trained him to win a few races. Subsequently, Miller resolved to build up a stud, and he became a prospective buyer of any well-bred mare by Maltster or Wallace that came onto the market, with Kelso acting as his eminence grise on all matters bloodstock. The first prestigious race in which his colours were carried to victory came with Starland, a daughter of The Welkin, in the 1914 Gimcrack Stakes. I think this really began his love affair with daughters of The Welkin and he was assiduous in seeking well-bred mares by that stallion for his stud. At the same time, he extended a commission to the *British Bloodstock Agency* to buy appropriate English mares, acquiring as many as eight at the December Sales in England in 1915, and these formed the core of his nascent stud. In those days Miller raced under the nom de course of 'Leslie English', a fiction he continued through the early years of the War before abandoning it to the full glare of publicity.



It was in February 1914 that Miller purchased the extensive property of A. J. Burcher, near Scone, to use to fatten-up cattle, as well as establish his standard-bred and thoroughbred horse studs. Initially, his holding consisted of about 1800 acres, which he initially named *Kiora*, although the spelling was later amended to *Kia Ora*. The property, only a few miles out of Scone, was in a belt of country crowded with breeding establishments; at one time it had formed part of the old *Segenhoe* estate owned by William Brown. The *Kia Ora* property was separated from what remained of *Segenhoe* by the Page River, which a few miles further downstream joined with the Hunter. It was ideal land for a thoroughbred stud, beginning with rich river flats of alfalfa extending inland to sheltered and timbered hills.

In early 1915, in his quest for a stud sire, he negotiated with Richard Wootton, who was then in England and purchased the five-year-old English stallion, Flippant. The horse, who had been a fair performer on the English Turf, was a three-quarter brother to Bronzino, the high-priced but ultimately disappointing stallion that Samuel Hordern imported into this country with much fanfare a few years before. Flippant came at a price of 1000 guineas, and Miller raced him briefly in Australia before retiring the horse to his stud in 1916, where he was mated with about twenty mares. Flippant wasn't a stud success and once that became obvious, Miller moved quickly to supplant him. This quick turnover of non-performing stallions was a firm policy of the *Kia Ora* studmaster. As far as his stallion philosophy was concerned it was very much a case of – if you will forgive the pun – 'many were culled, and few were chosen'. Flippant was merely the first in a long line of casualties that failed to measure up to the exacting standards, only to be sold-off.

Consider for a moment if you will, the number of sires that had already stood at *Kia Ora Stud* in the years up to 1937. Apart from Flippant and his successor, Magpie, there were Leverrier, Demosthenes, Nassau, Legionnaire, Saltash, Spelthorne, Sarchedon, Ethiopian, Constant Son, Baralong, Caledon, Pantheon, Christopher Robin, Medieval Knight, Ronsard and Chatham. Now, this isn't a bad list to be going on with. And from the very start, Miller was prepared to pay big money to acquire the right horse. Flippant wasn't cheap, but when it came to replacing him, Miller outlaid 5000 guineas each for Magpie and Demosthenes.

The latter, incidentally, is a rare example of Percy Miller purchasing an already tried stallion. Demosthenes was something of a sensation when he first got to New Zealand, and the *Kia Ora* studmaster went after him. Alas, when installed on the Page River, Demosthenes was most disappointing and proved a shy foal-getter into the bargain. Sarchedon, whom many regarded as the best two-year-old in England, set Miller back 6000 guineas and no less an authority than Dick Wootton declared him to be the finest-looking horse ever imported into Australia. Alas, at stud he, too, proved a failure.

The list appended above shows that Percy Miller had tried sixteen different imported stallions in the first twenty-one years of *Kia Ora's* existence. One is entitled to ask how any studmaster could possibly make a profit by turning over so many expensive stallions so quickly. The answer, dear reader, lies in the remarkable optimism of horse buyers in being willing to fall over each other in a rush to acquire yearlings by well-credentialed but unproven stallions. Given that the gestation period for a horse is some eleven months and a foal won't race until it is a two-year-old at the earliest, it follows that any stallion will enjoy three books of mares before any shortcomings in his stock become obvious on a racecourse. Miller capitalised on this unbridled optimism of buyers towards the progeny of new stallions. If their stock didn't fire in the first season or two, Miller quickly discarded the stallion. I might add that Miller was just as ruthless in his culling of poorly-producing mares, with rejects sold at West Maitland. The *Kia Ora Stud* simply didn't retain any stallion or broodmare exhibiting any weakness or lack of a constitution.

But I am getting ahead of my story. It was in Easter 1916 that Percy Miller made his first appearance as a vendor at the Sydney Yearling Sales when his embryonic stud put forth a modest offering of three yearlings, a colt and a filly by Flavus, and a filly by Downshire. The trio realised an aggregate of 280 guineas. In 1917 Miller again submitted three yearlings for sale, and the following year it increased to four. From the very beginning, Miller resolved to be a breeder for the public and as such, apart from a period during the Depression years, his yearlings were largely sold without reserve. It was in 1919 that he offered the first draft of Flippant, seventeen in number. Although his English import sired sound and hardy horses, Flippant wasn't particularly fashionably-bred for the time, and buyers were not that keen on his progeny.

Miller moved quickly to replace him with Magpie whom he purchased for 5000 guineas in May 1919. Now I suspect that the imagination and commercial flair of Percy Miller would have seen *Kia Ora* prosper under any circumstances, but the astounding success of Magpie made the task immeasurably easier. I have already told the tale of Magpie in the previous chapter. His progeny were not early comers but oh! What stamina they possessed when allowed to mature!

It was Windbag, coming from Magpie's second crop, that really made the stallion's reputation and the story of his sale, as a yearling, is part of Australian Turf folklore. The champion might so easily have raced in the ownership of Percy Miller, rather than that of his older brother Bob. When the future Windbag first entered the yearling ring on that autumn day in 1923, he was initially knocked down to Ian Duncan, a leading New Zealand breeder who was buying on commission for a colleague in the Dominion. Duncan had been frustrated in attempts to obtain earlier lots by Magpie that had gone for stiffer prices, and his decision to bid for the Charleville colt had been somewhat impulsive. After the horse had been sold to him and had left the ring, Duncan hurried to where the *Kia Ora* draft was stabled at *Newmarket* for a closer inspection of his latest acquisition. The future Windbag was not only small but a rather weak walker to boot, and in this instance familiarity bred contempt.



GEORGE PRICE & BOB MILLER

Duncan approached the auctioneer, Clive Inglis, and advised him that he wasn't prepared to transport the horse back to New Zealand. Accordingly, he requested that the colt enter the ring again at the end of the sale. No auctioneer is keen on such a course of action because buyers are immediately wary that there might be something wrong with the animal. So instead, Inglis approached Percy Miller and asked him if he was prepared to relieve Duncan of the purchase. In a lifetime of trading horses, Percy Miller earned a reputation for absolute integrity and straight shooting in his dealings, and this occasion was no different. Miller stated that if Duncan was prepared to take 120 guineas for the colt, he could book it to Bob Miller. He was, and he did. It was in this manner that Windbag became a windfall for Percy's brother. In ordinary circumstances, Percy would have taken the colt himself. However, the *Kia Ora* studmaster had only just broken off his relationship with his trainer Bill Kelso and sold all his horses in work. Accordingly, at the time he wasn't interested in ownership. Considering what Windbag went on to achieve, Percy's estrangement from Bill Kelso proved particularly expensive.



WINDBAG AFTER WINNING THE 1925 MELBOURNE CUP

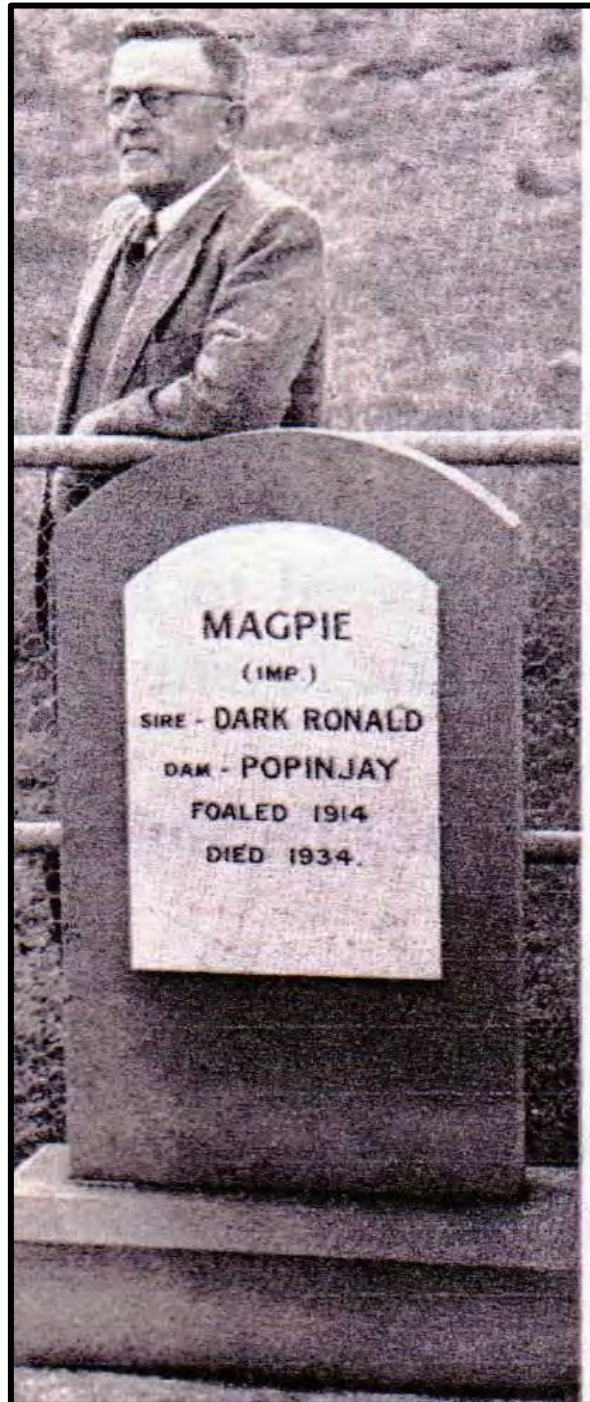


Incidentally, when Windbag retired, Miller could have stood him at *Kia Ora* for the asking, but at that time he refused to stand a colonial sire at any price. Consequently, Windbag went to Alex Hunter's *Northwood Park Stud*, near Seymour in Victoria, after bringing 4000 guineas at auction – a good price for an Australian stallion in those days. Alex Hunter was a good friend of Miller – a friendship that traced back to their younger days when each was heavily involved in light-harness racing. Although Percy hadn't been prepared to stand Windbag as a stallion, he was more than happy to patronise him with a few mares to kick-start his stud career for his friend. Two mares that Miller sent to *Northwood Park* for Windbag's first book were Kanooka and Myosotis. It was in this way that two of the great milers of the Australian Turf came into this world when the mares gave foal to Winooka and Chatham respectively. As a matter of fact, these two future champions followed each other into the sales ring when sold as yearlings.

I seem to have wandered off the theme of Magpie and the growth of *Kia Ora Stud*, but it is all grist to the mill insofar as the story of the 1937 A.J.C. Derby is concerned. Once Magpie, through the racecourse deeds of his sons, Windbag and Amounis, had become famous, the growth and prosperity of *Kia Ora* flourished spectacularly. Percy Miller passed his wholesale butchery business over to his older brother Bob to manage in the mid-1920's once Magpie had guaranteed *Kia Ora's* success, and from then on Percy devoted his energies to the stud. There is nothing in the annals of Australian thoroughbred history to match the mushrooming growth of *Kia Ora*, which quickly became the largest stud in the southern hemisphere. The milestones came thick and fast.

It was Percy Miller who bred and sold Dominant, the most expensive yearling ever sold in Australia up to that time when he went for 6750 guineas at Easter 1928; it was a record that stood for thirty years. Dominant was part of the stud's record aggregate at that year's Easter sales of 33,885 guineas. I think this is the statistic that best illustrates the stud's rapid development. In 1919 the yearling sales aggregate was a mere 1865 guineas, and yet just ten years later it had grown to 33,885 guineas! Two years after, in 1930, Percy Miller realised his coveted ambition of consigning one hundred yearlings into the Easter sales ring.

Much of the success, as Percy was the first to acknowledge, was due to the animal husbandry of **Bert Riddle**, the stud manager who was there from the very beginning. In those days the yearlings were dispatched to *Newmarket* well before Easter and, being boxed at Randwick, the youngsters were less likely to incur injury than running loose in the stud paddocks.



Bert Riddle & Magpie

Among the six yearlings on offer in 1922, the very first year Magpie's stock was sold, was a little filly from the well-bred matron, Galtee Princess. The mare had been one of *Kia-Ora's* early acquisitions for breeding. She had won races in Perth and Melbourne, and in 1918, was purchased with a Linacre foal at foot for 700 guineas by Percy Miller. The Linacre foal subsequently raced successfully as Galtee Maid. Just about all of the progeny of Galtee Princess won races, including this particular filly sold in 1922, later registered as Chatterbox. She raced in the colours of Bob Miller – pale blue, black diamond and sleeves and yellow cap – and was a filly that got better with age. She raced in the 14.2 pony classes before graduating to win at Rosehill, Canterbury Park and Moorefield in flying company. Perhaps her best effort was to finish second at Randwick in the June Stakes when beaten a neck as the favourite. Unfortunately, she broke down rather severely as a five-year-old and was promptly retired to matronly duties at *Kia Ora*. Chatterbox, despite her small stature, proved quite a useful broodmare and had already enjoyed success when Miller mated her with Pantheon in the spring of 1933. The resultant foal was in the draft of *Kia Ora* yearlings at the Sydney Easter Sales in 1936.

Now it is not always possible to provide a faithful description of a future Derby winner when offered as a yearling, but Avenger, our 1937 hero, is an exception. It was common in those days for the major newspapers of Sydney and Melbourne to send their principal racing writers on a motoring tour of the studs in the run-up to Christmas to review the yearlings for sale the following year. The pressmen would all informally chance their judgement of bloodstock by nominating the yearling they thought most likely. *Chiron* of '*The Australasian*' won the contest that year when he showed remarkable prescience in selecting the future Avenger as the pick of the *Kia-Ora* draft of ninety-six yearlings. I quote below the copy he filed for his newspaper at the time:

*“However, to my mind, the pick of the draft is the bay Pantheon colt from that one-time good performer, Chatterbox, by Magpie from Galtee Princess. The breeding is right, and so is the colt. The earlier progeny of Chatterbox were rather on the small side, but lack of size cannot be urged against this fellow, as there is plenty of him, and what there is exceptionally good. Although short topped, his back being strong and the middle-piece splendidly ribbed, he stands over a lot of ground and is a fine reachy mover. He gives the impression of perfect pitch and balance. He is exceptionally good in front, with a long clean shoulder well set back, with a long muscular neck and a keen, intelligent head.”*

As it transpired, when the colt went through the ring he was bought by Messrs Mackinnon and Cox of Melbourne on behalf of the Victorian sportsman, J. P. Arthur, for 850 guineas. Now, chance is a funny thing in life. By the mid-1930's Miller had been racing horses for more than a quarter of a century and he seemed fated never to win a classic with a horse of his own breeding and carrying his own colours. That he eventually did so with a horse he had once sold seems scarcely credible,. However, that is precisely what Percy Miller achieved with this youngster from Chatterbox. It just so happened that in the months immediately after the yearling sales at which the colt was sold, J. P. Arthur had a run-in with Victorian officialdom and decided to retire from the Turf on a matter of principle. He put up his extensive string of horses for sale at public auction in August 1936. It so happened that Miller had taken a shine to the Chatterbox colt as a weanling when he gambolled about the *Kia Ora* paddocks.

The studmaster always considered the youngster would develop stamina. Miller approached trainer Jack Holt and asked him to inspect the horse before the auction, and if he was sound, to buy him. Holt liked what he saw and for 800 guineas Avenger returned to the ownership of the man that bred him. I might mention here that at that auction of Arthur's horses, Holt also bought another rising two-year-old on behalf of Miller – Devoted Son – yet another that *Kia Ora* had bred and sold as a yearling. It is interesting to observe that in both cases the horses actually cost less some four months after being sold at Easter, even though neither had been tried on the racecourse.





JACK HOLT AND PERCY MILLER (Courtesy of Racing Victoria)

A strapping bay colt, Avenger wasn't hurried by Jack Holt in his first season, his debut being delayed until the autumn when he ran unplaced in a minor juvenile event at Pakenham. He appeared five more times that season, twice earning place money and saving his best effort till last when he ran second to John Wilkes in a seven-furlong handicap at Caulfield in late July. Considering that at the time, nominations for the major handicaps and Cup races closed in June, and Avenger hadn't returned Miller any prize money at all, it came as no surprise that the *Kia Ora* studmaster didn't bother putting forth the colt's name for the rich events. Indeed, the stable was not even entertaining the ambition of a Derby start at that stage. But colts – and particularly backwards and immature types such as Avenger – can often improve dramatically as the last weeks of winter give way to spring.



AVENGER (The Australasian)

Jack Holt chose the Chatsworth Plate, a mile race for three-year-olds run at Caulfield, for Avenger's seasonal reappearance. It was unfortunate for Holt that the veteran Caulfield trainer Frank Musgrave also chose the same race for a flashy chestnut son of Heroic sheltering in his '*Ruthen Lodge*' stables in Leopold Street. The horse in question was Ajax, who had proved himself the best juvenile in Australia earlier in the year. Despite a field of seventeen competitors and conceding weight to them all, including a full two stone to Avenger, Ajax had little trouble adding this event to his lengthening tally of triumphs. Avenger, however, ran on nicely enough at the end of the race to take the second prize and suggest that he was going to make up into a nice colt once he got over further ground. Moreover, he possessed a relaxed and docile temperament, the trait of a real stayer. When the strapping son of Pantheon continued to thrive in his work and won his next two races at Williamstown and Caulfield against his own age group, Holt knew he had a genuine Derby contender and laid his plans for a northern visit to the Harbour City.

His only start in Sydney before the Derby came in the Hill Stakes at Rosehill, and as is so often the case with Victorian horses making their first appearance at the suburban course, managed to find plenty of trouble. Several horses suffered in a scrimmage at the start and Avenger was the worst sufferer when crowded onto the inside running rail. After being last on the home turn he unwound a great finish to run second to the previous year's Derby hero, Talking.

It was Baillieu who was really responsible, for it was he that had imported Medmenham, the dam of Ajax, into Australia. She only raced here during her four-year-old season but won twice in nine starts, including a narrow victory in the Brunswick Stakes (10f) at Flemington. I might mention that while 'Prince' Baillieu never maintained a separate stud farm, this Melbourne stockbroker and scion of one of Melbourne's establishment families, was far more responsible for improving the quality of Australian bloodstock than many who did. Medmenham was just one of many of his successful imports.



AJAX



THE MOMENT THE AJC DERBY WAS WON BY 'AVENGER" (Sydney Mail)



LADY WAKEHURST AND AVENGER AT THE PRESENTATION (Sydney Mail)



Despite the success of a Derby with Avenger and a Caulfield Guineas and other good races with Young Idea, Percy Miller, for all his genius as a horse breeder, was never really fortunate as a horse owner. He raced some useful gallopers such as Broadcaster and Flying Duke but somehow, they never quite lived up to their early promise. Perhaps the best horse to carry his colours was the wonderful filly, Sweet Chime, who swept the board of fillies' classics in Melbourne in the spring of 1946. There was one other horse that might have developed into something special, however, – and that was Rob Roy, the half-brother to Homer that raced in Talking's Derby. He later won the Members' Handicap at that A.J.C. Spring Meeting by six lengths pulling up at only his second start in Miller's colours and was strongly fancied for the Melbourne Cup that year only to break a leg in a Caulfield gallop before the race, and was subsequently destroyed. To the end of his days, Miller maintained that he was the most promising stayer that he had ever had the good fortune to own.

Percy Miller died at the age of 68 after a long illness in August 1948 at his Dudley St, Coogee home, survived by his wife, and his only child, Marjorie. At the time of his death, *Kia Ora* remained Australia's pre-eminent stud as the quality of the stallions standing there at the time attest – Midstream, Le Grand Duc, Channel Swell and Delville Wood. Although in its prime, *Kia Ora* had been extended from its original 1800 to almost 3000 acres, the march of progress had served to reduce it over the years, not least with the construction of Glenbawn Dam, and at Miller's death, the stud totalled a little more than 2,400 acres. Likewise, its broodmare numbers had declined from the halcyon days when two hundred or more matrons roamed the paddocks to about half that number. During Percy Miller's lifetime, the stud had been responsible for breeding such champions as Windbag, Amounis, Murray Stream, All Love, Feminist, Loquacious, Chatham, Winooka and Shannon from its own mares, not to mention the greats such as Peter Pan that came from visiting broodmares.

Miller lived long enough to see another of his stallions in Midstream, succeed to the title first won for *Kia Ora* by Magpie, that of Australian Champion Sire. Loyal and generous, and a man of absolute integrity, from his very first tentative offering as a vendor in 1916, Percy never sold his yearlings outside the Sydney region, and he retained his original selling agents, *William Inglis and Son*, to the very end of his days.

His friendship with the Inglis family was such that he bequeathed his racing colours to John Inglis and for years after Miller's death the livery continued to be successful on Sydney racecourses. I shall leave the story of *Kia Ora's* sad decline to a later chapter of this chronicle, but it is fair to say that the seeds of destruction were sown with Percy's death. Even during his lifetime, the inevitable squabbles and petty jealousies that so often mar and fracture family companies had threatened the stud's viability. But a legal instrument that resided control of the enterprise in Percy's hands had at least contained such discontent while he lived. His death released the demons to wreak their havoc.



*MAGPIE (Dark Ronald-Popinjay by St Frusquin) was the all-time favourite of both Miller and Bert Riddle. Miller called his residence "Canara" which is an aboriginal-sounding word for blackbird or magpie. As a broodmare sire he was peerless.*

# SCONE JOCKEY CLUB

## Race Meeting

Registered A.J.C. :: Affil. N. & N.W.D.R. Association.

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### "ALABAMA" RACECOURSE

(NEAR SCONE)

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PROCEEDS TO SCONE AND DISTRICT RED CROSS BRANCH  
AND SCONE JOCKEY CLUB

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## SATURDAY, 28th APRIL

1945

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Six Races    ∴    Six Races

## £162 PRIZE-MONEY £162

(£100 DOUBLE)

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<p>1—1.30 : RED CROSS FLYING HANDICAP of £40, second horse £7, and third horse £3 from the prize. Six furlongs. Minimum handicap weight 8-st.</p> <p>2—2.00 : MAIDEN HANDICAP. of £12, second horse £3 from the prize. For all horses that have not won an advertised race on the flat at time of starting. Four furlongs. Min. handicap weight, 8-stone.</p> <p>3—2.30 : RESTRICTED HANDICAP of £13, 2nd horse £2, third horse £1 from prize. For all horses that have never won a prize exceeding £10 in value to the winner at time of starting. Five</p>	<p>furlongs. Min. handicap weight 8-stone.</p> <p>4—3.00 : ALABAMA HANDICAP of £60, second horse £7, third horse £3 from the prize. Seven furlongs. Min. handicap weight 8-stone.</p> <p>5—3.30 : CLUB WELTER of £25, second horse £3, third horse £2 from the prize. Six furlongs. Minimum handicap weight 8st 7lb.</p> <p>6—4.00 : 2nd MAIDEN HANDICAP of £12, 2nd horse £2 from the prize. For all horses that have not won an advertised race on the flat at time of starting. Five furlongs. Min. handicap weight 8-stone.</p>
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Entries close with the Secretary at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 20.

Entry fees for Flying and Alabama Handicaps £1; other races 10/. Nominations must be accompanied by fees and all necessary particulars. When entries are wired, fees must be telegraphed also, and the particulars confirmed by first mail. These conditions will be strictly adhered to, and no nomination will be accepted otherwise.

Bookmaker's fee £3/3/. Sydney races broadcast on the ground, and Bookmakers operating both on Sydney and local races.

Refreshments and Publican's Booth on the Ground.

Admission to Ground : Gents 10/., Ladies 5/-. Members of the Services in Uniform, half prices  
(Prices Include Tax)

Visiting horses can find accommodation handy to Racecourse on night prior to meeting, and will be able to work their horses on the track if desired.

C. PARRY, Hon. Secretary.  
Phone Scone 189; after 6 p.m., Scone 80.

D. H. ROBERTSON, President.

E. W. HOWELL, Hon. Treasurer  
(phone Scone 16)

MUSWELLBROOK PATRIOTIC RACES, 7th APRIL.

"The Scone Advocate" print.

Featured Image: Program for Scone Jockey Club Race Meeting at "Alabama" Racecourse on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 1945

The 2018 Scone Race Club Annual Cup Carnival is in full swing as I write with two days of highly competitive racing and almost \$2 million available in prizemoney. Gai Waterhouse has just won the Cup; again!

Reflection relates how much 'progress' has been made in just over 70 years. I am the lucky current custodian of the hand written minutes of the Scone Jockey Club from 07/12/1944 to Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1963 (Scone Race Club). The minutes are in two beautifully bound hard back foolscap-sized ledgers. The flowing hand writing is both exquisite and neat. These books are a precious commodity which came to me via Jack Johnston, his daughter Lesley and Harley Walden. No-one in authority appeared to want them? I will make sure they find a permanent and secure home; probably the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society.

The minutes for the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Committee Meeting of the Scone Jockey Club on 8 March 1945 are signed off by Chairman Mr D H Robertson and Honorary Secretary Mr C Parry. Recorded as attending the meeting in the Office of Stan G Keene and Co are: Messrs Robertson (Chair), Johnston, Morgan, Readford, Price, Keene, Loomes, Riddle, Clark, Howell & Parry. Apologies were received from Messrs Lochhead & Duncombe. Here were some exceptional luminaries named there!

The main item on the agenda was to set the program for the upcoming meeting of the SJC on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 1945: See Featured Image above. Another major decision was to award the proceeds of the Race Meeting to the Scone Red Cross 40% for their Ball and 60% to the Jockey Club. It was then customary, indeed mandatory, to subscribe to local charities. Business items also included provision for a Pluvius (Rain) Policy for £300 covering 3 hours 10am to 1pm, and also Public Risk & Worker's Compensation. Bookmakers Fees were set at £3/3/-.

The Scone Advocate reported on 'the successful fixture at "Alabama"' in its detailed report on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1945. Host property "Alabama" was then owned by Mr R M Bowcock who was 'thanked for his nice gesture'. The most successful combination on the day was jockey L P Duncombe who rode three winners.

It appears the Scone Jockey Club had no permanent home at this time also conducting race meetings at St Aubins and Aberdeen. The grand opening of the Scone Race Club's new track at White Park on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 1947 was still over 2 years away. See next post.



## Wallabadah Races



**Featured Image: Wallabadah Races New Year's Day circa 1925**

The Wallabadah region was originally known as "Thalababuri" by the Kamilaroi Aboriginal people. Wallabadah's name was derived from an aboriginal word meaning "stone".

The first European squatters arrived in the region in about 1830 and Wallabadah Station was established in 1835 on 44,000 acres (180 km<sup>2</sup>) of land. During the 1850s the settlement began to develop at the intersection of two mail coach runs which came from the north and northwest, and Wallabadah Post Office opened on 1 October 1856.

In August 1866 Captain Thunderbolt's third daughter, Mary Ann was born at Wallabadah. On 30 May 1867 he robbed the northern mail coach at Wallabadah. Thunderbolt also worked on a property west of Wallabadah during that period.

***Australia's first country racing club was established at Wallabadah in 1852 and the Wallabadah Cup is still held on New Year's Day (the current racecourse was built in 1898).***

The Marshall MacMahon Hotel was constructed circa 1867 and a part of it is still in use. In 1877 Wallabadah was larger than Quirindi, 15 kilometres away, but a rail connection to Quirindi reduced Wallabadah's expansion. A public school was opened in 1867 with the residence dating from 1898. In 1896 the Anglican Church of the Ascension (with 1912 additions) was established while the Catholic Church was constructed in 1910 on the New England Highway.

Agriculture is the dominant industry in the area with livestock, especially beef cattle and some sheep being reared there. Wallabadah now has a primary school, a pub and one shop.

## Rogilla



'Rogilla' in 1935

Rogilla was by Roger de Busli (GB) and his dam Speargila was by Brakespear (GB). Roger de Busli (GB) won three races from 20 starts in England. He commenced stud duties in 1925, but sired only one other winner of a principal race in Oro 1935 AJC Metropolitan Handicap.

Rogilla's dam Speargila was a good race mare that won 13 races in Sydney plus 10 other provincial and country races. Speargila was line-bred to Prince Charlie, as both Lochiel and Clan Stuart were sired by him. She was the dam of six foals, which all raced and were winners. Rogilla was the second foal.

His breeder Hunter White of 'Talbragar Station', Coolah granted three consecutive leases to Rogilla's trainer Les Haigh. Hunter White was also a graduate veterinarian who conducted original research into the ravages of Myxomatosis in rabbits. He was a descendent of the icon White family of 'Havilah' Mudgee.

**Rogilla**, was a chestnut gelding known as the *Coalfields Champion* from Newcastle. Rogilla raced during a vintage era of the Australian turf. He won in each of the six seasons that he raced as a three-year-old to an eight-year-old. Rogilla was an outstanding galloper in Sydney and Melbourne on wet or dry tracks recording 26 wins from 4½ furlongs to 2 miles with regular jockey Darby Munro winning 16 races.

Rogilla amassed an amazing record across 26 wins in 70 starts. Trained in Newcastle by Les Haigh, Rogilla won the 1933 Cox Plate, 1932 Caulfield Cup, Melbourne Stakes, C.B Fisher Plate, Kings Cup, 1933 Sydney Cup, Rawson Stakes, Chipping Norton Stakes, Warwick Stakes, Spring Stakes (twice), Autumn Plate, Randwick Plate, Tatts Chelmsford Stakes (twice) and Tatts Tramway Handicap. He won in every season from three years old to eight and from distances of 900 metres to 3200m.

Rogilla began his racing career two months short of his fourth season. His racing colours were black, with red armbands and cap. He was lightly framed and 15.3 hands tall and despite various injuries and illnesses was best remembered for his tremendous courage against the best in the depression era. In 17 of the races he contested he won eight by a neck or less, lost four by a neck or less and figured in five dead heats for first. He always pulled hard in races, which cost him any chance in the three Melbourne Cups he contested.

His best season was at six years of age, when he won 11 from 17 starts and in 1934 he defeated the champion Peter Pan III in four successive meetings including the AJC Kings Cup.

Rogilla when racing in Melbourne was stabled at Caulfield with great trainer Cecil T Godby who trained the Caulfield Cup winners Purser 1924, Gaine Carrington 1933 and Northwind 1936.

Trainer Les Haigh was born in 1892 at Bega and a former jockey in the Muswellbrook area. He relocated his 64 Everton Street stables in Newcastle to Sydney and in 1934 purchased leading Randwick trainer Frank Marsden's 10 box stables at 11 Bowral Street Kensington directly opposite the now Tulloch Lodge. The 'Gaulusville' stables are legendary and were built and named soon after 1897 by Melbourne Cup winning jockey Stephen Callinan who rode Gaulus to victory but it was also Phar Lap who began his racing career there in 1929.

Frank Marsden was mentor to the outstanding gallopers Furious 1921 VRC Derby & VRC Oaks, Richmond Main 1919 AJC & VRC Derby also Prince Viridis 1918 AJC & VRC St Leger, Cagou 1913 & 1917 AJC Metropolitan Handicap and the 1919 & 1922 AJC Sydney Cup winners Ian 'Or & Prince Charles.

Rogilla's racing record: 70 starts for 26 wins (including 5 dead heats), 12 seconds, 11 thirds and 21 unplaced runs.

In February 2017 'Rogilla' was an inaugural induction into the Newcastle and Hunter Racing Hall of Fame along with Luskin Star.

## **The Old Timer who knocked the dust off some Good'uns**

Harley Walden 2005

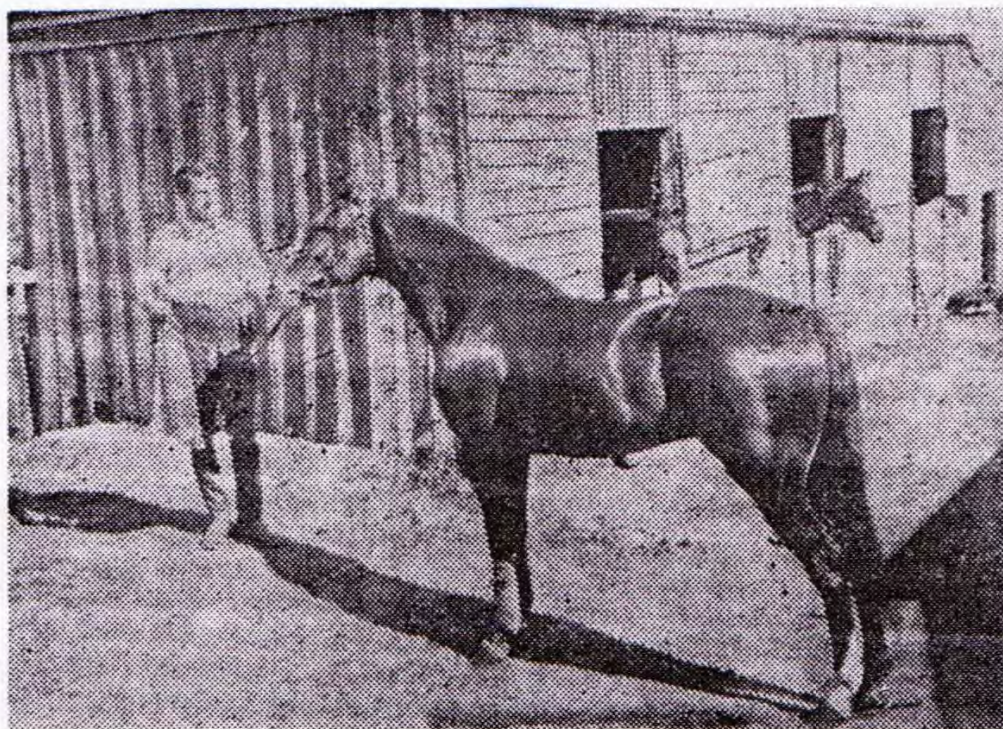
He was addressed as “Clancy” – the fellow immortalised by Paterson because he has a drovin’ gone – as he joined the young blokes, who found time to shift their gaze from the coloured sheets of the Turf Form. The old-timer joined in the discussion in his usual quiet, yet evidently, interested manner.

“Wouldn’t Earl Pentheus have a chance?” was his only reply, or question, in answer to one of the party, as he proceeded to finish the rolling of a cigarette. “What do you know about horses anyway?” was a direct shot from one of the lads.

“I knocked the dust from a few scrubbers in the bush in my time,” and pausing to apply a match to the cigarette, added nonchalantly, “And one of them took the Denman Stakes at Randwick”.

It was Jim Johnston, who stopped his questioner rather nicely, even though in those days he emulated “Clancy of the Overflow” at the rear of moving woollies to different parts of the State.....It was when Willie Plomer, a tractable son of the Donovan sire, Merv (imp.), had to be brought into calculations in the best sprinting company of Turfdom. Mentored by Scott Johnston, this bold galloper was taken to Royal Randwick.

On that particular day, he was discarded by the rank and file of punters, and 33 to 1 was called about the country prod, with the great Balarang an odds on favourite. The satchel boys were yelling themselves hoarse, the closing symphony before the flag-fall being “ten-to-one – bar one”.



**Scott Johnston’s champion galloper Willie Ploma, the chestnut son of Merv (imp) was bred by Mr Silas Rose of Parkville.**

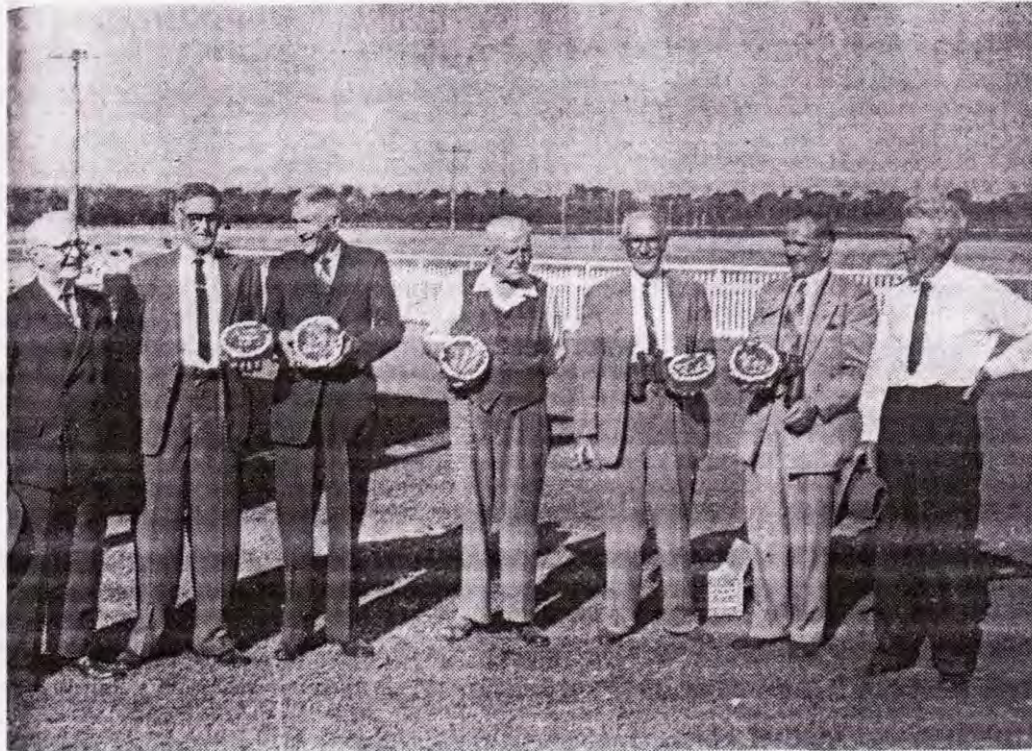


Willie Plomer was soon making play and by the time the straight was entered was coasting along, a full eight lengths in front and there he remained to win by his rider sitting against the chestnut, who was poetry in motion when on the job.

The horse boxes that can be seen behind Willie Plomer (see photo) were home to many of Scott Johnston's top-line country gallopers. With Miss Benita, Scott Johnston won no fewer than 32 races, taking out three with her on one afternoon at Gunnedah.

But more outstanding successes were destined to come the way of the young Scone owner-trainer. He lifted a power of races with Ruby Queen, Willie Plomer and Blue Tilly; all out of the greta mare Thelma, bred by Silas Rose, of Parkville; the first named by Renoric, and the remaining pair by Merv.

Scott really got hold of BlueTilly after she had been placed on discard, or scrap heap, as it were, but he patched her up and scored with her on practically every provincial course between Armidale and Newcastle.



**The Johnston Boys:** Associated with racing in Scone since the 1890s.

Third from left Scott, Clayton; (deceased), Hector; (deceased) and Jim, all foundation members of the Scone Race Club. (Photo taken in 1973).

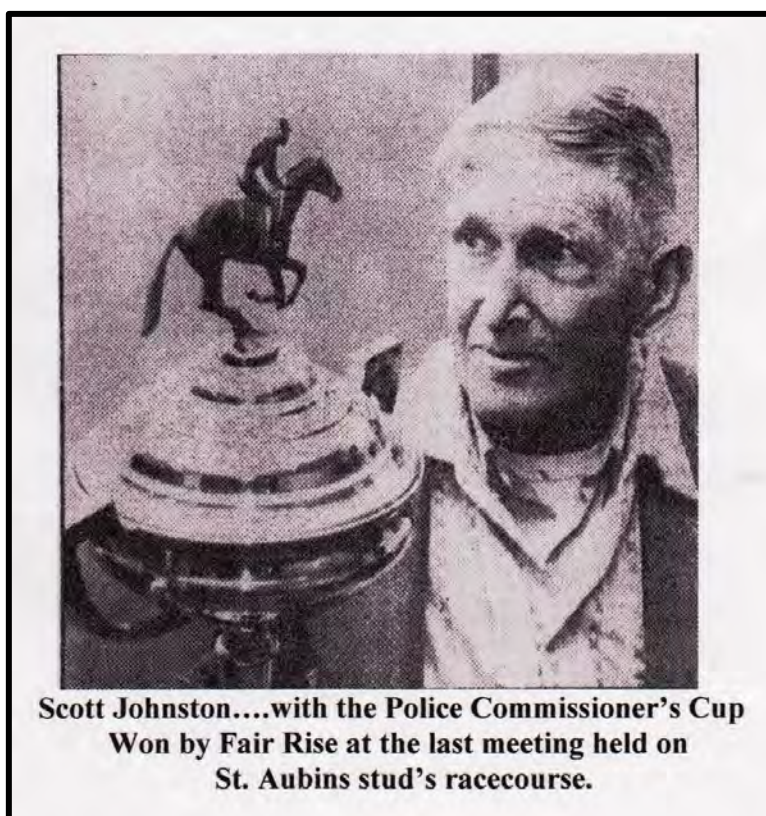
At one stage of her remarkable career she won six on end, commencing with a double at the Armidale Cup meeting, two more at Tamworth, and another brace at Wallsend – six races in eight days. She won twice in the one day at the old Rutherford racecourse at Maitland, later the site of a large woollen mill. The brilliant daughter of Merv began by winning the Maitland Handicap at 10/1, by 10 lengths and equalled the course record. Saddled up again, Blue Tilly won the Rutherford Handicap, this time beating the AJC Epsom winner Port Rush by 12 lengths.

It was at Wallsend that Lord Nagar was favourite at a prohibitive price, but Blue Tilly left him standing at the end of then furlongs. Such a burst of brilliance did she reveal that at least one astute judge on the course contended that the mighty Woorak would have had the job in front of him in running her down. And within a short week, Lord Nagar, bred at “Kelvinside”, or was it “Russley”, Aberdeen? fairly bolted with the Villiers Stakes at Randwick.

Willie Plomer, a rich chestnut colt, was however, probably the pick of a fine string held by the Scone-ite. He won in every direction and in all company. Then there was Aberdonia, a gelding that came into his hands when it was thought the best had been seen of him. He was a flat-footed horse, the hard tracks did not suit him, but in the softer going he troubled the judge on at least thirty occasions. And other bows in the stable string were the bold gallopers, Dalmeny King and Electric Bullet, who picked up their fair share of races.

Mersina, another cast-off resurrected by the master of Tyrone, landed races at will, almost including an Armidale Cup. With St. Rosaline, he also landed quite a few races, including a Corinthian Handicap at Scone under the steadier of 14st. 2lbs.

The stories of Scott Johnston are legion from the time he set up “Tyrone”, a 700-acre property just north of Scone.



He trained his first winner, Blue Graft, in 1910 when he walked him and another horse the 16 miles from home (Tyrone) to Muswellbrook races. Blue Graft won the Flying and the next morning Scott made the return trip.

Scott also won the Wallabadah Cup five times and taking out the last Scone Cup held on the old Satur racecourse on a sire which overlooks the new modern complex.

Denis Lad proved a hand galloper out of the Scott Johnston stable, included among his many wins the first running of the President's Cup at Quirindi in 1934; also the time honoured Armidale City Handicap.

Towards the latter part of his training career Scott Johnston had success with some great country performed gallopers; Some Rock with whom he won 26 races, Pitlochry 31 races including successive Quirindi Cups, Moriarty, with whom he won the Newcastle Northern Cup, also Briar Bay (Aberdeen Cup), Warrah Wood and Dispute.

Success came naturally to this bush horseman with winner too many to count and trophies to fill a room of cabinets. But it was always the one he didn't win that disappointed the Scone trainer, as put in his own words: "I had a pretty good horse in Freyburg. He should have won the Doomben Ten Thousand..... Warrah King came down right in front of Freyburg..... yet he finished fourth, with one of his shoes torn off," Scott said.

The veteran horseman, rich in every way of the "fair dinkum" Aussie passed away in 1984, aged 88, handing in his trainer's licence just twelve months previously as the oldest trainer in Northern New South Wales.

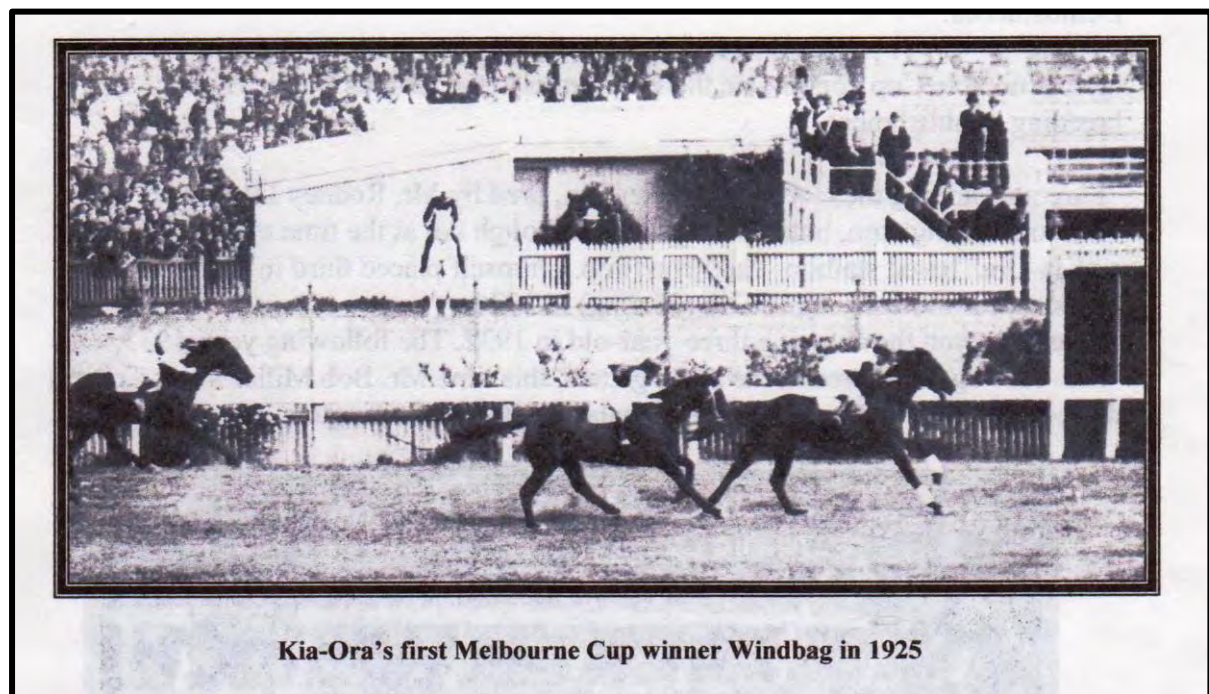


## The Breeding Scene & the Melbourne Cup

By Harley Walden 2005

Whenever a new champion arrives on the racing scene or a new stud opens its quest into the breeding arena memories are rekindled of a stud that produced so many great racehorses. In this article I have outlined the deeds and connection Kia Ora Stud, Scone had with Australia's premier staying race, the Melbourne Cup.

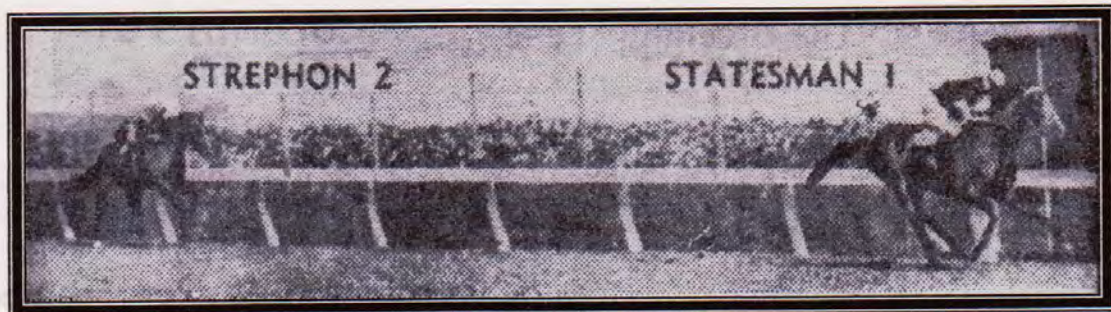
Since its foundation as a breeding property in 1912 the famous thoroughbred nursery over the next fifty years could be described as the doyen of other noted properties. It has featured in the principal races of Australia and the USA but its importance in the Melbourne Cup must be particularly stressed. The latter is the main distance handicap on the racing calendar.



Thirteen years after Percy Miller founded "Kia Ora" and under the spectacular management of A W (Bert) Riddle, "Kia Ora" produced the mighty Windbag the winner of many WFA races culminating in a record breaking win in the 1924 Melbourne Cup. Windbag, by Magpie (imp.) from Charleville was a real tonic for the Scone district.

Three years later another Melbourne Cup winner merged from the same establishment. This time it was Statesman by Demosthenes (imp.) from the imported mare Marcelle. A number of years since the Statesman year, in which all three placegetters were reared on "Kia Ora", the second horse was Strephon by Saltash. Strephon was rated good enough to ship to England to throw down the gauntlet to the best horse racing in the old country; unfortunately he failed to acclimatise and never produced his Australian form. The third placegetter, Demost, was also by Demosthenes.

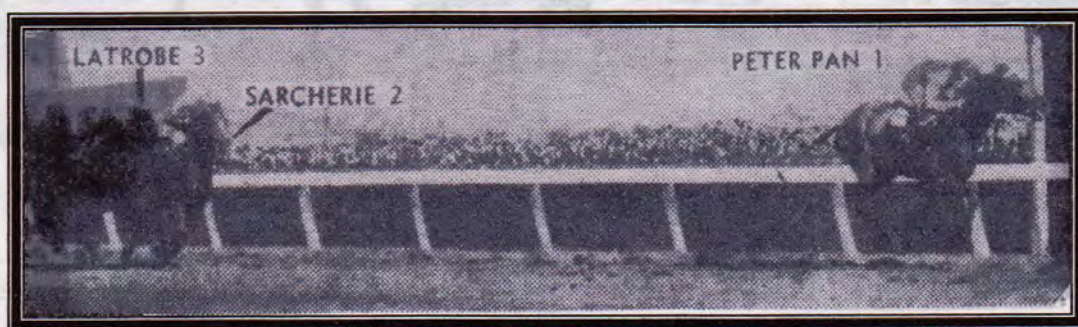




**Statesman wins the "Big One" in 1928**

Other notable Cup horses owe their existence to the famous Upper Hunter breeding establishment. Foremost among these would be Peter Pan, bred by Mr Rodney Dangar of "Baroona", Singleton, but certainly sired, although not at the time of conception, by a "Kia Ora" based stallion, Pantheon (imp.), himself placed third in the two-miler as a six-year-old carrying 9st 3lb (58.5kg) in 1926. Peter Pan won the cup as a three-year-old in 1932. The following year, 1933, "Kia Ora" again figured in the placegetters, this time Mr Bob Miller's colt Tropical dead-heating for third with the New Zealander, Gaine Carrington.

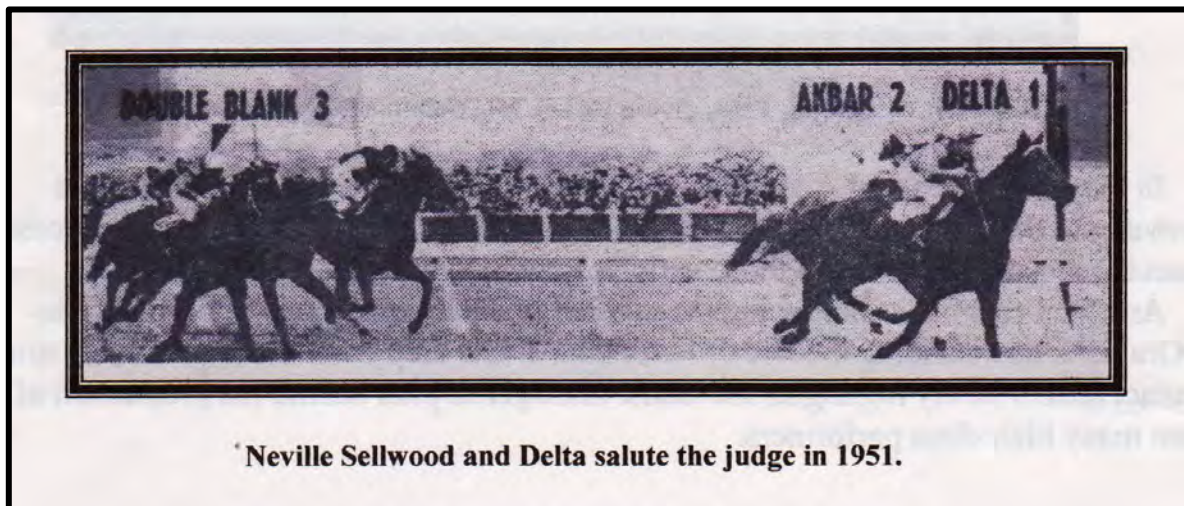
In 1934, this time under extreme conditions, Peter Pan was again victorious carrying 9st 10lb (61.5kg).



**The one they talk about. Peter Pan winning the Melbourne Cup in 1934.  
Bred by Rodney Dangar at Singleton. His sire Pantheon standing at Kia-Ora at  
the time of his son's dual successes in 1932 and 1934.**

Five years further on and we find Maikai and Pantler, both sired by Pantheon, filling second and third places respectively. Maikai, from Western Australia, suffered a narrow defeat by Old Rowley in the 1940 running of the major handicap. Nineteen forty-six saw yet another “Kia Ora” product figure in the prizemoney, this time, Carey by Midstream (imp.) finished in third position.

The year 1951 saw the mighty Delta by Midstream (imp.) from Gazza by Magpie (imp.) successfully carry Neville Sellwood to victory.

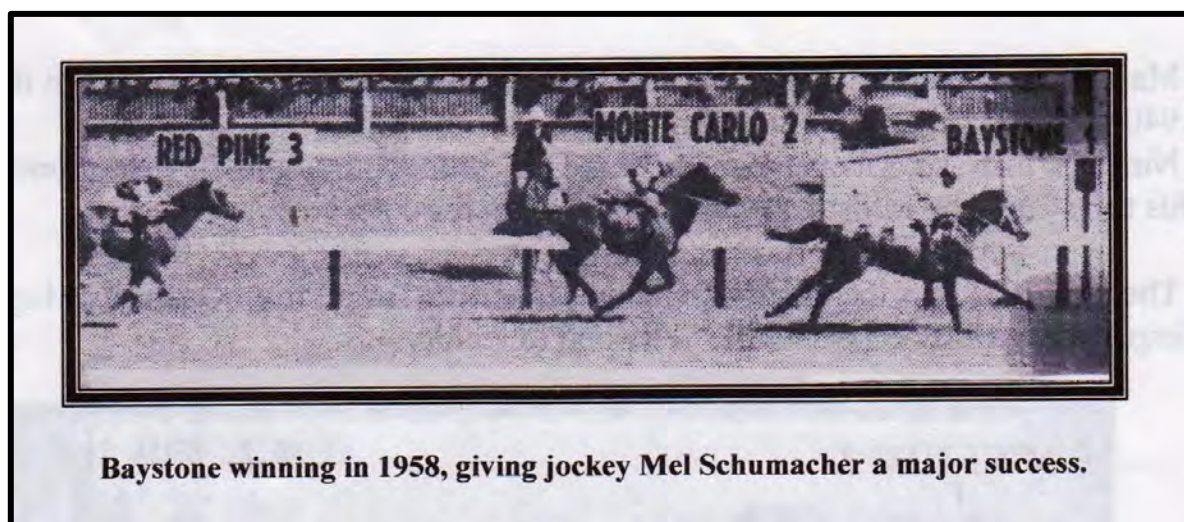


“Kia Ora” by this time was becoming known world-wide as the greatest horse nursery in the Southern Hemisphere, but it was to rise to still greater heights by 1956 when Evening Peel by Delville Wood (imp.) from Mission Chimes by Le Grand Duc, another Kia-Ora import, reigned supreme in the great two-mile event to defeat the New Zealand great Redcraze.





Baystone, in 1958, by Brimstone (imp.) from Unity by Manitoba (imp.) was the final Kia-Ora bred to take the two mile stayer's classic bringing to an end a domination that had run for near on 35 years.



In these latter years of Australian racing and breeding where the pendulum has swung to the sprinting breed of racehorse it is highly unlikely that what this world acclaimed stud achieved in those early years will ever be achieved again. Any stud capable of producing the number of Melbourne Cup winners as “Kia Ora” did, and standing the sire of Peter Pan, a dual cup winner and producing nine placegetters, surely highlights the astute managerial plan behind the production of so many high class performers.

*Footnote: I believe ‘Cambridge Stud’, Cambridge, NZ might mount a challenge to the number of individual Melbourne Cup winners produced?*

Harley was correct to anoint Kia Ora as the ‘jewel in the crown’ of thoroughbred studs in the Upper Hunter throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main challengers would be Moses Bros. ‘Arrowfield’ and the Thompson family’s ‘Widden’.

Bill Whittaker wrote an excellent resume of Kia Ora in the Bloodhorse Review, published in August 2006. Bill pays tribute to Percy Miller who *“always thought less of his own pocket than of the bloodhorse industry. He would cut his losses rather than unload failures”*. Bill describes how there was great rivalry from the 1920s to the 1950s between the Thompson family (Widden, Oakleigh, Yarraman Park, Camyr Allyn, Tarwyn Park) and Kia Ora with the later gaining hegemony following the death of Widden’s two great stallions Valais and his champion son Heroic.

In the period identified Kia Ora produced no less than EIGHT W S Cox Plate winners between 1927 and 1953. These were Amounis (1927), Chatham (1932 and 1934), Young Idea (1936 and 1937), Delta (1939) and Hydrogen (1952 and 1953) The three stand-out sires were Magpie, Midstream and Delville Wood plus Peter Pan’s sire Pantheon.

Kia Ora's seven winners of the Melbourne Cup sired at Kia Ora in these 'golden years' were: Windbag (1925), Statesman (1928), Peter Pan (1932 and 1934), Delta (1951), Evening Peal (1956) and Baystone (1958). Pantheon was purchased by Percy Miller for 7250 guineas at the dispersal of J E and C H Brien's neighbouring Kingsfield Stud in 1929. Pantheon had actually been conceived at the latter stud by R R Dangar's mare Alwina. Rodney Dangar owned Baroona Stud at Whittingham near Singleton where Peter Pan was raised.



## Shannon

Almost more than any other horse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century 'Shannon' epitomises the very best of folk lore in both thoroughbred breeding and racing in the Upper Hunter Valley. He captured all the elements of hardship, perseverance, application, dedication, romance, rich drama, emotion, high theatre and human endeavour in his truly remarkable career. Percy Miller, Bert Riddle, Peter Riddle and Barney O'Brien became household names. Later added to the list were W. J. 'Knockout' Smith with further loathing and lustre to Darby Munro.



Shannon was foaled at Kia Ora Stud in the New South Wales Hunter Valley in the spring of 1941. His sire Midstream was a son of Blandford, and his dam Idle Words was by the champion stallion Magpie. Their union was then unremarkable. The Blandford line was new to Australian breeding, and Shannon was dropped from only the second crop of Midstream progeny. Although plain and small he proved far from unremarkable. In five seasons of Sydney racing Shannon was peerless.

He won the Epsom Handicap, King's Cup and George Main Stakes (twice); sometimes a length in hand, sometimes six. He defeated horses such as Flight and Tea Rose in an era marked by heroes including Bernborough, and he was quick. Crazy quick. Shannon's unofficial time in the 1946 Epsom mile (1:32.5) still stands at Randwick, as does a seven-furlong record at Rosehill. By the time he came up for sale in 1947, he was a rising 7-year-old but remarkably preserved. He had raced only 25 times.

Shannon's sale to the U.S. followed a trend of Australian bloodstock steaming its way to American farms at that time. Beau Pere, Ajax, and Bernborough had all found stud careers in America.

Shannon was to tread new territory. He wasn't sold to stud; he was sold to race. He became the first Australian Thoroughbred to infiltrate the highest levels of American horse racing.

Taking quite some time to find his best form and after much archaic and bureaucratic drama the 'Bullet from Down Under' found his true metier. In rapid succession in 1948 he won the Argonaut, Hollywood Gold Cup, Forty-Niners, Golden Gate, and San Francisco handicaps. Shannon broke long established records for nine and ten furlong races in the process.

He was syndicated and sent to Spendthrift Farm owned by the leviathan Leslie Combs II. Although well patronized by his syndicate of owners Shannon's stud record did not reflect his racing record. He was a far better racehorse than stallion. He produced 132 foals of racing age. One hundred and nineteen made it to the racetrack of which 100 were winners. Shannon produced only six stakes winners before he died in 1955.



Shannon at Spendthrift Farm, Keeneland Meadows, Lexington KY in 1951

(With acknowledgement Jessica Owers: 'Shannon': Ebury Press 2013. Published by Random House Pty Ltd)

## Back to the 'Deen

By Harley Walden 2000

The Aberdeen Jockey Club was founded in 1898; down through the years suffering a number of setbacks, including three floods, the first in 1913, the second in 1955 and the one that finally ended horse racing in Aberdeen was in February 1971.

It's near on thirty years since the Aberdeen club last unfurled its flag at the pretty Riverside racetrack situated in the bend of the Hunter River at Aberdeen (Jefferson Park). Long gone are the times when the quietude and lethargy gave way to the pounding of hooves and raucous and staccato voices of the men supporting their satchels, those were the good old days, the roarin' days when the 'Deen boasted one of the most progressive clubs in Northern NSW.

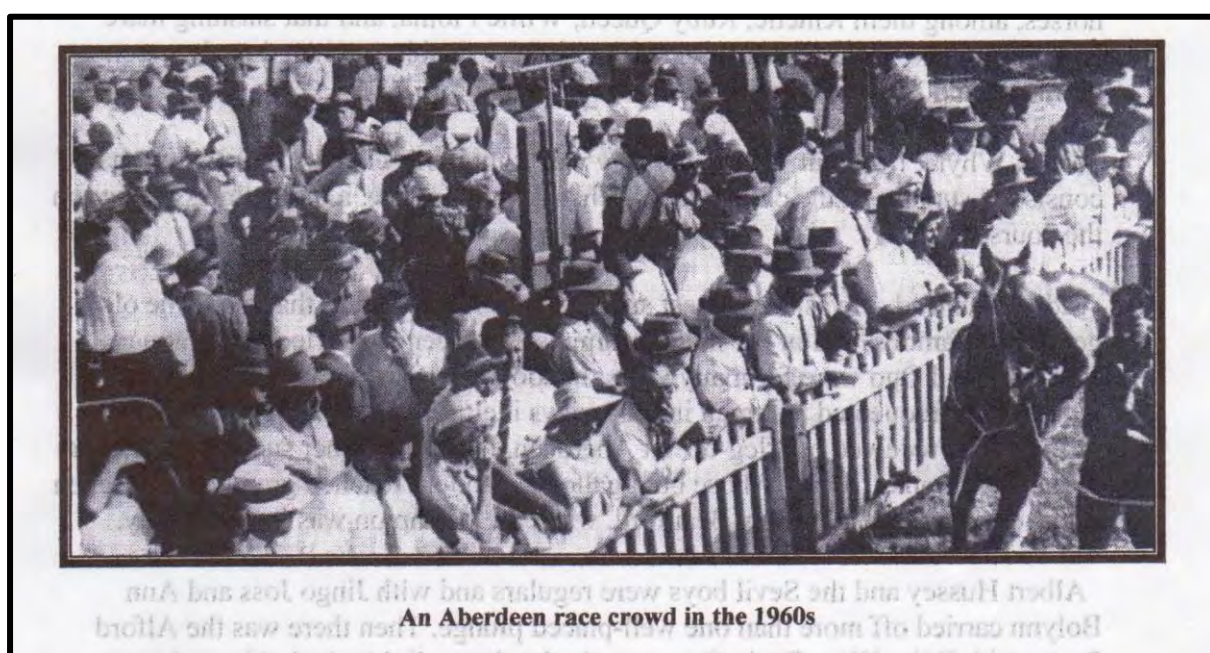


Image courtesy of the Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Although we are in the year 2000, and the past seems a long time ago, a cursory glance through memorabilia will revive memories for the younger of the district whose parents and grandparents were involved when racing was at a pinnacle in "Tiger Town".

Sportsmen and women, like good horses, go the way of all flesh, but the long list of some familiar names still finds their place in the treasure-trove of local racing history.

The name Fleming will be remembered and Tom Fleming was a doyen among judges, his verdicts still unchallenged. Likewise Tom Gallan, whose deft fingers and clear vision enabled him to carry out the important post of timekeeper. He and his old gelding, Ogo, will be recalled, the old horse must have known every blade of grass on the Aberdeen track, regulars losing count of just how many times the old fellow negotiated the undulating, yet safe surface.

Arthur Hardy in the Secretarial chair giving a hand to welcome all and sundry, Arthur was a prince in the game, many times filling in as judge for the Scone Race Club in its fledgling years.

The name Day is closely related to all aspects of sport in and around Aberdeen, and a stroll through the paddock finds Roy Day, who holds his hands up in racing – just cannot recall the many changes that passed through his hands.

Harry Oakes, whose success with Allunga, Flying Knight and Co., are well known, while Tom O'Brien would have mirrored the days when he had a hand in Aberdonia and Cortuena, both consistent and brilliant gallopers with whom Scott Johnston and "Toss" Gardiner likewise, had a big hand in.

Scott Johnston was always on hand and with him a string of no less than six horses, among them Kinetic, Ruby Queen, Willie Ploma, and that slashing mare Blue Tilly, who had a sequence of six wins (three doubles) at meetings between Armidale and Newcastle, all in the space of eight days.

Frank Whyte, from out Tooloogan way was right in his element, keeping with his consistent support of the club, with his charge Our Voyage, a many times winner on the course.

Sid Whitehead, it was that honest and great old mare, Mater, that made the old gentleman famous, and in her many triumphs Aberdeen supported her to a man. The mare and Ogo were for many years the idols of the local racing fans. Others who frequented the track in those days included Les Haigh of Rogilla history, who received his "leg up" at Aberdeen, like many other successful mentors of the day. Frank Cronan, whose bold galloper Pandora reached grand heights, even to the downing of the mighty Beauford, when the champion was in his heyday.

Albert Hussey and the Sevil boys were regulars and with Jingo Joss and Anne Boleyn carried off more than one well-placed plunge. Then there was the Alford Bros., with Ruby King, Rorie Queen and other lesser lights. Jack Almond, over from Denman, always had a handy one. Bill "Chummy" Gardiner kept the best of them striding at their top with his more than useful gelding, Longmark. Last, but not least, Charlie Fittock, official and owner, Albert Friedman of Wingen and Tom O'Donnell of Scone, Jim Sweeney and Dan Perkins who plied their calling as bookmakers for many years, later their places taken by Ernie Marks, and his second-lieutenant, Arthur Fox.

The Aberdeen Race Club was always blessed with a host of top committeemen, as well as members and supporters. It was he manager of Aberdeen Meatworks, from 1924 to 1954, Lou Davies, who is credited with putting the club back on its feet after the First World War. Not only was he President for many years, but also ran his string of good horses trained by Ernie Cribb.

Such was the strength of the committee, Aberdeen business man Mr. Arthur Taylor served as treasurer for 32 years, later becoming the President. The club ran meetings, three or four times a year and was able to race through the Depression years because of constant employment at the meat works.

During the early nineteen-forties the Aberdeen club hosted several meetings for the Scone Race Club before local racing settled into White Park. One such meeting was held on November 11, 1944, resulting in Valiant Hero, trained at Scone by Scott Johnston, winning the Scott Memorial Hospital Cup, run over seven furlongs. Another feature of the program was the dual success of Red Kennel in the Maiden and Probationers Handicaps, the gelding prepared at Aberdeen by Jerry O'Brien. The best performance of the fixture, however, went to Jungle King, the brown son of Harinero, landing the Nurses Handicap, over six furlongs, with the steadier of 11 stone (70kgs), which included 42lb (19kg) of dead weight.



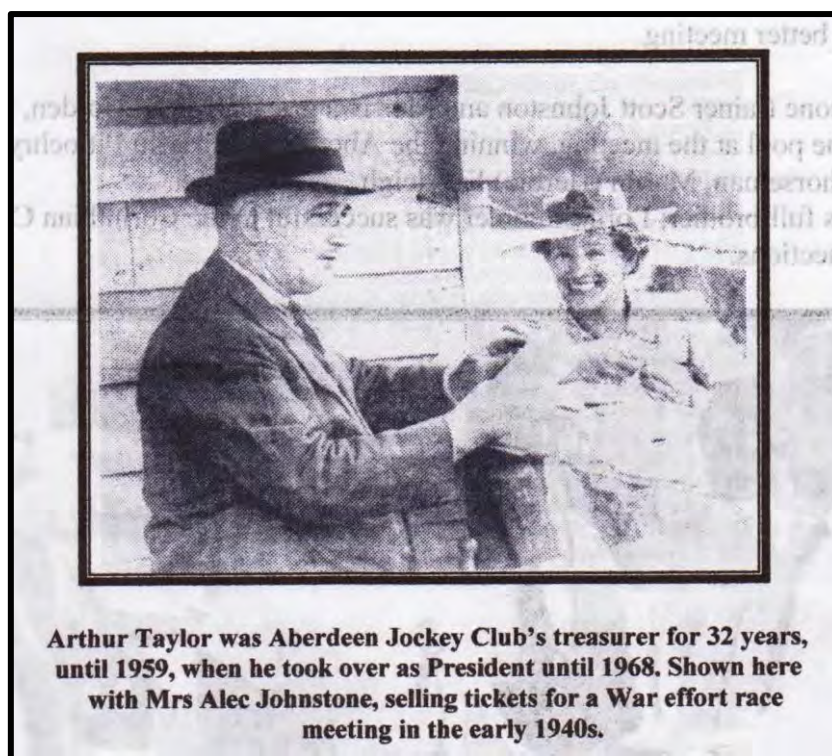


Image courtesy of the Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Over the years, if there had to be a highlight singled out for mention on the old track, it probably would have occurred on a Saturday in September 1950; a memorable day for Scone apprentice, Ross Snowdon, who rode a double hat trick. The young horseman rode all six winners on the program, four of those for his "master", Scone trainer, Scott Johnston. (*Amanuensis note: Ross is father of champion trainer Peter Snowdon; grandfather of Paul*).

It seems ironic that the Aberdeen track should become the scene that almost cost Ross Snowdon his life. It was at this course with its famous "dip" that almost claimed the life of the Scone horseman, when three horses came down in a sensational fall. The year was 1952, and the fall occurred as the field was about to come up out of the "dip", a furlong and three-quarters from home. For no apparent reason, Snowdon's mount, Deep End, crossed his front legs and fell heavily. In a flash, Pacobah (N. Bell), and Gay Cup (K. Clement), were over the top of the fallen horse. Clement was unharmed, with Bell suffering a hip injury. The head injuries received by Snowdon were substantial, and left him in a coma for several days. Ross Snowdon lived in Singleton up until his death a couple of years ago' often recalled the fall and his close brush with death.

The devastation left by the 1955 flood left the track and the amenities in complete ruin, but after a long idleness and with plenty of voluntary labour, racing at Aberdeen resumed on May 2, 1959. With a new President, Mr. Arthur Taylor in the charge, the two Vice-Presidents, Mr. J. P. Fleming, then 89 years of age and Mr. W. R. D. Stephens, 82, said they had not seen a better meeting.

It was Scone trainer Scott Johnston and Merriwa grazier, Mr. G. Hordern, who scooped the pool at the meeting, winning the Aberdeen Cup with Pitlochry, ridden by Scone horseman Martin (Herbie) Eveleigh. Pitlochry's full brother, Lord Stranraer was successful in the Corinthian Cup for the same connections.

When the Aberdeen Club held its New Year race meeting on Saturday, January 9, 1971, little did they realise that this was to be the final outing on the old track, with the floods that arrived some weeks later laying it to rest for ever.

By all reports the final meeting was well attended with winners coming out of the stable of Wilf ("Wiffo") Barker, Ron Englebrecht, Reg Fletcher and Roy Hinton. Crown Prince was successful in the Aberdeen Handicap for Scone owner/trainer, Tom Easy. Secret Tom, racing in the colours of Gloria and Stan Wicks won the final event on the old track, the gelding prepared in Scone by Tom Ollerton and ridden by the trainer's brother, Jim.



Image courtesy of the Scone Advocate and the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

Looking back over the history of the Aberdeen Race Club, it is not hard to imagine why those who still remember, speak of the old track, its committees, supporters and competitors with pride, horse racing in days gone by kept communities together, acting as a leisure outlet.

There is no doubt that down through the years the people of Aberdeen who have copped their share of hard knocks had looked to their racing for lift, but sadly though the elements and various other reasons, Aberdeen, like many other smaller country race clubs have hauled down their "flags", never to be hoisted again.

*Footnote: I attended the final meeting at Aberdeen. I recall the win by Secret Tom; and also that Roy Hinton won with a beautifully bred bay filly/mare by Pipe of Peace ('Peace Prize'?) which R. F. Moses (Fairways) desperately wanted to buy! He had lost a Pipe of Peace mare of his own 'Peace Offering'.*



**"The Boss" John Inglis**



PLATE 39. THE SYDNEY YEARLING SALES. *Above:* Mr John Inglis cajoles buyers, under the watchful eye of veteran auctioneer Mr Reg Inglis. *Below:* View of the sale-ring, showing the top-priced yearling of the 1954 sales in the ring. This brown colt by Delville Wood (imp.) from Best Wishes brought 6500 guineas.

Photo: *Courtesy of Douglas M Barrie 'The Australian Bloodhorse'*

## John Inglis aka **"The Boss"**

John Inglis ... was his unit's SP bookie during the war.

Former highly valued Inglis employee and Scone Bloodstock Agent Kieran Moore has just reminded me ('The Bar', Scone 15/11/18) that John was always known as 'The Boss'; no argument and everyone knew who! Kieran's tales from 'behind the gavel' are legendary! I will try to catch up sometime. There was a secret 'language' between John and Ossie Roberts which you could not detect from under the Morton Bay Fig Tree. I did perceive it on the few occasions when I occupied in the vendors box. You had to be an 'insider' to interpret the signs! Suffice it to say that there were 'favoured' vendors and buyers; and then there were others! It was a very serious contest.

I was going to call this blog 'The Rock'. I should have done; it would have been apposite. Almost 50 years ago Harold Baldwin told me the reason he stayed in the thoroughbred breeding industry was one man: John Inglis. Harold was a business man well used to the vagaries and vicissitudes of everyday business and barter transactions; occasionally encountering the recusant, rebarbative, fraudulent and serially mendacious. John Inglis represented the very pinnacle of integrity, honour, honesty, decency and reliability. He was an immutable constant in a cabal with few others. Harold trusted him implicitly. I quickly learned to do the same. The industry does not always engender such implicit trust.

In the encomium reproduced below there is reference to 'hoaxers'. I was once the unwitting victim of a serious hoax. John was my salvation. I had just sold a yearling by 'Bletchingly' for the then enormous sum of \$105,000:00 in about 1980 knocked down to champion trainer T J Smith. My brown colt out of 'Beyond All' was lot number 13 in the Easter Catalogue. 'Beyond All' was a sister-in-blood to champion mare 'Lowland'. 'Kingston Town' was at his peak and 'Bletchingly' was champion sire. Angus Armanasco had inspected him and declared "he was the most like 'Bletchingly' he had seen". The planets were aligned. I was floating on air as I descended from the vendor's box. I almost knocked over cold, grey-eyed George Freeman who had the next lot in the ring. From there things started to go awry. The supposed purchaser, a Mr. Prosser, came back to the stables with us and discussed possible names. The same buyer also bought a Biscay colt from Sir Tristan Antico's 'Baramul Stud' for \$80,000:00. I conducted an interview with a commercial TV station. The portents were excellent; until Mr. Prosser turned out to be a complete fraud! John Inglis tried to chase him down including through a local Synagogue but the man was a charlatan without any money, capacity or intent to pay! John came to see me. He looked me in the eye and said: 'Don't worry Bill; Tommy (T J Smith) and I have been doing business for 50 years. You'll get your money'. He was as good as his word. My colt raced as 'Norseman' and won a midweek race at Rosehill for c-owner Mrs. Darby Munro. Sir Tristan's Biscay colt was more successful racing as 'The Challenge'.

When I accompanied the Baramul horses to the USA in 1970 my immediate boss was Jack Flood. Jack worked for 'Mr. Inglis'. He always called him that and was full of lavish praise. On another occasion Hugh Munro from 'Keira', Bingara turned up late one winter Sunday afternoon with a float-load of cull broodmares for sale. Who helped him unload and provide stabling; none other than J. A. Inglis 'as soon as he'd finished feeding the pigeons'. Racing pigeons were his relaxing passion. We used to host release for his club at our Scone Cup Race Meeting. It was a very popular feature. The winning pigeon used to take little over an hour reaching its loft in Randwick. As always John and the firm William Inglis & Sons were the best friends we had in Scone. They sponsored races and invested significantly in building sales boxes at White Park. There were myriad other courtesies and kindnesses. Not many are recorded.



Cliff Ellis and I attended Tom Flynn's (Oakleigh Stud) Memorial Service in the beautiful Heber Chapel in Cobbitty. John delivered the eulogy but was overcome with emotion. He was an extremely sensitive man. On another occasion a close family member had passed away. I wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Inglis. The next time I saw John he took my hand in his and held it firmly. Tears poured down his cheeks. No words were necessary. Mrs. Inglis had been a close school friend of my late mother-in-law. It always felt like 'family'. With John Inglis his word was his bond. There aren't many who can justifiably claim this honour.

An eye for horseflesh and hoaxers' Hush Puppies

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/obituaries/an-eye-for-horseflesh-and-hoaxers-hush-puppies/2006/07/27/1153816316050.html>

July 28, 2006

### **John Inglis, 1917-2006**

THE Australian turf is awash with people known, sometimes fondly and more often euphemistically, as "colourful racing identities". But, says the writer and broadcaster Max Presnell, true gentlemen of the turf are thin on the ground. John Inglis is generally regarded to have been one of the few.

Inglis, whose funeral was held in Randwick yesterday, left a mark on the thoroughbred industry, not least through his role as auctioneer at the sales under the Moreton Bay fig at Newmarket. He would begin the sale every day with a cry of "Sale O! Sale O! Sale O!" then sell through to lunchtime, eat a pie, then sell to dusk.

He retired as William Inglis & Son managing director and chief auctioneer in 1988, although staying on as chairman and then a director. Yet, at 88 and in failing health, he attended this year's Easter yearling sale and the Randwick autumn carnival and was pleased with the result – a record turnover of \$117 million in four days of selling.

John Alan Inglis was born into the family of stock and station agents founded by William Inglis, the son of Thomas and Catherine, who migrated from Scotland in 1830. William started the company in 1867 with Joseph Butler. It was an auctioneering and produce agency in George Street, Sydney. Butler left the partnership after 10 years and, in 1882, Inglis began a "horse bazaar" between Castlereagh and Pitt streets.

The family conducted its first yearling sale at rented premises in Newmarket in 1906 and bought the property in 1917, the year John became the first of three children for Reg and Bubbles Inglis. The house on the Newmarket property became home for John, Dick and Diana, and John was to live there for 75 years.

Educated at Coogee and Shore, he began work at 15 for William Inglis in the company's O'Connell Street headquarters as an office boy. John and Dick would wander the trainers' stables, talking horses and seeking tips. One of John's early passions was pigeon showing and racing.

Trained as a gunner, Inglis was stationed near Toowoomba during World War II, making friends with Bernie Byrnes, who was to become his trainer. Inglis became the unit's illegal SP bookmaker, cleaning up the company's loose change every week. He and Byrnes also ran a two-up game. At Toowoomba races he saw a two-year-old horse, Bernborough, which he said later was the best horse he ever set eyes on.

Back in Newmarket after the war, Inglis bought a colt with two unhealthy looking legs from Percy Miller, of Kia Ora stud. Inglis called the animal Meteor and gave it to Byrnes to train. Meteor won 10 races and Inglis was hooked. "The Boss", as Inglis became known, had a knack of selecting a good horse by an unfashionable sire.

The Miller family later gave Inglis their familiar racing colours – light and dark blue diamonds and red cap. The best horse to carry them was Shaftesbury Avenue, which Inglis owned with trainer Bart Cummings and which won six group one races. Disorderly, a two-year-old gelding, carried them to victory at Newcastle two weeks ago.

Inglis took over the company reins from his father in 1957. He developed friendships with breeders and paid annual visits to studs to see the young horses. He would watch them walk off the floats when they arrived to be sold. His eye for a horse was such that he remembered them when they came up for sale. The best bargain he ever saw was Flight, bought by Brian Crowley for 60 guineas (\$126) in 1942. Flight won 24 races and over \$60,000, making her the highest money-winning mare.

His judgement in other areas was sometimes tested. A hoaxer masquerading as a blind man bought yearlings one year before it was discovered he had no money to pay. After wealthy Arab racing enthusiasts took an interest in Australian horseflesh, John Singleton had a couple of men dressed in Arab clothing strike fear into the hearts of other buyers, until the Hush Puppies under their white robes were noticed.

Some young trainers had their start after Inglis allowed them time to pay when owners were hard to find. The Inglis company ran into trouble after Cummings, one of the leading trainers, owed the firm \$7.5 million in 1991 for horses bought in 1989. The matter was resolved.

There were also problems with Brian Yuill, who bought 15 per cent of William Inglis with hidden interest-free loans. Before serving four years in jail from 1994 for defrauding Spedley Securities, Yuill was a director of Tulloch Lodge Ltd, a syndication company based on the stables owned by the trainer Tommy Smith.

Legend has it that Inglis said to Smith: "Tommy, racing has been good to you. Why don't you pay it [the money owing]?" Smith replied: "You must be mad. Why don't you?"

John Inglis married Margaret Whitford in 1950. They had three children, William, Jan and Arthur.

He is survived by Margaret, Arthur, Jan and seven grandchildren. His son Arthur is now managing director of William Inglis & Son.

## **Tony Stephens**

### **John Inglis, thoroughbred auctioneer, gentleman and scholar, dies at 88**

**By John Holloway** 21 July 2006 — 10:00am

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/racing/john-inglis-thoroughbred-auctioneer-gentleman-and-scholar-dies-at-88-20060721-gdo0a5.html>

JOHN Inglis, the doyen of Australia's thoroughbred auctioneers, passed away after a lengthy illness in Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, on Wednesday night. He was 88.

Inglis, whose family's thoroughbred and cattle operation dates back to 1867, was regarded by peers as a gentleman and a scholar. He loved racing and had been honoured with life memberships by the Australian Jockey Club and Sydney Turf Club.

Inglis had been ill for several years but still attended the races quite often with his wife, Margaret.

Apart from selling horses, Inglis also raced successful gallopers, with the Bart Cummings-trained chestnut Shaftesbury Avenue the best by far. He also had a successful association with Ron Croghan, a friend of more than 50 years, selecting yearlings for the pair to race, buying them at modest sums.

"The Boss", as he was affectionately called, was always close by when the floats arrived at the Newmarket stables at Randwick with the yearlings to sell at the respective auctions. He would watch the yearlings come off the floats and his eye for a horse was so outstanding that he could remember which ones he liked and invariably bought one or two at each sale.

A great number were trained by his close friend Bernie Byrnes, who lived on the Inglis Newmarket complex for a number of years.

Inglis saw many ups and downs during his thoroughbred selling career and possibly the most disturbing event concerned two of Australia's greatest trainers, Tommy Smith and Cummings. Both trainers experienced financial problems in paying for their yearling purchases some 20 years ago and, as a result, Inglis's arranged a sale, called the Night of the Stars, where the yearlings were re-sold to try to recoup some of their outstanding debts.

Inglis stuck by both trainers and remained great friends with the pair through the ordeal.

Woodlands Stud general manager Trevor Lobb, who began his working career with Inglis's in 1965, recalls many a sale when Inglis would auction every yearling from the catalogue.

"He was an amazing person," Lobb said. "He'd start the sale off in the morning and sell through to lunchtime where there was a recess for about an hour, join the vendors in having a hot pie for lunch, and then going through all afternoon and back up again the next day until all lots were sold."

Inglis is survived by his wife Margaret, son Arthur and daughter Jan. His nephew Reg Inglis is the managing director of William Inglis & Son.

**Vale John Inglis**

**<http://www.thoroughbrednews.com.au/News/Story/24850>**

21 July 2006

by Stallions.com.au

The thoroughbred industry has lost one of its finest with the passing yesterday of John Inglis.

The patriarch of Australia's foremost bloodstock auction house, the man known to all as "The Boss", probably dropped the hammer on more thoroughbred horses than anyone in the world.

And he sold every one of them – as many as 40,000 – with the same honour and decency he displayed in every aspect of his life. Born in 1918, John Inglis represented the fourth generation of a family that arrived in New South Wales from Scotland in 1829.

Soon after landing in the colony, Thomas Inglis received a grant of 60 acres of land at Camden where he established a farm called Craigend, which still exists and is still farmed by an Inglis.

The auction business was begun by Thomas' first son William who started selling produce at Camden and then went into the livestock business in Sydney, where he established the Inglis Horse Bazaar that operated for 30 years in Pitt St.

In 1906 the business moved to the Newmarket site near Randwick racecourse where it has stood for 100 years.

William Inglis passed the reins to his son John who died in 1914 when they were, in turn, handed to his son Reg who kept the business going while his older brothers were away at the war.

The firm of William Inglis and Son rode the boom of the 1920s, becoming Australia's biggest bloodstock auctioneers, only to plunge back to earth with stock market crash of 1930, surviving the depression largely by selling cattle.

By the time the next major crisis arrived, the latest John Inglis and his brother Dick were running the firm.

That difficulty was the collapse of tax-minimisation syndicates, the most high-profile of which was the Cups King syndicate put together by trainer Bart Cummings.

Cummings faced financial ruin with around \$12 million worth of yearlings and no-one to buy them.

But thanks to "The Boss", who ensured all the breeders were paid, the great trainer was allowed to trade his way out of trouble.

John Inglis personally sold every yearling offered by his firm for around 35 years after WWII.

"In my day I'd do the lot. Be in the box all day," he said.

"The only time I didn't sell them was when a very good racehorse was up. Then my father would step in."

These days five men do the same job.

"The Boss" gave the selling away in 1988, handing the running of the business over to his nephews Reg and Jamie and his son Arthur.

But until he fell ill a few months ago he would visit the office every day. Reg Inglis yesterday described his uncle's passing, at the age of 88, as a sad reminder of lost times.

"It is the end of an era," he said.

"It is a sad day but a happy release. He had become quite unwell and he didn't like being that way.



“He was the the doyen of auctioneers in Australia and a wonderful man who was universally liked.

“He personified common decency, his word was his bond and he was a very humble man.”

William Inglis and Sons sold many of the greatest horses to have raced in Australia to some of the greatest names in the country.

But none did more for the game than the man who put true meaning into his company’s motto:  
“Unshakeable integrity”.

*Stallions.com.au*

## Bert Lillye

The late Bert Lillye was *the* racing journalist par excellence. If the pen is indeed mightier than the sword then Bert's construct was exquisitely honed pure rapier steel with an incisive pointy tip. Even his peers acknowledged his craft. Among these legendary luminaries are figured Jack Ward, Bill Casey, Keith Robbins, Max Presnell, Bill Whittaker, John Holloway and even Les Carlyon. Racing writers were employed to keep punters informed. The furious advancement of new age technology has caused a withering on the vine of media's changing face. Few are left. On retirement Bert said: "My greatest disappointment is that the wonderful characters are fast disappearing from the racecourse, the victims of progress. The characters have gone even faster than the racing writers."



Presentation of the 'Bim' Thompson Memorial Flying Handicap, Scone Cup Meeting 1981

David Bath Bill Howey Robert Thompson A O Ellison Antony Thompson Peter Meahan & Bert Lillye

Bert Lillye was the best friend the Scone Race Club ever had. He retained a lifelong passion for Scone and district. The Scone Cup in May each year was his most favoured destination exceeding even that of the Melbourne Cup. He brought an entourage with him. Being a most gregarious person he appreciated more than anything the abundant hospitality lavishly bestowed. Famous watering holes included 'Trevors Stud' in Phillip Street, Scone. This was the home of Archie and Betty Shepherd. Rum and milk was the 'heart starter' every day at 6:00am. On one famous or perhaps infamous occasion Bert and I overdid it.

We were expected on Radio Station 2NM at Muswellbrook to talk about the Scone Cup. We lingered rather too long at 'Trevors Stud' and were running late. The anchor journalist Mike Pritchard (now ABC) was distraught! He'd run out of content and advertisements with almost 40 minutes to fill. No worries! He couldn't shut us up when time expired. We talked through the 10 minute news break as well. Both outward and return journeys would have been criminal today. This was before RBT. On reflection perhaps we were culpable anyway? I was the guilty driver.

Bert Lillye was the ultimate 'wordsmith' challenged only by Carlyon but exceeding him in passion. He was a perfectionist who did not cut corners. His research was profound; his 'nose' for a story piquant. In pursuit of a good yarn Bert was absolutely determined and stoically single minded. Bert was inducted into the Australian Racing Hall of Fame in Brisbane in May 2015 which is the industry's leading accolade. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> occasion the Racing Hall of Fame honoured the luminaries of the turf; both equine and human. Chairman of the Hall of Fame selection panel Bob Charley said the event was an opportunity to recognise the people and the horses that make racing the "unique sport it is". Lillye joins previously elected journalists A.B. "Banjo" Paterson, Bert Wolfe and another former Sydney Morning Herald racing editor Bill Whittaker. His presence there is richly deserved.

One of Australia's foremost racing journalists Bert Lillye was involved with the industry for almost 50 years. Lillye began work at 15 as a copy boy at 'Smith's Weekly' in 1934. From there he progressed to the Sydney Morning Herald, moved to the Daily Mirror for five years, and then returned to the Herald where he remained until his retirement in 1984. He also contributed extensively to Turf Monthly, where he commenced writing his column 'Backstage of Racing'; a feature he later continued in the Sydney Morning Herald. Lillye was an expert researcher, ever careful to verify his findings before committing them to print. Wherever possible he would look at the human angle, and show sympathy for the 'battlers' of racing. He was known as a great raconteur. Many of his stories he brought together in his collection of anecdotes 'Backstage of Racing'. I'm the very proud owner of a signed copy.

See also:

**Legendary turf journalist Bert Lillye joins greats in racing's Hall of Fame**  
**John Holloway May 21, 2015**

<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/horseracing/legendary-turf-journalist-bert-lillye-joins-greats-in-racings-hall-of-fame-20150521-gh6j1e.html>

**Racing Victoria Associates**

Bert Lillye (1919 - 1996)

<https://rv.racing.com/careers-and-education/australian-racing-museum/hall-of-fame/associates/bert-lillye>

## Father of the press box wrote from the heart

December 30, 2012

<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/horseracing/father-of-the-press-box-wrote-from-the-heart-20121229-2c0a9.html>

Worldwide, racing writers, epitomised by Bert Lillye, are withering on the vine of the media's changing face.

Even in the US most major publications had more than one scribe specialising in the horse sports but few are left.



Race apart ... Bill Casey, Keith Robbins, Bert Lillye, Jack Ward and Max Presnell with trainer Bart Cummings.

In Australia, where the turf has been more of the national psyche than a sport, mammoth staffs were employed to keep punters informed.

Being a racing writer differs from being a journalist who can write racing. Most can and might even do it better than the "expert" who produces stories and comments, tips and other menial tasks.

"*The Sydney Morning Herald* staff of the 1950s and 1960s had many proficient writers with Lillye the star performer," Neville Prendergast wrote in *From Press Box and Stable*.

"George Miller, Roy Abbott and Bill Whittaker, bloodstock expert Charles McQuillan, Sam Finlayson and Ray Kelly were also employed.

"Whittaker was one of the more astute judges and could interpret intelligently. *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran a lot of statistical stories [sweet words for compiling the official starting price] and relied heavily on accurate details men like Reg Eades, Ted Wells and Cec Poachey."



With Craig Young taking redundancy this year, Fairfax Media in Sydney has one full-time racing writer, Chris Roots, and a geriatric contributor.

Before becoming a racehorse trainer Prendergast was a contender for one of the best racing writers. Who is on top of the list in my time?

Employing guide lines of being full-time and producing over a long period are major attributes. Of course, styles have changed with some great reporters and other fine writers. But Lillye gets my vote.

"As for wordsmiths the great Bert Lillye of the 50s and 60s would be just about cancelled out by Les Carlyon of the 90s," Prendergast opined. "Perhaps Carlyon was a shade cleverer with phraseology but Lillye might just about had an edge in passion."

Carlyon writes with excellence from subjects ranging from Bart Cummings to Gallipoli but Lillye for over a half century churned out hundreds of thousands of quality words on racing. Nobody wrote more because not only did he appear in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Sun-Herald* and *Daily Mirror* in Sydney but also *Turf Monthly* before he died on February 18, 1996.

On his demise, Arnold Rodgers eulogised: "I followed Bert's advice and purchased the title *Turf Monthly* and restarted the magazine. From the day I took over 44 years ago Bert advised me. For many years he continued to put together each month's edition of *Turf Monthly*."

"Being a perfectionist he would not cut corners. Everything had to be spot on. It was for *Turf Monthly* that he began writing Backstage Of Racing, a feature he carried on for Fairfax."

*Backstage Of Racing* was also the title of a book of his columns published by John Fairfax Marketing. Lillye, too, was also the subject of a *This Is Your Life* on television which emphasised his passion for the punt and racing in general.

During World War II he went AWOL, travelling from Queensland to Sydney to see Modulation win the 1944 Epsom. Subsequent fines and confinement to barracks, he figured, were reasonable prices to pay to see a major race live. In pursuit of a good yarn Lillye was ever determined.

"How can I forget the disastrous floods of the 1960s that put most of the Richmond district under water?" he wrote in his final column.

"Dozens of valuable racehorses were lost. Boats were only available to civil rescue authorities. But Jim Walsh, publican and committeeman of the Hawkesbury Racing Club, came to the rescue. He rounded up a small boat for me and the photographer to search for horses.

We obtained scoop photographs when we found Martello Towers [an AJC Derby winner] covered in mud but alive ..."

What Lillye didn't disclose is that he approached the *SMH* sports editor, Doug Gardiner, to ask for an office car - because he didn't drive - to pursue the story and was knocked back. Thus he called upon photographer Ron Bickley, who rode shotgun with him on most of his country ventures for *Turf Monthly*, and they came up with the goods.

"I genuinely believe Bernborough was the best racehorse I've seen," Lillye maintained. "What he did under enormous weights as a six-year-old stallion made him a freak ..."

"Bill Cook was my favourite jockey but Ron Quinton would be a champion in any era. As for trainers, how can anyone go past Thomas John Smith, MBE, who set a record that will never be equalled and one of greatest success stories of our time and that's not restricted to racing."

After leaving Fairfax, Lillye contributed even more to racing as a member of the Kembla Grange committee. "My greatest disappointment is that the wonderful characters are fast disappearing from the racecourse, the victims of progress," he said.

The characters have gone even faster than the racing writers.

No doubt latter generations are as good, and probably more versatile as those who look down from the walls of the old Randwick press box, which is going, too.

Young now drives a bus for school children on the central coast with aplomb and patience which none of us, Lillye in particular, could have done.

### **Legendary turf journalist Bert Lillye joins greats in racing's Hall of Fame**

**John Holloway May 21, 2015**

**<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/horseracing/legendary-turf-journalist-bert-lillye-joins-greats-in-racings-hall-of-fame-20150521-gh6j1e.html>**

Former Sydney Morning Herald turf editor Bert Lillye was inducted into the Australian Racing Hall of Fame in Brisbane on Thursday night. It is fitting Lillye be included among Australia's racing luminaries, which is the industry's leading accolade. It was the 15th occasion the Racing Hall of Fame honoured the heroes of the turf, equine and human.

Lillye was joined as an associate inductee by Eduardo Cojuangco, while jockeys Glen Boss and Robert Thompson also entered the Hall of Fame, while George Moore was lifted to legend status.

Danehill, Choisir, Dalray and Briseis were the horses added to the Hall of Fame, while Phar Lap's trainer Harry Telford was joined by Brian Mayfield-Smith and Jim Moloney in the trainers' category.

Chairman of the Hall of Fame selection panel Bob Charley said the event was an opportunity to recognise the people and the horses that make racing the "unique sport it is". Lillye joins previously elected journalists A.B. "Banjo" Paterson, Bert Wolfe and another former Herald racing editor, Bill Whittaker, and his presence there is richly deserved.

I met Lillye while a copy boy at Fairfax's Ultimo offices, which printed the Sydney Morning Herald, The Sun and The Sun-Herald.

Being a "mad" racing follower, I was fortunate enough to have been befriended by Lillye, along with all the other famous racing writers employed by the Fairfax group.

Lillye, however, was the man who made me want to succeed in the profession and he took me under his wing in more ways than one. Yes, to be a successful racing writer, you had to be a good drinker and that was one thing he succeeded in teaching me.

He was the most prolific wordsmith I ever encountered and was very much a gambler at heart, from the war years when Bernborough was the best horse he had seen. Bert also rated Rising Fast, Dalray, Peter Pan and Tulloch each deserving their own pedestals.

Bert's love of horses saw him heavily involved in the catastrophic floods in the Windsor district, a renowned spelling district for racehorses, in the 1960s.

He approached the then SMH sports editor to supply him with a car and photographer to go to Windsor and get pictures and information for the paper but his request was denied. Lillye never had a driver's license and got in touch with his great friend and racing photographer Ron Bickley and they made their way to Windsor with local publican Jim Walsh arranging for a boat and a skipper to search the area.

What they achieved was somewhat remarkable with one of Australia's favourite racehorses Martello Towers, the winner of the 1959 three-year-old triple crown, up to his shins in water covered in mud.

The grey galloper was washed five miles downriver from where he had been spelling but thanks to the efforts of his photographer, Lillye was able to save Martello Towers and the photo's where spread all over the front page.

Bert was instrumental for my close involvement in breeding and was responsible for my first trip to Scone, which he painted to me over many a cold ale as one of the great parts of the thoroughbred industry.

Lillye also had a great fondness for Phar Lap and was intrigued how a wreath would appear at Randwick racetrack for two decades by an anonymous person who he later tracked down as Noel Hickey. The headstone from Phar Lap's grave in America was presented to the Australian Jockey Club and placed inside the track where it remains today and Hickey continued to place the wreath each year commemorating his passing in April 1932. Again it was another front page story for the doyen of racing journalists.

He also appeared on a This Is Your Life TV episode with Roger Climpson and spent many years on the administration side of the Kembla Grange Club with Keith Nolan and their efforts saved the club from extinction.

Lillye had several columns in the Herald – the Backstage of Racing with a book being released in 1985 after his retirement – along with Bloodlines, which is the name of this column I inherited 15 years ago.

Lillye passed away on February 18, 1996 and had a career in racing journalism that had spanned 50 years. There will never be another Bert Lillye.

**Johnhollysenior@yahoo.com.au**

RACING VICTORIA ASSOCIATES

Bert Lillye (1919 - 1996)

<https://rv.racing.com/careers-and-education/australian-racing-museum/hall-of-fame/associates/bert-lillye>

**“He lived life to the full, and through his pen was able to give countless other people a lot of happiness”. (Keith Robbins)**

One of Australia’s foremost racing journalists, Bert Lillye was involved with the industry for almost 50 years. Lillye began work at 15 as a copy boy at Smith’s Weekly in 1934. From there he progressed to the Sydney Morning Herald, moved to the Daily Mirror for five years, and then returned to the Herald where he remained until his retirement in 1984. He also contributed extensively to Turf Monthly, where he commenced writing his column Backstage of Racing a feature he later continued in the Sydney Morning Herald.

Lillye was an expert researcher, ever careful to verify his findings before committing them to print. Wherever possible he would look at the human angle, and show sympathy for the ‘battlers’ of racing. He was known as a great raconteur, and many of his stories he brought together in his collection of anecdotes Backstage of Racing.



Keith Robbins   Allan Speers   Ron Bickley   Bert Lillye



### **Martin 'Herbie' Eveleigh: 'Local Legend'**



***The featured image shows Herbie Eveleigh returning to scale to rapturous applause on his own horse Bo Yanko. The occasion was the Aberdeen Cup of 1989 run at White Park, Scone. Herbie received one of the warmest receptions of his long career. It helped lubricate the ambience that Bo Yanko started a short priced favourite. He was a very good racehorse.***

Apparently he was christened Martin Eveleigh; but never known by his mother's specially chosen Sunday name. He was always just 'Herbie'.

During the time White Park was the official home for the Scone Race Club (1947 – 1994) Herbie Eveleigh graduated from apprentice rider to master jockey. No-one knew the not-so-sublime subtleties of the tight little course better than Herbie. His inaugural mentor (master) was the late Scott Johnston based at Tyrone Stud on the extreme northern edge of the township. Rumour has it that from the age of 14 or even less young Herbie walked across the paddocks from the Eveleigh family home on Noblet Road to ride work for Mr Johnston. School attendance became irregular. Herbie's future was set. There were more regular 'works outs' and track-work commitments at White Park.

Knowledge of local conditions gave Herbie a significant advantage at the local meetings. However his skill set improved to the extent he became champion apprentice in the Newcastle, Hunter and Central Coast Racing Association. He graduated later to champion jockey (number of winners) within the same jurisdiction. This was a major achievement with jockeys of the calibre of Bill and John Wade based with major trainers at Broadmeadow in Newcastle. Herbie also rode regularly in the North and North West Racing Association area rarely venturing outside these two domains. There was enough to be done near home.

Most of Herbie's early wins came at the behest of his master Scott Johnston. Scott had a great team to train on behalf of an elite clientele. Many owners were pastoral beneficiaries of the Korean War inspired 'pound-a-pound' wool boom of the 50s and early 60s. Many successful graziers from the Upper Hunter and especially the Merriwa district could indulge their every whim. For many this was the means to afford racehorses. 'Pitlochry' raced by Mr Geoff Hordern and 'Farnham Castle' owned by Mr S E Edwards were extremely prolific winners for all concerned. I think Herbie won about 40 races on each? It amounted to a great score for the little local champion jockey.

Trainer Alf Marks who arrived in Scone in 1968 with Sam Hordern was Herbie's nemesis; but it was each-way traffic. Alf was skilled but succumbed to a chronic affliction. Exposed very early to the ravages of alcohol addiction Herbie resolved never to touch a drop in his life. He hasn't; advantage Herbie. Alf was different. He struggled with his demons. He was always suspicious Herbie was 'taking him for a ride'. I doubt it; but the gremlins persisted. *'He's seven fox power cunning'* was one of Alf's favourite descriptors. *'Mrs Kelly wouldn't let Ned play with Herbert'* was another pearl. He claimed they both suffered from insomnia ('the insomniac' was his exact call). *'He lies awake all night thinking how he's going to outsmart me; and I lie awake all night thinking how he thinks he's going to outsmart me'*! They were interesting times.

Alf was my nemesis; but I really liked him. Late one night I received a call from Alf. He was suffering from the 'horrors' in his room at the Golden Fleece Hotel His old mate Jack Gill had been in town with Gill Brothers circus. Alf and Jack had been on a five day 'bender'. Alf called me 'Herbert' when in the horrors. He claimed *'they were after him'*. 'They' turned out to be 'imaginary weasels with faces thirty feet long, a long dark bloke in a corner' and he 'thought he had hepatitis'. He probably did. I called my friend Dr David Warden and described the clinical signs. David immediately diagnosed DTs.

He prescribed the tranquillizer 'Largactil' which I could pick up at the hospital. I did. It was now about midnight. I called to see Alf. He was in a mess like I hadn't seen before. Glazed anguished expression and profuse sweating were obvious clinical signs. Then there was the diatribe about 'weasels with faces thirty feet long, weird strangers in the room and claims of hepatitis'. I managed to insist he take the medicine while I looked on. I left and went back to bed. I lived not far away. About 2am my telephone rang. It was Alf again; same story. I didn't want to disturb anyone. This time I took some animal/horse 'Largactil'. I now knew the human dose. I watched as he took my embellished dose of 'Largactil'. I left and went back to bed; again. Two days later I saw Alf. He acknowledged me and told me 'he'd slept like a baby for 24 hours and when he woke up he was fine'! He no longer called me Herbert!

I digressed; but with Herbie Eveleigh and Alf Marks it's worth it. There is no doubt Herbie Eveleigh is a local living legend of the racetrack. Now over 80 he's a great credit to himself and his extended family. Still active and competitive he breeds, breaks, trains and races his own. He's not strictly licensed; but who said anything about rules? On Noblet Road you make your own laws; and claim adjacent 'Crown Land' territory for grazing rights. Herbie has a very sharp mind and razor wit.

**Frank Roughan "Gun Shearer & Trainer"**



**Featured Image: 'Gentleman' Frank Roughan receiving the Merriwa Cup in 1963 won by his charge "Sir Mark"**

**Merriwa Race Club President Mr Geoff Hordern of 'Pitlochry' Merriwa holds the microphone while Mrs Hordern presents the trophy to trainer Frank.**

**Acknowledgement: Mrs Doreen Roughan and Wayne Roughan of 'The Ranch'**

I could have used several other outstanding 'action' images of Frank provided by Doreen and Wayne but I'm restricted to only one on my 'blog'. His depiction as a shearer might have been more apposite; but this one is the 'sanitised' version of Frank. He was a man of many parts; and one of the most genuine ever born!

This is yet another in my series of 'Local Legends'. The objective is to preserve for posterity the rich lode of pure gold stories pertaining to real Scone identities which might otherwise be lost? Already I have paid tribute to Reg Watts, Shorty Cribb, Bobby Palmer, Cliff Ellis, Ron Jeffries and made reference to several others. The late Frank Roughan ranks with up there any of them. People around Scone still speak reverently about Frank and his exquisite skills as a shearer. He earned and kept his place as perennial Number 1 on the board. However like many of his genre, gender and generation Frank was multi-skilled in a way that few achieve today. Bush skills were paramount to employment and survival. The 'school of hard knocks' and the 'university of life' are stern tutors. Frank could turn his hand to almost anything. Apart from shearing he earned his stripes as a racehorse trainer, horse breaker, rodeo roughrider, bull rider, camp drafter, farrier, fencer and all round stockman. Apart from anything else Frank was also nature's gentleman; and a champion bloke. I never ever heard him use foul-mouthed language. 'By jingo', 'by gee whiz', 'by jeepers' and 'by crikey' were about as robust as it ever became.

I take the liberty of transcribing the eloquent and sensitive eulogy presented at his memorial service in December 2007. It's much better than I could possibly have written myself. I have only marginally manipulated the original text.

**Francis Edmond (Frank) Roughan: Born 11 December 1929; Died 21 December 2007**

*Frank Roughan was born at Muswellbrook on 11 December 1929, the son of James and Verlie Roughan. He was one of eight children; four boys and four girls; Jack, Jim, Frank and Eris; Essie, Carmel, Pauline and Norma.*

*As a boy he helped his parents on the family farm at McCully's Gap near Muswellbrook. Leaving home at 14 years of age to become a shearer, he worked at sheds all over NSW including Narrabri, Wee Waa, Walcha and as far south as Cooma. He quickly gained the reputation as the fastest 'Gun Shearer'. In the mid-1950s Frank was fabled as being among the very best. Wherever reputations were being discussed among his peers, Frank (who was known by the nickname of 'Smalley') would invariably be one of those named in discussion. It was not only his speed that made him stand out but also the quality of his workmanship. People who knew him and were taught to shear by Frank described him as a wonderful tutor, with an eye not only for quantity but quality of outcome.*

*During the off season Frank worked as a fencer. It was at one such time that he worked on a farm which is now part of the Sporting Complex near the Scone Golf Club. This farm was owned by Mr and Mrs Jim Fraser who had a young daughter by the name of Doreen. Frank and Doreen fell in love and were married in 1954 at St James' Catholic Church in Muswellbrook. They made their home in Scone, initially in Kingdon Street and later at "The Ranch" off Gundy Road. They had four children; Rosalie, Wayne, Dennis and Andrew.*



*Frank became a horse trainer in Scone during the 1950s and 1960s and had a number of jockeys working for him including apprentices Tom, Billy and Jim Ollerton. In seeking to manage his horse training and shearing commitments, he would start his day at 3:00am, feeding and working the horses, travel to his current shed, and, after doing his 10 hours, return home to feed and work the horses well into the night. He was a successful trainer, entering horses at meetings at Sydney, Newcastle, Wyong and Gosford as well as locally. His best wins were the Muswellbrook Cup in 1960 with 'Furdan Valley' and the Merriwa Cup in 1963 with 'Sir Mark'. All three Ollerton boys won races on his horses.*

*Frank passed away peacefully at the Scott Memorial Hospital in Scone on 21 December 2007 surrounded by his loving family.*

*Frank was a man of deep and abiding faith in the Catholic Church, having raised his children to be men and women of prayer who understand the importance of the church in their lives. He loved people and they loved him. He was highly regarded as a sincere man whose friendship was epitomised by loyalty and trust.*

*His basic tenet was to love and serve his fellow man wherever he may be. He always endeavoured to live by that principle. I was a work colleague in the police service of Frank's younger brother Eris who I held in the highest regard. I latterly learned to respect Frank with the same high esteem.*

### **Sporting Interests & Community Service**

In his formative years Frank tried his hand at boxing in the Maitland area joining Jim Clark and others to make up a car load. In the 1970s Frank and family joined the Scone Athletic Club. Frank was elected as President for a number of years and was Official Starter for running events. As President Frank led the club to 'Triangular Carnivals' between Muswellbrook, Denman and Scone. There was an annual pilgrimage to the Area Championships in Newcastle where Frank also officiated.

Lawn Bowls was another love of Frank's. He played consistently throughout the 1970s to the 1990s for both the Scone RSL and Scone Bowling Clubs. He won many single, doubles, triples and pennant tournaments representing both clubs.

Frank was also President of the Scone Clay Target Gun Club becoming a Life Member. On his own admission Frank was a better 'gun shearer' than a 'gun shot' but he greatly enjoyed his time at the sport.

Throughout his nether years and even before Frank shorn all the pet sheep in the district 'gratis'. He would even take his portable shearing gear to different locations and shear anything between 1 to 20 sheep. He refused cash payment; but not a cold stubby!

Retiring from shearing in 1979 due to an injured hand (RSI) Frank worked at the Aberdeen Tannery for 3 to 4 years. He later managed the Scone Saleyards for 13 years before finally retiring at age 66. Sadly Frank's retirement years were sullied by bouts of ill health. 'Q Fever' was an occupational hazard for all those working closely with ruminants. It's like very severe Influenza and Frank endured a doubly bad bout. In 1998 Frank was diagnosed with Lung Cancer and had a large portion of one lung removed at RPA in Sydney. This developed into a chronic condition which prevailed for almost 10 years. It never dampened Frank's spirit or his resolve.

## Frank the Man

If you could describe him in one word (or two) words it would be FAIR DINKUM. He was a sincere, loyal and trusted friend. He was a communicator who could speak fluently in all emotions. It didn't matter if he was happy, sad or angry. He could always say exactly what he wanted to say in the best way possible for others to understand.

Basically whatever he said he would always land on his feet. When he went shopping he would spend all his time shaking hands with his friends; sometimes away for hours shopping for a small item.

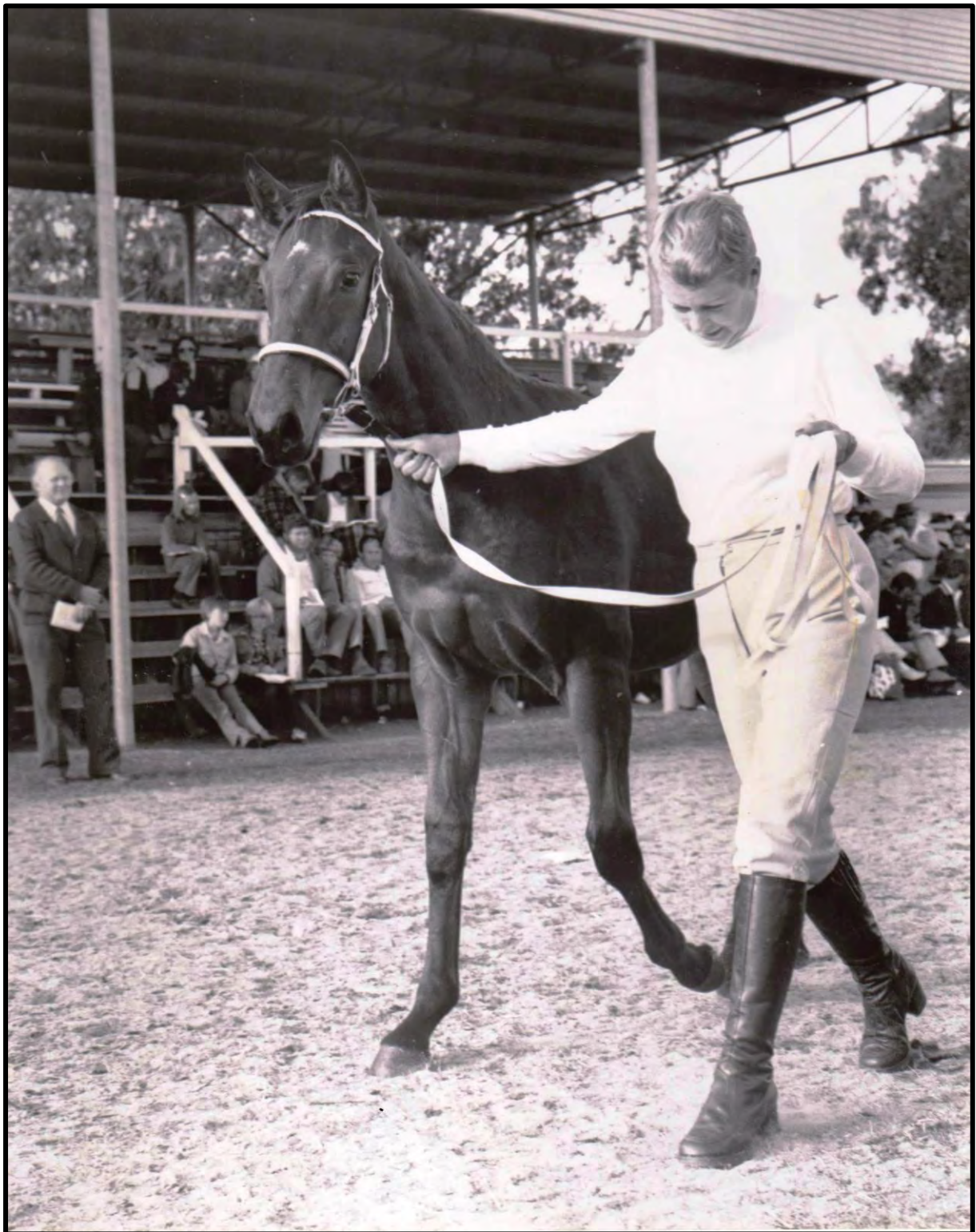
He loved people and life and his teaching to his children was to "Love One Another" and "try to get along with people". His saying was that "we are here to help one another; not to fight with one another".

He held the Catholic Faith as a most important part of his life, and he taught all his family to pray to God, and the importance of going to church.



**Sconeite Snippet: Betty Shepherd**

Filed in [Just In](#), [Sports Featured](#) by [Elizabeth Flaherty](#) February 13, 2016



Featured Image: Betty Shepherd leading a yearling in the Scone Sale Ring at White Park

BETTY Shepherd was the first female horse trainer in the world, but says she never encountered a glass ceiling, a few hushed tones at an Inglis sale perhaps, but nothing that held her back.

According to Betty it was a boy at the fruit and veg shop with a cute bottom that led her to a career in racing.

"I was working at the chemist across the road from the shop, where Scone Legal is now and I tied my horse up behind the shop and saw a good looking guy with a beautiful bottom," she smiled.

"I decided I was going to marry him and I was 17 and a half when I did," she said.

"We were married for more than 60 years," said Betty.

"I started riding track work when I started going with Archie", she said

"I can't remember never riding, growing up then we always rode horses," Betty said.

Betty was the youngest of seven children.

Her brothers and sisters were born in Scone, but the family moved to Tamworth during the depression for work and Betty was born there, before the family later moved back to Scone.

Betty and her husband Archie trained race horses together at their small stable in Phillip Street, Scone.

It was when Betty was doing track work in Tamworth in 1953 that she was told she had to be registered as a stable hand to be working at the track.

Betty quipped that she should be registered as a trainer, so she filled out the paperwork and became a trainer.

There was no fanfare, just some simple straight forward paperwork, but Betty thinks her charms may have helped.

"He fancied me a bit, I was a good sort in those days," said Betty.

"There wasn't that much said about it," she said.

"After I applied for it Dawn Flett, she was from Tamworth, she did too and she got hers straight away.

"If people were saying things I didn't know and I wasn't listening.

"Well, we had the shop and I was training horses and preparing yearlings and things like that, I was always too busy to worry about anything else," she said.

"I was cheeky you know, I just got on with things," Betty Shepherd said.

Betty was never officially a jockey but she rode in barrier trials.



The photo of her riding Quick Knocks was indicative of the riding attire of the day, no skull cap and no boots.

With the gelding Trevors, Betty became the first female trainer to have a horse in the Melbourne Cup and Caulfield Cup.

He was a horse by Good Brandy and Blue Lass but was not part of the stud book.

“He wasn’t stud book and they didn’t want him, they gave him to me as a foal and I broke him in and trained him,” she said.

Trevors won three trebles in a row during 1965 and 1966.

The first was two at Rosehill and one at Canterbury; the second was two at Randwick and one at Canterbury and in the final treble in 1966 two at Randwick and one at Rosehill.

Trevors went on to run in the Caulfield Cup where he had a photo finish for third, but was pipped at the post.

He ran in the Melbourne Cup in 1966, but was not up to the distance and ran eighth.

The stables which still stand tucked away behind Phillip Street would draw a crowd when Trevors was at home.

“When we had him it was like grand central station there, at any time there would be 10 or 20 people in town down at the stables looking at the horse,” she said.

There was an American buyer interested in Trevors, but the horse died suddenly in Scone.

Betty recalls Murray Bain, a local vet and sizable man who tried to resuscitate him, but was not able.

Of all the horses she had, Trevors was her favourite.

“We were absolute mates,” she said.

“I broke him in and did everything, so he was mine from the beginning, but he was a quiet horse for anyone to handle,” said Betty.

Trevors is buried in her backyard under a big tree, along with other family pets.

Betty was also the first female to show horses at the Inglis Easter sales like her other firsts, she fell into it.

She had been working with the horses, but a man would always walk the horses into the ring.

When a male handler did not turn up and the horse was being called to the ring she stepped up and led the horse out.

“There were a few hushed tones at first, but things carried on,” she said.

“Because I handled the horses all the time, they responded well for me in the ring,” she said.

“In those days we had to get them lunging and rearing up and things and they did it all well for me,” Betty said.

There were many things Betty learned about equine care and has made note of in a book she can not quite recall where she placed it, but it is full of equine tips accumulated over a lifetime when vets were not always available and simple remedies helped.

She has jotted down recipes for ointments, simple advice and shared her knowledge with many younger horse people over the years.

There were always a good number of young females from the industry who would visit Betty to learn from her.

“Girls have a different way with horses, they are more maternal with them, they love their horses, men are more aggressive with them,” she said.

Her advice to young people in the industry working with horses is simple “be kind, it makes a horse quieter,” she said.

Betty doesn’t believe stallions are as good for racing.

“They are more aggressive, they hurt themselves more easily in their nether regions and are difficult when there is a mare in season,” she said.

Betty muses that maybe there was no problem in her notable firsts as a female in the racing industry because she was always her own boss.

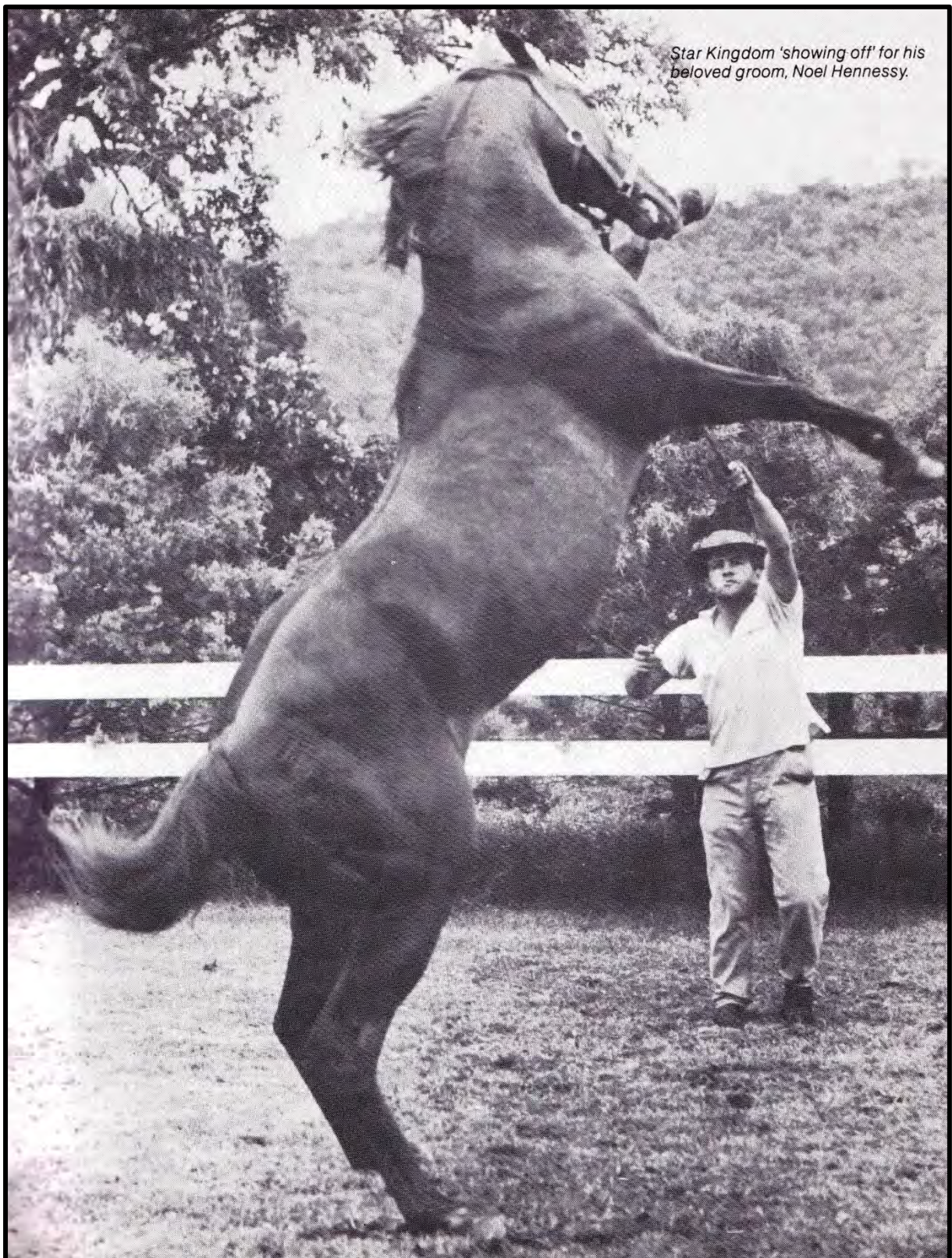
She worked with her husband Archie as a team on the track and in the shop.

Hot Piper, one of the last horses she trained, was a Whiskey Road horse and is now living out his days with a friend in the Barrington.

The last thoroughbred at their stables died a few months ago and now the paddock is home to a naughty Shetland and a friends pony.



## Noel Hennessy and Star Kingdom



Star Kingdom & Noel Hennessy



Noel Hennessy passed away in Denman early Saturday morning 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019. He is possibly the 'last link' to the great Star Kingdom? He was with him at 'Baramul' when he died on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1967.

Journalist Brian Russell released the following eulogy:

#### Death of last handler of Star Kingdom

*Noel Hennessy, an iconic Hunter Valley horseman who has died at Denman at the age of eighty, may have been the last person to see and handle Australia's most influential sire of last century, Star Kingdom, before he died on April 21 1967 at the Baramul Stud in the Widden Valley. Maitland born Hennessy had joined the staff at Baramul in 1957, a stud then owned by Sydney solicitor Alfred Ellison, and as stud groom cared for Star Kingdom for the last nine years of his life. He also looked after Todman, the son of Star Kingdom who won the inaugural Golden Slipper, when he stood at stud at Baramul, and the awesomely brilliant Biscay, both as a foal and as a sire. Biscay stood briefly at Baramul when he retired from racing. Among other horses grown under Hennessy's care at Baramul were champion Star Kingdom filly Citius and Todman's Golden Slipper winning son Eskimo Prince. In recent years Noel Hennessy has been living in retirement at Denman.*

Peter Pring writes in his excellent tribute in 'The Star Kingdom Story' (Thoroughbred Press):

*"Star Kingdom died at the good age for a thoroughbred of 21 (the average lifespan for a stallion is 16 years) on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1967. Noel Hennessy first became aware the something was wrong when 'Star' broke with his established practice of waiting for him at his gate for his evening meal. He had gone to his box and he wasn't even looking out through the door, as he did when it was raining heavily.*

*Hennessy recalls that his heart missed a beat. He hurried to the box and there he found the old horse with his head down "looking dopey". He put his feed in his manger but Star Kingdom hardly bothered to move. The groom became alarmed and went straight to the telephone to call the vet Murray Bain.*

*Bain arrived half an hour or so later having dropped what he was doing; but minutes after his arrival he was able to announce his diagnosis. Star Kingdom was suffering from Equine Colitis, an inflammation of the colon brought about by a thickening of the lower bowel. Bain described it as a common ailment affecting older horses. Sadly there was nothing he could do other than to help relieve the horse's suffering; what is more, he was certain he attack would prove fatal.*

*And so it transpired. At 10 o'clock that night Star Kingdom, who was now under heavy sedation, got down. Half an hour later, with his head resting in his beloved groom's arms, he passed away and so ended one of the most glorious chapters in the history of Thoroughbred breeding."*

#### Footnotes:

This most poignant description is redolent of that of Phar Lap and Tommy Woodcock. Local Scone champion 'Trevors' trained by Betty Shepherd suffered the same fate in the same month of April 1967.

For live footage of both Star Kingdom and Noel Hennessy see also:

<http://sconevedtdynasty.com.au/the-vet-on-the-stud-farm/>



About 2 years ago I took Paul Hennessy to meet with Jessica Owers at Noel Hennessy's house in Denman. Jessica was planning a book on Stanley Wootton after her story on 'Shannon'. We all had a good old yarn. Jessica did not proceed with her book but would have some notes on the meeting? This was the last time I visited Denman.

Peter Pring writes further in his excellent tribute in 'The Star Kingdom Story' (Thoroughbred Press) on the personality, character and idiosyncrasies of the great stallion as described by Noel.

*"Possibly no-one knew the horse better than Noel Hennessy, his groom and personal attendant for the last nine years of his life.*

*The great chestnut stallion and Hennessy, who was born seven years before him in 1939, developed a special bond of affection. The proud, high-spirited Thoroughbred aristocrat loved him like a dog loves a master, and when he was in his yard, Star Kingdom would follow him about just to be near him. When Hennessy went away, on holidays or to the yearling sales, 'Star' would fret terribly. He would sulk, refuse to exercise himself and would mope about in the lowest of spirits.*

*On Hennessy's return to Baramul, Star Kingdom would almost explode with joy. He would rear up, dance about, snort, whinny and race around him until Hennessy came over to him. He would then nuzzle into his chest, almost knocking him over in his enthusiasm. And, as soon as that was over, he would close his teeth firmly around his arm (Hennessy swears it was true) and would not let him go until he was ready. It was almost as if he were saying "Now that I've got you, you must promise that you'll never leave again."*

*Hennessy describes Star Kingdom as "a big, little horse ... only just a shade over 15.1 but built like a power-house. Very strong shoulders, high in the hind quarters, he was perfection for a sprinter-miler. And he really stamped these characteristics into many of his best foals.*

*"He was big in intelligence. He understood exactly what you wanted him to do. You could communicate with him totally. I have never known a horse like him."*

*Star Kingdom also had a delightful temperament. Hennessy says "He was extremely good natured. He never kicked and he never bit although he certainly didn't tolerate fools. He knew who he was. He knew he was the 'King', and as long as he was shown due respect he was as good as gold.*

*"I only saw him take a permanent dislike to one person. A worked on the place filled in time one day by teasing him over the fence. But old 'Star' never forgot that he had done it and would put his ears back whenever he was around. He wouldn't let him put a foot inside his yard."*

*Hennessy recalled that he could recall three other things that Star Kingdom did not like.*

*"One was people who tried to shoo him away with their hats when he was just being inquisitive and taking a closer look at something.*

*"Then," Hennessy adds with a laugh, "he would go for the hat and do everything he could to take a bit out of it.*

*"Another was that he did not like being tethered, tied up. All you had to do was to ask him to stand and he would. He was marvelous like that."*

*Star Kingdom's other pet 'hate' was his own son, Todman. Star Kingdom could not abide him. I will let Noel Hennessy take up the story.*

*"You see 'Star' liked to think he was the only really important horse around. When that was how it was, everything was okay. But in 1960, Todman – who was also a pretty big attraction – was retired to Baramul and visitors, instead of just coming to see 'Star' also went on, just a couple of yards further, to look over Todman as well.*



Star Kingdom and Todman courtesy of Peter Pring and 'The Thoroughbred Press'

*"This Star Kingdom could not tolerate; it made him intensely jealous. And he almost had a fit if the visitors made the cardinal error of going across to view Todman first. Then he would lie his ears back, bare his teeth, and when they did, final, get to his yard he would insultingly turn his back on them and amble off."*

*Hennessy said that his frustrations with Todman did not stop there. "You see Todman was a cheeky devil and he knew just how to bring 'Star' to the boil.*

*"When they were in their respective exercise yards there was only a race of five or six feet between them. And it was here that Todman would stand pressed up against his fence looking stupidly and unblinkingly at his father as if he was trying to stare him out.*

*"Now this capped everything. Old 'Star' would almost pass out with apoplexy. Although I must admit it gave us all great entertainment to watch them behaving like this."*

*In the area of preferred tastes Hennessy says that Star Kingdom had a passion for apples and for milky thistles; and that he was a great 'do-er', never leaving a morsel of his morning or evening feeds. And neither did he ever have a sick day. He was never affected by colic, he was never constipated, he never scoured and he never even had a cold.*

*The only physical disability he suffered was, in his advancing years, when the soles of his feet dropped. He had special shoes made with bars at the back. "And it was then," Hennessy added, that we started taking him into the creek for an hour or so each day to keep his hooves moist and soft. And this was something that the old boy really loved. He would splash about, looking at all the goings-on around him and when the sun was on his back he was in a state of perfect contentment."*

**Author' Note:**

***I have in my possession the front (fore) navicular bones of 'Biscay' which I harvested at the time of his death. 'Biscay' suffered very badly from advance navicular changes in his later years. 'Bletchingly' was similarly afflicted although not to the same extent. It seems quite likely (to me) that Star Kingdom suffered the same pathology which may have been passed down to his son and grandson?***

*Another pastime that gave Star Kingdom great pleasure was the pursuit of fowls that were bold enough to enter his yard in search of fallen grain and other delicacies. "He always played the same game by the same rules, and he never tired of it. In a faraway corner he would appear to be sleeping but, slyly, with hardly a movement of his eyelids, he would in fact be watching the chickens' progress. Then, when he was certain that they were too far from safety to run and that they would therefore have to fly or be trampled, he would be transformed into a raging, ranting monster. He would charge down upon them scattering them in all directions."*



## GROOM AND STALLION - NOEL HENNESSY AND STAR KINGOM



*Noel Hennessy and his dog.*



*Star Kingdom's grave.*

Noel Hennessy was born at Maitland N.S.W. in 1939 and came from a well known horse racing family. His uncle was former Newcastle trainer Carl Deamer. As a 16 year old teenager, he witnessed the great flood of the Hunter Valley in 1955, stranded on the overhead Maitland Railway Station footbridge. From here he saw the rescue helicopter plunge into the roaring floodwaters after hitting live powerlines while trying to rescue the people trapped in the railway station signal box.

Noel was good friends with the great Dungog horseman, Kevin Bacon, and followed the show circuit with him. He then went to Dungog to look after polo ponies for the Mackays and from there to Haddon Rig Stud at Warren to polish the show horses for the Falkiners. In 1957 on the recommendation of Lionel Israel, Noel landed a job with A.O. Ellison at Baramul Stud in the Widden Valley. When he arrived at Muswellbrook Railway Station, he met Charlie Asimus in a Vanguard utility and travelled in the back of the utility to arrive at Baramul by midnight. At daylight he arose and was not impressed with the isolation and decided a couple of days and he would be out of there. It was not to be, for Noel stayed 13 years, and married local girl Reba Woodlands. They have 3 daughters, Nerelle, Loretta, Charee and son Neil.

When Noel first arrived at Baramul, Ray Cassidy was Star Kingdom's groom but, after 15 months Noel took over the position when Ray left. During his thirteen years at Baramul with Australia's premier sire, Star Kingdom at his side, he met all the leading racing identities, breeders, owners, trainers, jockeys etc. etc. Who does Noel consider the best? - Stanley Wootten the best judge of horseflesh - Angus Armanasco the best trainer of 2 Y.O. - Neville Begg the best trainer because of his kindness and the way he looked after his horses - Peter Cook the best jockey followed by Neville Sellwood. Murray Bain the best vet by a country mile. Jack Ingham the best owner because of his long period of dedication to the Sport of Kings. Noel said Star Kingdom could be temperamental and you always had to keep

an eye on him. His nickname was "DICK" and he enjoyed chasing the chooks that wandered into his stallion paddock. He covered his mares with the greatest of ease and in this regard was almost foolproof. Before Star Kingdom's outstanding son Todman was sent to Maurice McCarten's Randwick stable, Stanley Wootten declared he would be the fastest horse McCarten had ever trained, and so it proved to be. Todman was not as good a looker as his younger brother, Noholme, who won the Epsom over the Randwick mile as a 3 Y.O. He was later to become a top sire in America. Noel was good mates with top jockey, Neville Sellwood, who was killed in a race fall in France. Noel received a letter from him a short time before that terrible fall cost Sellwood his life.

Time marched on and the mighty Star Kingdom and Todman are buried side by side at Baramul Stud. Noel Hennessy and his wife Reba live quietly in Paxton Street, Denman with 10 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter. Noel is a keen fisherman and travelled in recent times to Cape York and the Longreach Hall of Fame, ever mindful of the loss of his brother in law, Peter Woodlands in a tractor accident during their days at Baramul Stud. The Woodlands family are rank and file of Denman and district. The Hennessys are steeped in the best racing traditions of the Hunter Valley from Carl Deamer, John Deamer, Jason Deamer and Noel's brother, Scone horse trainer, Paul Hennessy.

Courtesy of Ray Barry





Featured Image: Hilton Cope and Ken Howard at White Park Racecourse, Scone on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 1976

The caption reads:

***Discussing the progress of Saturday's Trainers Day race meeting were the "Prince of Race Callers" Ken Howard, and new race club committeeman, former jockey Hilton Cope. Ken Howard received a standing ovation for his description of the Ken Howard Intermediate Cup and greatly pleased the committee with his offer to return again next year.***

In fact this may have been Ken Howard's final call? Then retired to Nambucca Heads on the north coast of NSW Ken agreed to make the long journey by car to call 'his race'. At the time he was suffering from what ultimately proved to be a terminal illness. He did not return in 1977.

As a young committeeman I was most impressed with Ken's generosity, dedication and professionalism. He was accompanied on the car journey by four fellow members ('mates') from the Nambucca Bowling Club who made sure Ken arrived safely; and made it home again. I met them at the gate. It was a road trip of about 5 or 6 hours each way. The intrepid Nambucca crew were neither intimidated nor phased. They would accept fuel expenses only in compensation. Those were the days!



THE SPIRIT WITHIN

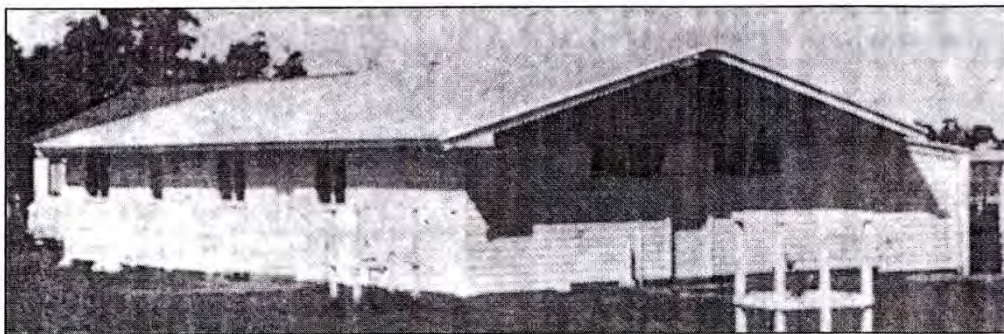
## SCONE RACECOURSE



1959



Early 1960's



The new building in the Members' Enclosure at the Scone Racecourse  
April 1959.

May 8, 2016

*By Harley Walden*

DURING the war years, a number of race meetings were held by the Scone Race Club, namely at "Alabama" and St Aubins.

On December 7 1944 an enthusiastic band of gentlemen gathered to form a committee for the sole purpose of constructing a leisure outlet for the people of Scone and the Shire.

Mr. Doug Robertson was elected President, Mr. Ted Howell treasurer and Mr. Cecil Parry honorary secretary. The committee comprised: Messrs. B. Price, AW Riddle, S. Keene, S. Readford, C. Duncombe, L.R Morgan, H. Johnston, S. Clark, L. Israel, N. Lohead and Sgt. J. Loomes.

The committee was formed with the aim to raise sufficient funds to obtain at the time, many people considered a "pipedream".

In an endeavour to obtain these funds to build the course, the committee opened a public subscription list, which met with liberal support from the people of the district.

In addition, one prominent horse-breeder of the area stated he would donate one Hundred pounds towards the expense of building the course.

When this was made known to other breeders in the district, six of them agreed to do likewise.

Thus, with seven hundred pounds guaranteed, plus eight hundred and seventy-eight pounds from public subscriptions, the committee set about to build a course on White Park, and in August 1945, Mr. G. McRae was employed to lay out the course and a start was made.

For many years past there had been a desire, even a demand, for a club-owned course and appointments in the Scone district, the acclaimed home of the thoroughbred of the extensive terrain beneath the Southern Cross itself.

This was made possible, but only after more than a modicum of hard work, pulsating from a comparatively small body of sportsmen – men who placed the public first and foremost and who never lost sight of the fact of the needs of the district from an angle envisaged and worked from what must be at all times within its ambit.

These public-spirited men and their colleagues found the wherewithal to have a track laid out and the appointments placed in position.

These self-same did more, they appreciably co-operated in bringing into use an expanse of country destined by nature to bring relaxation and a colourful occupation to the residents of the town and environs, and even further afield.

White Park itself is steeped in history.

Originally it was part of Kelly's Farm, the property of sailor Richard Kelly who lost two of his ships while employed under government contract and received a grant of 1920 acres in Scone as compensation.



This was Governor Darling's day and Kelly Street was then the track leading to Kelly' Farm.

The farm became part of St Aubins soon afterwards and when Bakewells subdivided the old Racecourse Paddock the people of Scone were given the use of another paddock known as the Town Paddock or Bakewells Paddock as a recreation area.

For many years school picnics, Empire Day functions and many sporting activities were held there, but when further subdivisions of St Aubins were made in the early 1920s it seemed that the town would once again lose a popular recreation area.

It was purchased and given to the town by Mr. Alf White of Belltrees, in whose honour it was named "White Park" in 1924.

Thus in 1947 the Scone Race Club staged its first Cup meeting on a parcel of land belonging to the people of Scone.

## **Golden Slipper Princess 1969**

A seminal event occurred in 1969 which I believe represented the apotheosis of overarching convivial and congenial community approbation in my fifty years in Scone. It occurred in 1969. I recall local ubiquitous totemic accountant Don Scott remarking this was the high point in his period of stewardship which embraced all creeds and castes. The genuine RSL club was an exclusively male bastion still populated by a majority of veterans over auxiliaries. Men like George McLaughlin and Ernie Cone were treated with reverence and respect. Governor of NSW Sir Roden Cutler VC was a special guest during the year. 'Everyone' was there. The Scone Race Club Committee was populated by racing men, stud masters, farmers and graziers, businessmen, tradesmen and covering every ilk. Jock Robertson, David Macintyre and Arthur Bragg doubled on the Sone Polo Club Committee.

I refer to the competition for the inaugural Golden Slipper Princess promulgated and promoted by the Sydney Turf Club (STC) and supreme entrepreneurial Director George Ryder in particular. George was the inspirational stud master of 'Woodlands' near Denman. Harley Walden has written most enthusiastically of the event in his appositely named treatise: ***'The Spirit Within'***.

### ***Race Club Finds New Way to Attract and Entertain Patrons***

*The word gimmick is commonly used today as companies, sporting bodies or people in business endeavour to attract the attention of the public.*

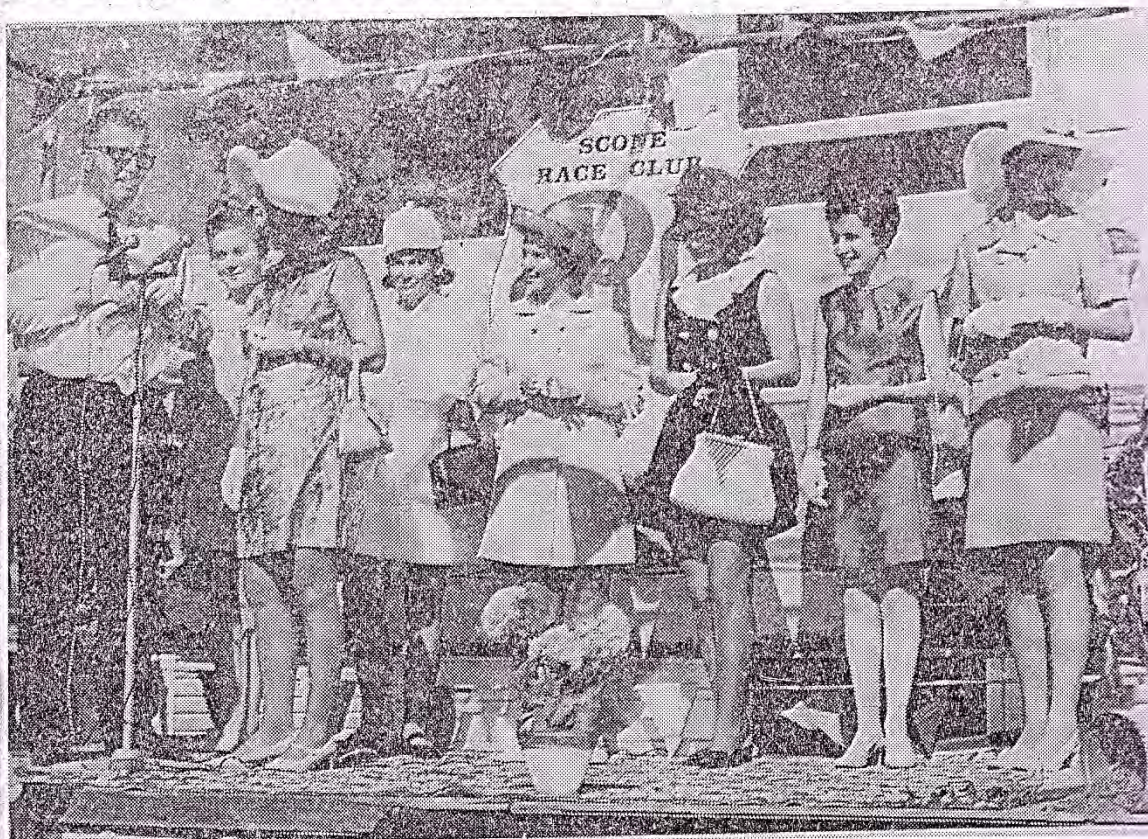
*On Saturday March 8 1969 the committee of the Scone Race Club did not have this word in mind. But they certainly attracted a large crowd at White Park to witness, not only a good day of racing, but to see Scone Pre-school teacher Miss Jean McPherson chosen to represent the racing area in the final of the Golden Slipper Princess Quest set down for judging at Rosehill Racecourse on Saturday March 22.*

*According to all reports the versatility of interests and the charm of the seven entrants were impressive. There was pride shown in from those in attendance that these girls were products of the Upper Hunter.*

*This concept had captured the imagination of the large crowd on hand as the girls, from the dais of the members' enclosure at the Scone Race Course answered questions as to their interest and their thoughts on the contest.*

*The crowd found it illuminating to discover that among the seven girls was one who had been the Singleton Show Girl twice. Another had been a Scone Floral Festival Princess; another was a local tennis star with considerable successes chalked up to her career; another was a (National) swimming champion who modestly never mentioned the fact; while several others were old hands in the racing game, with family backgrounds that made them worthy contestants.*

## Seven entrants.



- ABOVE: Girl's taking part in the Golden Slipper Princess quest (Hunter Valley area) parade on the dais at Scone races on Saturday. The eventual winner, Miss Jean Macpherson, is being interviewed by the compere, Mr. Ed. Webster, manager of Radio Station 2NML. The other contestants, pictured left to right, are: Dorothy Shepherd, Sue Wicks, Denise Holman, Sue Bowditch, Kathryn Rose and Beryl Towse. — Photo: B. J. Budden.

## Grazing potential of Hybrid Forage Sorghums

Hybrid forage sorghums are popular fodder crops for summer and autumn grazing in north-western New South Wales.

*The feeling of the crowd was one of warm, sympathy and admiration for the young contestants and voiced their approval and congratulations to the winner Miss Jean McPherson from Scone, who on Saturday March 22 was to be adjudged the Golden Slipper Princess and the honour of being the representative of Australian Racing at Hollywood Park in Los Angeles and at Woodbine in Toronto, Canada.*

*When Miss Jean McPherson returned to Scone the Scone Club seized the opportunity to promote its next meeting on Saturday April 12. During the afternoon she was welcomed to the gateway to the members' enclosure by Scone Race Club President Mr H. R. 'Harry' Hayes.*

*It was in this enclosure only a few short weeks before that Miss McPherson was adjudged Miss Hunter Valley racing Princess. This was in front of a crowd of Saturday's same proportion who had gathered to welcome home their local Golden Girl.*





The Golden Slipper Princess, Miss Jean MacPherson, of Scone, rides in state down the course proper at Scone races on Saturday. (B. J. Budden photo.)

*These two Saturday meetings proved memorable for all concerned as it was not every day that racegoers had the opportunity of a double attraction.*

THE SPIRIT WITHIN

*The Nineteen Sixties*

**Golden Slipper Princess**

Miss Jean MacPherson

The Golden Slipper Princess, Miss Jean Macpherson, of Scone, rides in state down the course proper at Scone Races on Saturday March 8, 1969. (B. J. Budden Photo) Carriage driver: Ron Dennewald. Clerks of the Course: Laurie Harris (left), Stan Bowd (right).

**Presentation . . .**

Mr. H. R. Hayes, Miss Carol Browne (centre) at the presentation of a travelling case to the Golden Slipper Princess, Miss Jean MacPherson (right) at Scone races on Saturday. (B. J. Budden photo.)





Jean McPherson sashed winner at Scone



Jean sashed at Rosehill by STC Committeeman Keith Harris

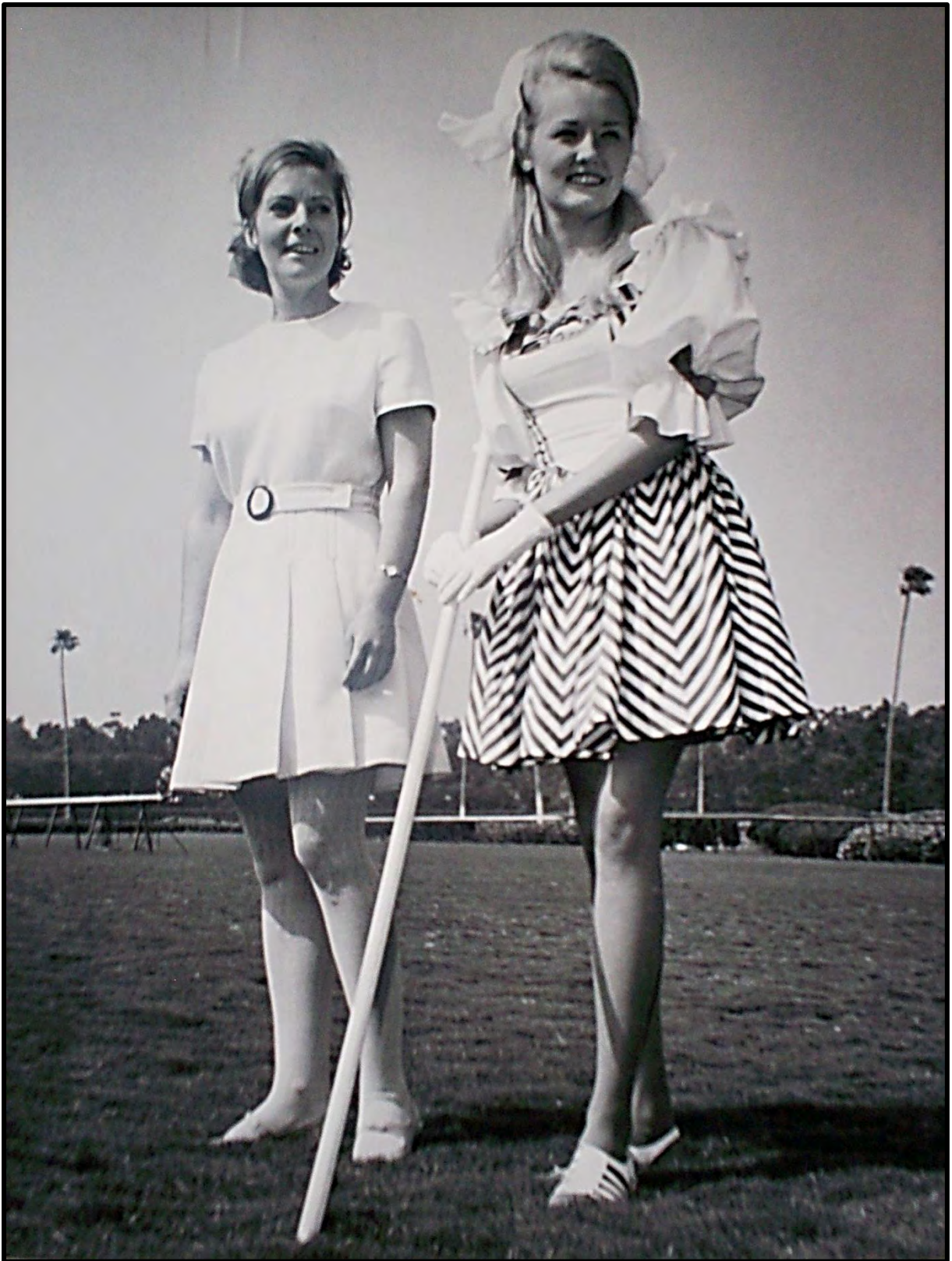




Jean with 1969 all-time great Golden Slipper Winner 'Vain' at Rosehill



Jean & Phyllis Diller at the Golden Slipper Presentation 1969



STC Golden Slipper Princess and Hollywood Park Golden Goose Girl





Jean at Hollywood Park LA with Major Norman Larkin and Hollywood Park Golden Goose Girl

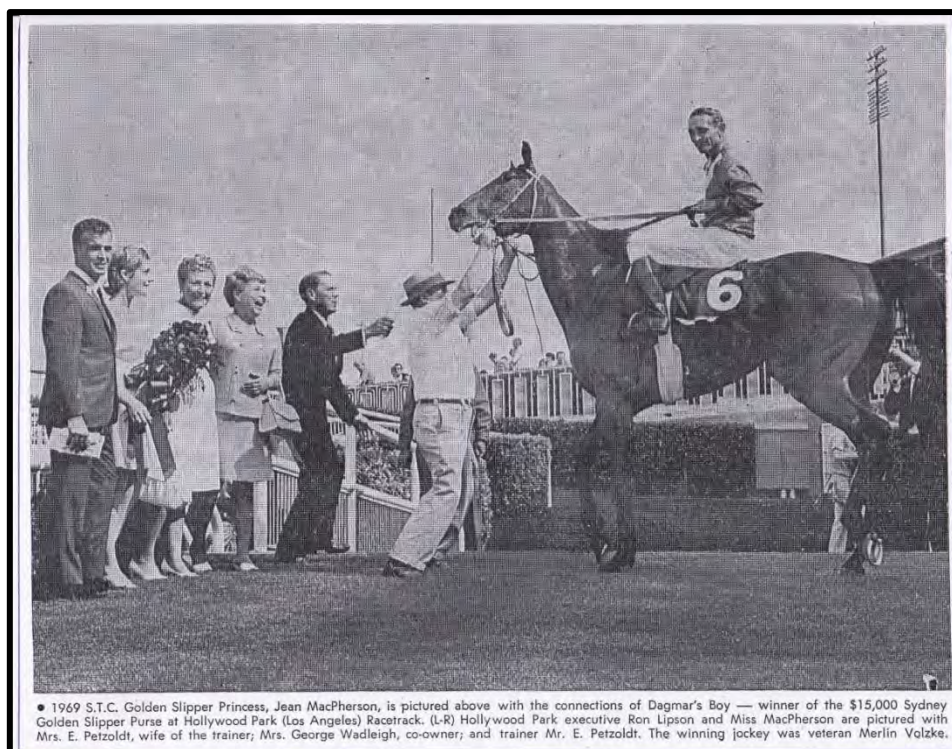
Major Norman Larkin was then President of the Australian (and NSW) Thoroughbred Breeders Association. According to cynical some this was a sinecure. He had been the first equine veterinarian to visit the Scone and Upper Hunter District. He did this from his base at Bondi.

He was also President of AEVA a short time later in the mid-1970s.



Golden Slipper Princess and Golden Goose Girl





'Dagmar's Boy' winner of \$15,000:00 Sydney Golden Slipper Purse LA 1972



Weight's right for Ismael Valenzuela



## ARABS CUP



***The Featured image shows the presentation of the ARABS Improvers Cup held at Scone Race Club's White Park Racetrack in April 1980. L to R: Bill Howey (Scone Race Club President), Mr George Ryder (Chairman of the Sydney Turf Club), Mrs Jan Higson (NOT Gibson; George Ryders' daughter and ARABS 'secretary'), Kelly Almond (part-owner and trainer of Hunter's Royal, who won the Improvers Cup), Mr Norman Lane (Chairman of the ARABS Committee), Mr Neville Cox (part-owner of Hunter's Royal) and Mr David Almond (part-owner of Hunter's Royal).***

This might not be what you expect? It used to be the 'biggest thing' at Scone Race Club after the May Cup meeting. The latter was always the biggest single sporting event in the valley.

Super sleuth George Ryder conjured up yet another brilliant idea from a very fertile and inventive brain. He's just introduced syndication of stallions to Australia enabling greater consumer participation and ostensibly also 'affordability' of superior bloodstock from both local and overseas supply markets. The USA had already forged the way in this as in many other entrepreneurial and commercial endeavours throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Australia was playing 'catch up' with G E Ryder at the helm; a common theme in racing and breeding.

In 1971 George and his partners had sold Woodlands to an interesting International partnership between Lord Derby (UK) and Bob Kleberg of King Ranch, Texas (USA). The great days of domination of Sydney racing by the flagship D Chrystal Snr, D Chrystal Jnr, Dr T Street and G E Ryder owners, trained by T J Smith at Randwick, ridden by G Moore ended forever. Woodlands became Derby-King Ranch for the time being. Perhaps the money tree had shed all its leaves? However the sale enabled George and a few remaining cohort to acquire the famous but jaded Kia Ora Stud in the Segenhoe Valley near both Scone and Aberdeen. Instantly George sprang into action with the syndication of both Gynsynd and Baguette for Kia Ora. The immediate and prescient future was assured.



George then excelled with his Australian Racing and Breeding Syndicate (ARABS). For only \$500:00 per share anyone could buy into the portfolio. It allowed thousands of small players with limited means to both participate in and enjoy the exquisite thrill of thoroughbred ownership. At least that was the theory. Even I was sucked in. GER could be VERY persuasive! It actually worked; with some corollary benefits for the Ryder family. There usually were. Armed with some more 'new money' (other people's) George acquired an impressive and select band of broodmares. He was good at this. He brought some of them with him from Woodlands. In racing and breeding George knew the score. His network and knowledge were unmatched. The ultimate 'hussler' Bobby Riggs would have been no match for G E Ryder on the tennis court, the golf course or the racetrack.

The ARABS syndicate was instantly successful. The distinctive colours of yellow-and-black diamonds showed up front and central in many races throughout NSW and even further afield. Pat Farrell from Muswellbrook was one of the principal trainers for the syndicate. George picked his team well. Star apprentice Wayne Harris' name was on everyone's lips. Winners began to flow regularly. Hungry appetites and slaked thirsts for new age success were assuaged; at least for the time being.

The major showcase for the syndicate became the Open Day at Kia Ora Stud allied with the Scone Race Club's ARABS Cup Meeting at White Park Race Track in Scone. I can honestly claim title to the latter concept. At least 1000 ARABS patrons crowded into the Upper Hunter for the 'big weekend'. By 1980 George had on-sold Kia Ora Stud to John Clift from 'The Dip' Stud at Breeza on the black soil plains between Quirindi and Gunnedah. 'Gunsynd' had made both names famous throughout the country. The ARABS secretariat office at Double Bay staffed by Ryder family members was also expensive to maintain. Cash flow was imperative. Some lifestyles are fiscally consumptive.

I have just rediscovered the 'Gallop Around' report in the Scone Advocate by Brian Russell of the ARABS Cup meeting April 1980. Brian's ecstatic report featured the headline 'Robert Thompson King of the ARABS'. Should that have been Sheikh? Robert certainly had a great day riding half the program with three winners in the six race card. The main race was the \$2500:00 Mary Tange 2yo Sires Produce Stakes won by 'Miss Bayreme'. Mrs Ron Tange always attended the races dressed immaculately featuring exotic Ascot-style hats. She and husband Ron were great supporters; and sponsors. The latter matter was not lost on G E Ryder!

Years later John Messara sniffed out an opportunity. He launched a successful takeover bid for all the ARABS bloodstock by the simple expedient of acquiring a majority shareholding. George Ryder did not see him coming. It was a sad day for him and his 'family of ARABS'. The distinctive colours also went with the deal. They have been sported by some of Australia's greatest racehorses in recent times. Miss Finland is a prime example. These are raced under the banner of John Messara's Arrowfield Stud; now perhaps the most successful exponent in the nation? Many would argue convincingly that John is the present day 'Sheikh of Racing'?

## Champions of Yesteryear: Vo Rogue, Vic & Harley



**Vo Rogue & Vic Rail**

I've taken the liberty of extracting most of this from the late Harley Walden's most sensitive appraisal of two of his favourites in his regular column for Scone.com. I duly acknowledge the source: <http://www.scone.com.au/champions-of-yesteryear/>

Only Harley Walden has a local connection. I have recorded much of his story in detail elsewhere in my 'blogs' and writings. Harley shares much in common with his heroes Vic Rail and Vo Rogue. 'Battler' is the appropriate adhesive 'glue' in local argot. He likes to take a shot at those whom he considered 'toffs'! It's an inspiring story of triumph over relative adversity in the very best Australian tradition. Vo Rogue was the quintessential people's champion just like 'Gunsynd' before him. Apart from out-and-out real champions like Makybe Diva, Black Caviar and Winx these are the very best promotion racing can have.

There's much more to it than that. Both Vic Rail and Vo Rogue rightly achieved national prominence with some electrifying performances and racing achievements. I vividly recall the incomparable Richie Benaud waxing lyrical in his Test Cricket calls for Channel 9. I do believe Richie was an avid punter? He had to keep working until well into his 80s! Vic Rail later achieved national and even international prominence because of a bizarre set of circumstances. As was his wont Vic Rail was very 'close and personal' in dealing with his horses. It was partly because of this that he became the very first human casualty of what was later named **Hendra Virus** after the Brisbane superb where he lived, worked and trained his horses.

Hendra Virus is a zoonotic disease. That is capable of transmission between animals and man. Its primary hosts are various species of Fruit Bats or Flying Foxes. These abound and are most prolific in the lush warm humid climate of sub-tropical Brisbane. It's part of history now how the virus was transmitted to Vic's horses by the bats and then to him. The common modality is contaminated feedstuff. The disease is invariably fatal in both equine and human species with a very high mortality of almost 100%. Several of my co-professionals have died acute deaths as a result of close exposure to the virus in both living and dead horses. Fortunately an efficient vaccine has been produced for use in horses.

Vic Rail was a knockabout bloke; just like Harley.

Champion of Yesteryear: Vo Rogue

Source: <http://www.scone.com.au/champions-of-yesteryear/>

August 27, 2016

By Harley Walden

*When Vo Rogue was gelded the veterinary surgeon who performed the operation looked down at his 11-month old patient struggling to come out of the anaesthetic, and decided the horse had no heart in him.*

*No heart! Six years later the little bay with no heart in him had 16 Group wins, a string of track records, a devoted public and a small matter of \$2.93 million in the bank.*

*Vo Rogue was one of those gallopers for which the description "freak" is no exaggeration, the product of parents who never won a race between them, Vo Rogue fetched the princely sum of \$5,000 as a weanling, which looked no bargain as he grew into a slow and ungainly juvenile with little interest in running.*

*Nicknamed Erky, he was always a curious looking animal.*

*With a thin, patchy coat that needed sump oil to protect it from the Queensland sun.*

*He was never near a syringe or a vitamin supplement, and if his trainer Vic Rail had had his way, his hooves would never have felt the farrier's blow.*

*He was not hosed or shampooed, he was fed oats, lucerne, tick beans, sun-flower seeds and calf manna, with very little corn.*

*It might all sound a little eccentric, but there's no denying Vo Rogue could run, like the wind.*

*Most of all he liked to run in front, with huge ground-eating strides that would break his opponents' hearts.*

*It was a race tactic which would set everybody's blood pumping a little faster. The punters knew what they were getting and the challengers knew what they had to do to beat him.*

*Not since Gunsynd in the early 1970s had a racehorse so captured the Australian imagination.*

*He won from 1000 to 2040 metres in every mainland state except South Australia, where he never started.*

*By the end of his career the six-year-old he had won 26 races and placed in 18 of his 68 starts.*

*"The people loved him not only because of his front running style, they loved him because of his will to win," Rail said.*

*"He tries hard and he makes sure they get their money's worth."*

*Although his looks were unorthodox and his parents relatively undistinguished, a closer inspection gave clues to Vo Rogue's ability.*

*He stood 16.3 hands, with an intelligent head, huge shoulders, plenty of rein and marvellous legs.*

*According to Rail it was the length of his stride that made him a champion, it also threw him off balance on rain-affected tracks, but on a firm surface he could foot it with the champions of any era.*

*After a superb five-year-old season which netted him six Group victories and more than \$1 million in prizemoney, Vo Rogue returned to win four more races as a six-year-old, including group one victories in the George Main Stakes (1600m) at Randwick and the Australian Cup (2000m) at Flemington, and his third successive Group Two C F Orr Stakes (1400m) at Sandown.*

*Victory Rail, so named because he was born the day the Japanese surrendered in the Pacific, had spent much of his life defying conventional wisdom.*

*When Vo Rogue turned the tables on Super Impose in the C F Orr Stakes in 1989 the critics had their answer.*

*Vo Rogue led from the jump and pounded down the Sandown straight to win the race for the third year running.*

*It was virtually a carbon copy of the previous year. Vo Rogue carried the same weight (57.5kg), clocked exactly the same time (1:23.30 and beat the same horse, Super Impose, by almost the same margin (1½ lengths).*

*"He's proved the knockers wrong hasn't he?" Rail said, scarcely able to keep his grin below ear level.*

*"He hasn't lost anything", nor had his part-owner, Gary Roberts, a professional punter who had taken all the 2-1 the bookies would lay, and confessed that Vo Rogue had "got him out of a hole".*

*It was not the first time Roberts had emptied his pockets on The Vo, two years earlier he had paid \$180,000 for a fifth share in the gelding that turned out to be the investment of a lifetime.*

*The two men closest to the champion galloper were Vic Rail his trainer, a bona fide Queensland battler with a curious name, who never appeared comfortable in his crumpled race-day suit.*

*In a tragic twist, Rail died in 1994, three years after Vo Rogue retired, after contracting the Hendra Virus.*



*Vo Rogue was ridden by a jockey called Cyril Small, who was thrust into the limelight by a mighty horse.*

*Small was born on a cattle property between Grafton and Casino in northern NSW and swears he was riding horses before he could walk.*

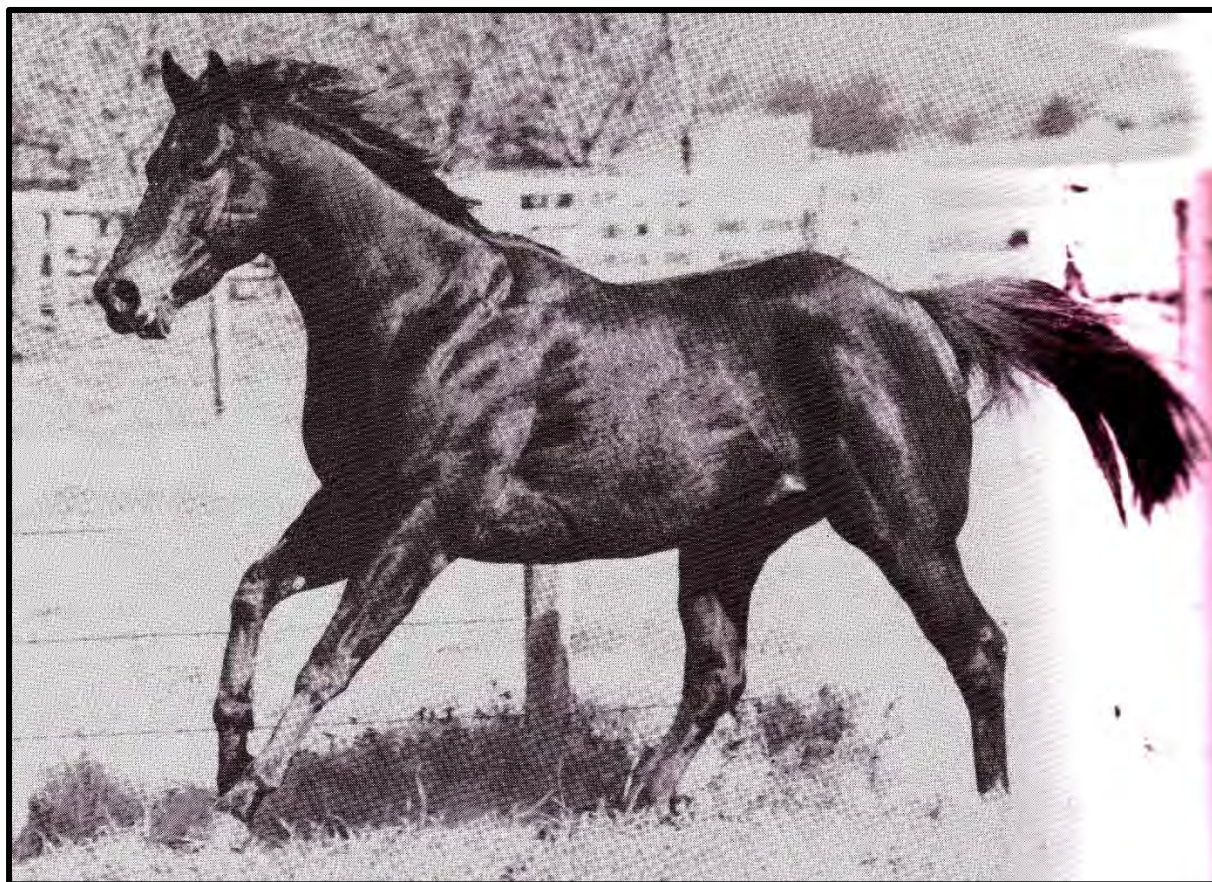
*He loved horses so much he even rode them to school in a small country town called Wyan, where his class mates numbered 20 at most.*

*Vo Rogue died on May 10, 2012 at the grand old age of 28.*

*A champion in all facets of the sport, the front-running champion would have people hanging over the fences when Vo Rogue amble back to scale.*

*They'd chuckle at the irony of this bare-footed, dusty-coated Queenslander, who dragged downed the toffs and was the best horse in an era of champions.*

**Bletchingly** (1970) by Biscay ex Coogee by Relic (Am) by War Relic (Am).



Breeder: S T Wootton

Bletchingly has provided for both my retirement plan and superannuation. Perhaps I should explain?

I always admired Biscay and the profound percipience of Stanley Wootton. The success of his import Star Kingdom is legendary. I was actually party to at least two priceless pearls of wisdom from the master. I have in my possession a hand written letter from STW to my then employer Murray Bain dated 31/12/1972. It was written on flimsy notepaper from the Southern Cross Hotel (Intercontinental), 131 Exhibition Street, Melbourne 3000. I typed it out so I could absorb its magical messages. Later in 1974 I had occasion to write to Mr Wootton at Treadwell House, Epsom, England. This was about the time Murray Bain passed away. In his reply My Wootton thanked me for my letter and also my congratulations on *'Bletchingly's recent maiden win'*. He stated in his reply: *'This is a very nice horse and I believe will make a very good sire one day'*. I've kept the letter and framed it.

Later Bletchingly won his fifth and final race start in the then Group II Galaxy Stakes at Randwick in 1975. It was his only ever start *'the right hand way (NSW) of going'*. That day in the birdcage enclosure Bletchingly had a discharging sinus from his left lower jaw. This was to crop up later after he went to stud at Widden. I had a good friend Archie Shepherd who was the dominant SP bookmaker in Scone. He and his ilk are exceptionally well informed! Archie said it was the best sprinting performance by an 'immature and inexperienced' racehorse in a very long time.

Armed with this 'inside knowledge' I went into action when STW announced Bletchingly would be retired to stand at Widden Stud which neighbours Baramul in the Widden Valley. I had just assumed special duties as the main veterinarian at Widden. Owner Bim Thompson had been groomer at my wedding at 'Tinagroo' on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 1975. The planets were aligned. There were a limited number of shares available in Bletchingly at \$3000:00 per share. He would stand at a service fee of \$1500:00. It looked simple. It wasn't. I married on an overdraft and Sarah and I lived in rented premises at Tarangower near Scone. With my partners John Morgan and Nairn Fraser we had assumed control of the veterinary practice then known as Morgan Howey Fraser and Partners. Venture capital was at a premium. Malcolm Fraser had just hit us with his iniquitous and odious Provisional Tax. I still 'wanted to be in'. I managed to persuade Sarah who had subtly put an embargo my punting. I would approach the manager of the Bank of New South Wales for a loan. I did.

My problems were not entirely resolved. The manager was a devout non-drinking, non-smoking, non-gambling Methodist Lay Preacher '*with a name like a Trotter*' (John Kelso). I was asking for an unsecured loan to purchase a share in an unproved thoroughbred stallion. I must have sounded convincing because Mr Kingston Rayward approved my request. He became my confidante and friend. We didn't meet socially or ecclesiastically however. 'The rest', as they say in the classics 'is history'. Bletchingly was an instant success siring one of the greatest racehorses ever in Australia in 'Kingston Town' from his first crop. I actually bred his very first Stakes Winner in 'Bakerman' (ex. 'Breadline') which I sold as a weanling in Scone. Bakerman won 16 races in all including the King George IV Stakes (Group III) at Doomben.

Bletchingly duly retired to Widden but drama pursued him. He still had a discharging sinus from his left lower jaw (mandible). I made some enquiries. My very good friend and veterinarian in Victoria Greg Morrison gave me the accurate history in detail. Bletchingly was initially delayed in his debut racing career due to a 'cracked sesamoid'. This might have been a 'lucky break'; excuse the intended pun. He did not appear until a 3yo. Quite early on he developed the discharging sinus. Greg swabbed and trephined the wound administering the antibiotic of choice based on the results of the swab. This was 'Cloxacillin'; a new generation Penicillin at the time. As sometimes happens the horse succumbed to severe per-acute antibiotic induced diarrhoea. It takes a while to recover. My tentative prognosis was to advise caution. I thought I could not improve on Greg's carefully considered and expert surgical approach. We collectively decided (Bim Thompson and I) to extract the first season 'just in case'. Arrangements were then made to send Bletchingly to Professor David Hutchins at Sydney University, Camden Veterinary Field Station for evaluation. Dave was another close friend in whom I invested great faith.

The visit to Camden was both enlightening and entertaining. Bletchingly was sent down by escorted horse float while grazier David Macintyre flew Bim and I down in his small private aeroplane. Dave ordered a full series of complete spectrum X-rays of the lower left mandible. Voila! He discovered a longitudinal fracture of the second left lower premolar. Myriad surgical clean ups provided temporary respite but food eventually forced itself down again through the 'invisible' fracture line. Sinus discharge inevitably recurred. The solution was extraction of the fractured tooth. It's not so easy with a fully mature thoroughbred stallion. It requires surgical anaesthesia and expulsion ('chiselling out') the offending tooth. The procedure went smoothly without any real problems. As Dave very bluntly pointed out there can be many.

His retort about Quarter Horses being very prone to pressure myositis (muscle damage) on the surgical table caused Bim to splutter into his soothing Scotch! Actually Professor Dave was right. Bletchingly was much more like a standard Quarter Horse than a thoroughbred. He had inherited his sire's musculature but had a short bullocky neck, low wither and 'flat quarters'. Bletchingly recovered uneventfully and went safely back to Widden to resume his stud career. It was a great relief all round. I think the Insurance Company were as satisfied as I was relieved. Interestingly the missing tooth never troubled Bletchingly again. He lived to be 23. The lower arcade of pre-molars and molars actually moved ('closed') to cover the deficit. There were no other signs.

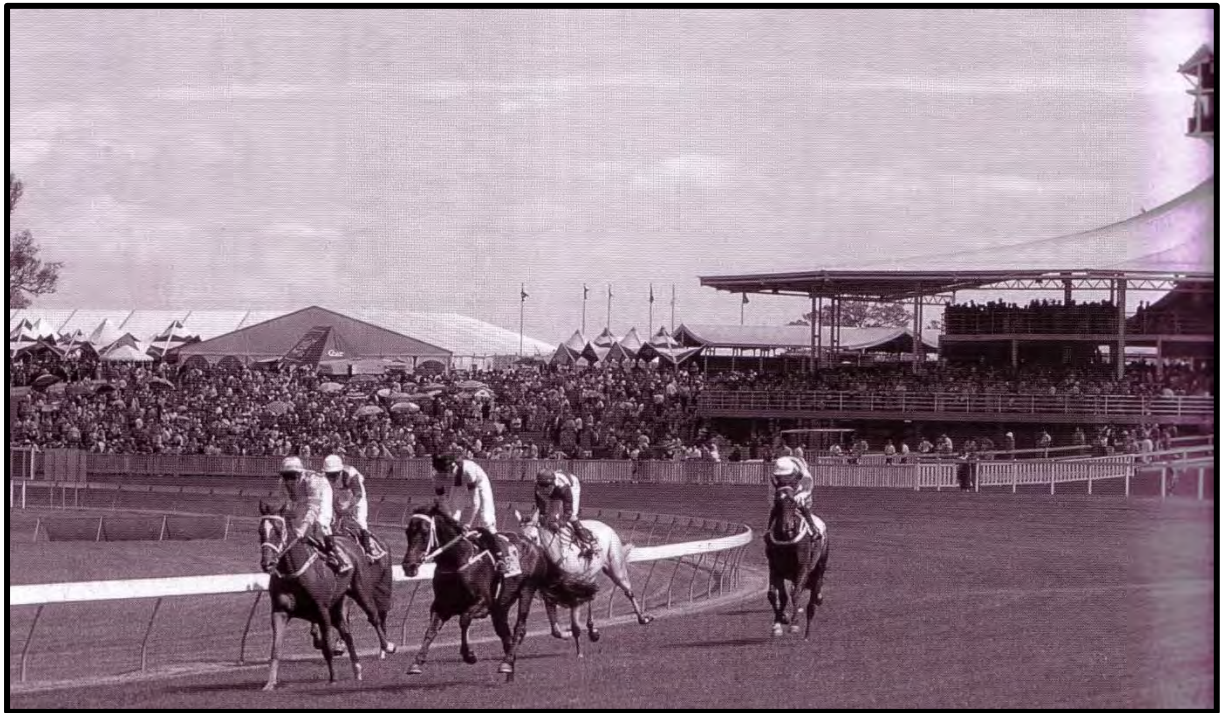
Bletchingly became champion sire for three consecutive years with his first three crops of foals racing. He did not become champion sire again despite bloodstock 'experts' confidently predicting 'better offspring with better mares'. It didn't happen; it rarely does. I do recall Bim showing me three foals in his first crop and volunteering the opinion they were 'alright'. They were. There was the brown colt with Ada Hunter ('Kingston Town'); the chestnut colt on Angelic ('Pilgrims Way') and my own chestnut colt with silver mane and tail on Breadline ('Bakerman'). David Hains bred the first and Tiggy Moses the Angelic colt. I later bought shares in the latter as a sire. I was cashed up by then with my sale of a Bletchingly/Beyond All colt for \$105,000:00 to T J Smith and also my eventual sale of the Bletchingly share. Acutely aware that all horses have a residual value of nil or less I/we converted this to real estate in Sydney and also the share market. Fortuitously my spouse Sarah is fiscally adroit. She even managed to stop my punting! Like I said my comfort in retirement is nearly all due to Bletchingly. Yes; I owe him a lot! On the other hand is an unsecured investment in a share in an unproved thoroughbred stallion a 'punt'? I'm just musing.



## A New Racecourse is Born

May 11, 2016

<http://www.scone.com.au/a-new-racecourse-is-born/>



Scone Race Club Opening November 1994

By Harley Walden

Scone Race Club would hold its race meetings on the White Park track for near on fifty years when in the mid-1960s it became clear that the White Park racecourse would soon prove to be inadequate, although it was extremely well located on the southern edge of town.

Various sites were looked at but proved to be unsuitable or too expensive so plans for relocating were shelved.

In the late 1970s after modest track upgrading and completion of a joint grandstand and horse sale ring at White Park, Scone Race Club sought assistance from the TAB to upgrade its administration centre, jockeys room and dining room.

The NSW Racecourse Development Committee (RDC) informed the club that no further funds would be forthcoming while the club remained at its present location.

One option that became apparent was a possible amalgamation with the Upper Hunter Race Club (Muswellbrook).

This proved an extremely unpopular option with club members and the citizens of Scone and the plan was abandoned.

In 1987 the club once again approached the RDC for assistance in upgrading its patron facilities and administration building.

The RDC explained quite clearly that it was prepared to assist in building a new racecourse as long as sufficient land was acquired; they were not prepared to sink more money into the totally inadequate racecourse at White Park.

With this in mind, committee members searched high and low for a suitable location but without success.

In 1988 Scone Race Club Committeeman Bill Rose informed the committee that he had found, in his opinion, the perfect site.

At the same time he produced a plan: if the Scone Race Club would assist the Hunter Equine Research Foundation then the land at a cost of one million dollars could be paid for.

With this in place the Club set about building a state of the art racetrack on Tarrengower at Satur.

When it became known that the track at White Park would close shades of 1944 appeared when a group of Scone sportsmen gathered and discussed the idea of giving the old track the send-off it deserved.

The “White Park (Racecourse) Wake” Committee consisted of W.P. Howey (convenor) former Scone Race Club President, Mr. A.A. Ashford (accountant), J.W. Johnston (stud owner), A.M. Rose (former Race Club treasurer), H.K. Walden (racing journalist), Stan Wicks (property owner and former horse trainer), W. Norman (Scone Newsagent).

The date set down for this nostalgic event was October 22 1994, followed by the “wake hangover” TAB meeting two days later on Monday, October 24.

They would be the last on the race track that has served the Scone racing industry for more than 47 years.

If the crowd was any indication, Scone Race Club should hold “closing down sales” more often.

At least 3000 people flocked to White Park racecourse on the Saturday to farewell the old track.

Forty-seven years of racing at White Park came to an end as lone piper George Fraser wailed Auld Lang Syne on the bagpipes and racing stalwart Bill Howey climbed the ladder to lower the Scone Race Club flag for the last time.

Howey is a former Scone Race Club President and Fraser is the grandson of long-time patron of the club, the late Sir Alister McMullin.

That was typical of the nostalgic presence amongst the crowd which took precedence over racing as people used the occasion to simply reminisce.

The end of nearly five decades of racing at White Park had attracted names synonymous with racing from near and far.

## Mayor's Speech

### Melbourne Cup 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour

15<sup>th</sup> October 2010



Featured Image: Des Gleeson (VRC), Lee Watts (Mayor UHSC), Noel Leckie (Scone Race Club), Amanda Elliott (VRC), Bill Howey (Councillor UHSC, Facilitator)

Welcome to Victoria Racing Board director Mrs Amanda Elliott, VRC Ambassador Mr Des Gleeson, accompanying Melbourne Cup personnel, Sponsors, Councillors, and members of the UHSC community.

The Melbourne Cup is the race that stops the nation and in 2010 the famous race celebrates its 150th Anniversary. Scone has embraced the spirit of this anniversary tour and has played host to a wide range of related activities this week. These activities have included: a race fanfare musical playoff and national anthem singing competition local schools, an open day at Invermien Stud, and a 'Track Truths' session yesterday which saw ABC reporter Mike Pritchard interview local Melbourne Cup personality Greg Bennett.

In addition to the public being able to view 4 Melbourne Cups today plus a range of racing memorabilia, the 18-carat gold Cup travelled to Scott Memorial Hospital and Strathearn Village Aged Care Facility where we enjoyed a parade of race day hats made by Scone Pre-School Children. The Cup will travel out to historic Belltrees Primary School where Ellerston and Rouchel students will join Belltrees Primary School to be a part of today's celebrations and view the Melbourne Cup and this evening, the Scone & Upper Hunter Horse Festival Committee will play host to the 150th Melbourne Cup at a 'Melbourne Cup' Trivia Night at the Linga Longa at Gundy. As they say ... 'It's all happening!'

The Melbourne Cup Tour is part of the Victoria Racing Club's commitment to share 'The People's Race' with everyday Australians. On behalf of the Upper Hunter Shire Council – and the Scone community in particular – I wish to thank the VRC for making today's visit by the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Melbourne Cup possible.

You cannot refer to the Melbourne Cup and not think of Scone. For some 150 years Australia's Thoroughbred Breeding operations have been concentrated in the Hunter Valley. Our picturesque and fertile soils provide:

- 50% of all Australian thoroughbred foals born each year
- 71.6% of yearlings sold at Australian yearling sales,
- 75% of Australian stallion service fees, and
- Substantial employment in the region.

The size of the local thoroughbred industry has seen the Upper Hunter internationally recognized as the world's second largest thoroughbred breeding nursery. Fittingly perhaps – and not just because of its thoroughbred population – Scone is well known as the Horse Capital of Australia and is, as a result, an iconic destination when it comes to exploring the names of so many people and horses who have woven their stories through the rich tapestry of the Melbourne Cup's 150 year history

To touch on the sheer number of local people involved with many a Melbourne Cup horse or history lesson would be to open the cover on one of the largest racing encyclopaedias ever written. Instead I will mention just a few of the Melbourne Cup related human and equine names that call and have called this district home.

Our town's connections with the Melbourne Cup go all the way back to the start of the race: Dr Judy White of the famous Belltrees property reports that her family bred and raced Archer who, for over a century was one of only two horses who won the Melbourne Cup twice – in 1861 and 1862.

Scone's link to the Melbourne Cup comes full circle with the Scone born 2009 winner being a horse called Shocking who will start one of the favoured runners in 2010 as well. Shocking was bred by local stud Ilala which is owned and managed by George and Felicity Fraser.

What of the horses of the interim years?

Stand on Scone racetrack on any given morning and amongst the morning mist you will spot the man who broke in and pre-trained the Champion mare and 3-time Melbourne Cup winner Makybe Diva – Greg Bennett. Another well-known trainer is Betty Shepherd – one of this country's first licensed female trainers. Betty prepared 'Trevors' for the Caulfield and Melbourne Cups in 1966.



I mentioned Makybe Diva – a mare who became a household name after her extraordinary feats in this famous race. This mighty mare and her 2010 foal reside just up the road from here at Segenhoe Stud. Segenhoe's name comes up again as the breeder of Maybe Better who ran third to the Japanese raiders a few of years ago. Middlebrook Valley Lodge was responsible for breeding Intergaze. Intergaze's dam – Amarula – died this year but there are a number of female descendants from this family still resident at the farm. Other local winners include the Wakefield Stud bred Subzero who, upon retirement from racing, was employed as the clerk of the course's horse by Racing Victoria's long-time Clerk, Graham Salisbury, and has made numerous appearances on television, at charity functions, and at schools.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cup – like every running of the Cup before it – will have a distinctly Scone flavour courtesy of the birth place of a number of the race's runners. Some of these horses will have ties to more than just a Scone farm – I speak here of a group of local coal miners and racehorse owners including our very own Councillor Carter's husband – who will be cheering on their horse Zabrasive should he make the final field.

Arrowfield Stud, Bellerive, Widden, Kia Ora and a number of other well-known local properties have played their hand in standing the sires, breeding the foals, owning or agisting the dams of Melbourne Cup starters. Perhaps not surprisingly there is also no shortage of famous equine graves on all number of properties; one that comes to mind is 1940 Cup winner Old Rowley who is buried at Merriwa.

What of the riders? Local resident Keith Banks – described at the time as Sydney's most competent lightweight jockey – rode in 2 Melbourne Cups in 1964 and 1971 respectively. Keith is father-in-law of Scone Race Club Curator Reto Cadalbert whose family runs Rosehill Lodge on the New England Highway. Hilton Cope – the former owner of Darley's base at Kelvinside in Aberdeen – rode in the 1966 Cup whilst Wayne Harris rode in 4 Cups and won in 1994 riding Jeune.

You'll trip over a Melbourne Cup or two heading out to dinner at a number of Scone homesteads. The Cups for the 1920 winner Poitrel, 1948 winner Rimfire, 1956 winner Evening Peel and 1987 winner Kensei compile that local collection – some of these cups being on display today alongside the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Melbourne Cup. The owners of these Cups are people you will cross paths with on any given day at the newsagent or at a local meeting – Russ Lazarus (who raced Kensei) and Bill Moses (whose family raced Poitrel) have generously supported today's events by allowing their Melbourne Cups to be on display. I should mention that when the first Melbourne Cup Committee meeting was held to discuss today's events Russ arrived with a bulky pillow case that no one thought to ask after the contents of. There was more than one exclamation of surprise when mid-meeting he suddenly opened it to reveal the prized trophy itself!

It would be fair to say that horses and horse racing are in our blood in Scone. No other town in Australia can claim a connection with the horse the way we can and in 2011 the Scone Race Club will host an inaugural 'stand-alone' Saturday meeting in addition to the traditional Scone Cup remaining on the Friday with total prizemoney for that day alone at around \$600,000. Like the Melbourne Cup, Scone Cup belongs to the people and we are delighted to see this town's racing heritage elevated to the national level.

We hope you enjoy today's opportunity to see the Melbourne Cup, and once again I wish to thank the VRC and our sponsors for making this visit possible. I hope you will enjoy a piece of racing history by joining us today ... and all the best for your ticket in the sweep come the first Tuesday in November!

## Local boy makes own fame



Peter Snowden was happy to share his story with Scone during the 2011 Scone and Upper Hunter Horse Festival. He is pictured with Mike Pritchard

CAITLIN ANDREWS

15 Dec, 2011 12:13 PM

He is one of the best trainers in the country and master of the highest earning racing conglomerate, but locally bred Peter Snowden still remembers where he came from.

As the thoroughbred racing trainer secures his position at the top of the pool, he hasn't forgotten his beginnings in Scone and the people who have believed in him his whole life.

Snowden, the head trainer for Darley controls the Sheikh Mohammed's stables - Crown Lodge at Warwick Farm, Flemington and Agnes Banks at Hawkesbury.

Earlier this month it was also announced he would take horses to the World Cup meeting in Dubai.

Snowden's top feature horses at present Sepoy and Helmet will be the runners to go, also preparing for the Dubai World Cup night next year.

Snowden told The Scone Advocate, these two signature horses are the best in the stables at present with Sepoy winning four group 1 races and Helmet proving just as good with three group 1 victories under his belt.

With more than 250 horses in training at one time, Snowden works with a team of highly dedicated people starting work at 3.30am in the morning and working through to 7.30pm seven days a week.

However, Snowden doesn't take his success lightly as he expresses extreme gratitude to the support of his wife, Lyn, son Paul, master of stables in Melbourne and daughter Lisa, a lawyer, throughout his career.

Snowden's highly illustrious career started here in Scone when he followed in the footsteps of his father, Ross, who was a local jockey.

He first started riding as a teenager as an apprentice to John Noonan when he lived with close friends and mentors Scone racing identities Tom and Joy Ollerton.

Snowden and Lyn married in Scone and the couple tries to visit as often as possible, with family still living in town.

Bowing to the pressures of keeping the weight off, Snowden took advantage of the opportunity to train and has never looked back.

Snowden started training for Lionel Israel, then moving to Warwick Farm to train for Woodlands before taking over from John Hawkes as head trainer at Crown Lodge.

Last season Darley had seven group 1 winners, the second highest in the country to Black Caviar's trainer Peter Moody (nine), was the highest earning stud topping \$16 million and boasted the most winners in the country.

Snowden said it feels good to be doing so well, but he still doesn't forget where he came from.

"I was born in Scone and grew up in Scone.

"Scone is where I first started and I will never forget where I came from," he said.

"I've had a wonderful life in racing and I've had great opportunities that I have taken advantage of.

"I've worked really hard, my job is my life, but I have great support from my family."

Snowden said he believes the future of racing in Scone looks terrific with a committee that is very driven, very passionate and very committed to keep striving to be the best and attract the best in the country.

He said he would definitely bring up quite a few horses to the 2012 Scone Racing Carnival.

One of Snowden's biggest followers Tom Ollerton said back in the day Snowden was a good rider in the bush and rode a winner in town too.

"Peter has put in the hard yards and he deserves all he gets.

"I feel proud of Pete, he did it tough when he first went to the city but to his credit he stuck it out," Mr Ollerton said.

"You can take the boy out of the bush, but you can't take the bush out of the boy."

Local racing reporter Harley Walden has also watched Peter grow from a little boy to the self-made success he is today.

"What Peter has done, he has done himself," Mr Walden said.

"He was ready made for his appointment at Darley as nothing is ever left undone with Peter.

"He is a good country lad doing well.

"Peter Snowden is a chap that if he walked up Kelly Street today people could talk to him and he would talk to them and he'll never be any different."

Former veterinarian Bill Howey, who has suggested Snowden may even be the highest sporting achiever ever produced in Scone, said Snowden's story was a story of inspiration almost beyond the limits of reasonable possibility let alone probability.

"Snowden has achieved all of this while still retaining his natural country humility, grace and charm.

"Success and fame have not changed Peter – a true test of character."



Ross Snowden and Stan Wicks at White Park Races

#### Peter Snowden Tribute

Peter was born into a racing environment in the Hunter Valley, which itself is the epicentre for thoroughbred breeding. He has by his own endeavours achieved a level of success that others can only dream about. What's more he has done this without ever compromising his own high standard of integrity and fair play.

There have never been any short cuts or hiccups in Peters' professional life, which makes his story so much more remarkable.

He remains the same modest, likeable and thoroughly trustworthy person he ever was.

I am sure that these qualities are plain to see during his frequent T.V. interviews. What he tends to downplay is his total commitment to the training and well-being of the horses in his care and the level of patience and understanding needed to bring out the best in them week in and week out.

J. R. G. Morgan Sussex England

August 2016



## Scone Bred Champion

### *Prologue Update (Sunday 14th October 2018)*

***Just when we were thinking things couldn't become any better; they have! Peter and Paul Snowden have scaled 'The Everest' twice; with outstanding sprinter 'Redzel'. Billed as the richest-race-on-turf in the world the contentious and controversial 1200 metre sprint, now in its second year, was a scintillating success again yesterday (13/10/18) at Randwick. The \$13 million race filled the fine old course to capacity. The gates were closed early 'capturing' well over 40,000 hedonistic patrons. It appears Sydney has not lost its voracious appetite to party following the initial 'great romp' in late January 1788! The Snowden camp has collected the majority purse now in both competitions including the inaugural running for \$10 million in 2017. It adds yet further cachet to the magnificent 'rags-to-riches' saga of the Snowden cadre from Scone.***

This is a story of inspiration almost beyond the limits of reasonable possibility let alone probability. Chris Roots wrote about it in the SMH on Wednesday 30 November 2011 under the headline 'Snowden's amazing journey defies belief'. See: <http://www.smh.com.au/sport/horseracing/from-scone-to-dubai-snowdens-amazing-journey-defies-belief-20111129-1o57e.html>. Previously I had written to Peter Snowden to compliment him on his extraordinary success and absolutely outstanding achievement in becoming Australia's champion thoroughbred trainer. I reflected on the following:

*'You have achieved all this while still retaining your natural country humility, grace and charm. Success and fame have not changed you – a true test of character! I am reminded of your early days with John Noonan and 'Wiffo' Barker and quietly reflect on how proud your parents Ross and (stepmother) Pat would have been! Justifiably so! It would not have been any different if your escalation had not been quite so stratospheric! I also retain very fond memories of son Paul in my Junior Cricket Team. He certainly learned 'how to play a straight bat'.*

*It is mildly ironic and equally prophetic that one of your early successes was with 'Promising' (by 'Osmunda') for Roger Neill and Paul Field? How this modest beginning has blossomed into today's quintessential triumph! No doubt you are immensely proud of your close family and enjoy the unqualified support of your extended family not least from your devoted spouse Lynn?'*

Chris Roots continued: 'Peter Snowden never imagined he would train in Sydney when he was a battler in Scone. He certainly didn't dare to dream he would travel the world for Sheikh Mohammed, the ruler of Dubai, and take horses to the World Cup meeting in the UAE State. So when Peter, now the Sheikh's head trainer in Australia, got the call to take star three-year-olds Sepoy and Helmet to Dubai, he was surprised and delighted. "I didn't even think I would have a winner in Sydney when I was in Scone," he said. "This has been an incredible journey to get to where I am. I'm just honoured that they would want me to keep training these horses over there. They could have just taken them over and I'm sure they would have got the job done." Peter Snowden views with a mix of "anticipation, excitement and trepidation" news that his champion colts Helmet and Sepoy will race on Dubai World Cup night, the richest race program in the world, next year.

Previously Godolphin had summoned some of Peter Snowden's most promising horses to Europe but they had no success under different trainers. Sepoy and Helmet are clearly the two best Darley products to have headed overseas and it is a change of policy to keep them under Peter Snowden's care. It will be the first time Peter will prepare horses to race in the famous Godolphin royal blue, which has only been seen in Australia when it chases the Melbourne Cup.

Sepoy, a winner of 10 of his 11 starts, will carry the blue silks in the \$2 million Dubai Golden Shaheen over 1200 metres on an artificial surface called Tapeta at Meydan, while Helmet will be entered in the \$2 million UAE Derby. Both races are on March 26. Snowden said the two colts are likely to have starts in Melbourne in Darley colours before heading to Dubai. Peter's son Paul who runs the Melbourne part of the operation will be the travelling foreman.

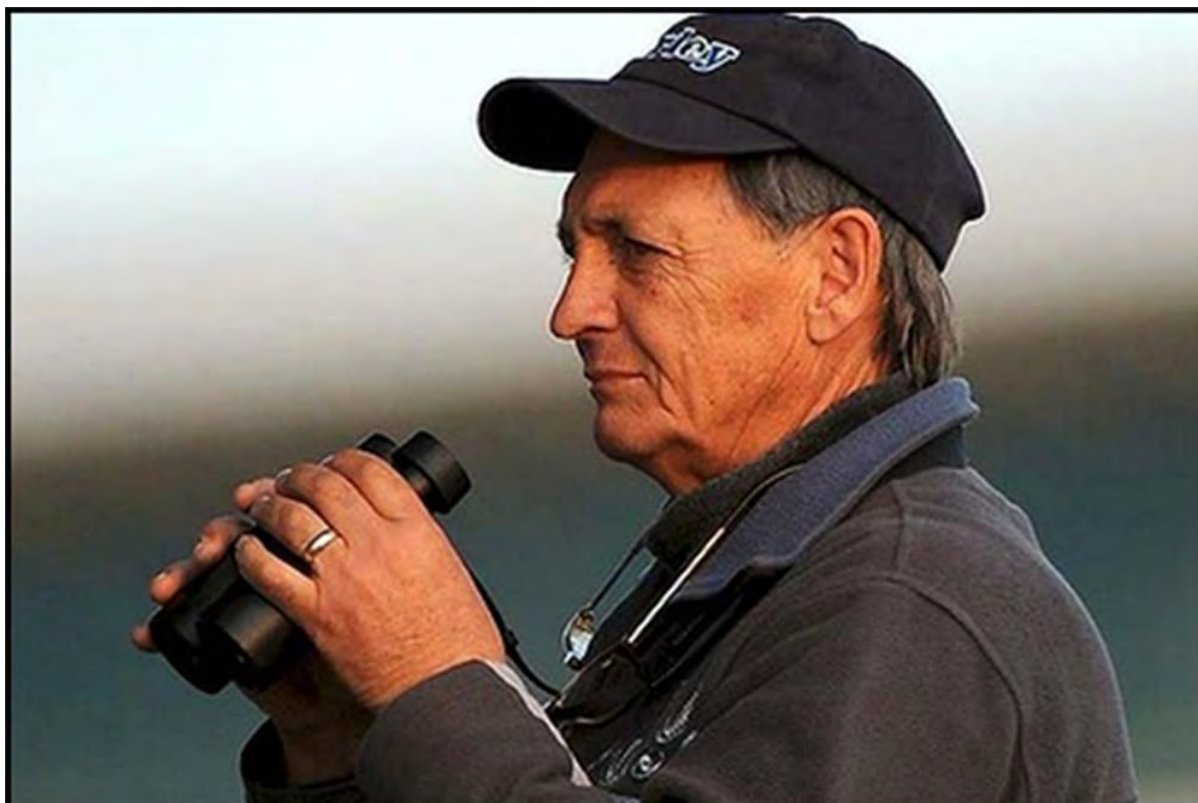
Sepoy and Helmet lead Darley's unprecedented sweep of the two-year-old Group 1s last season, winning two each and they have trained on to win the biggest three-year-old races of the spring in Melbourne. They were both expected to leave Australia for European campaigns next year but the timing has just been moved forward. Sepoy, a son of Elusive Quality, is the highest-rated three-year-old in the Australia on a mark of 129 with Timeform. He won the Blue Diamond and Golden Slipper as a juvenile and then beat the older horses at three in the Manikato Stakes before taking out the Coolmore Stud Stakes on Derby Day at Flemington. He will race for the final time for Snowden in Dubai after which he will be transferred to one of Godolphin's European trainers and target the Golden Jubilee at Royal Ascot and July Cup at Newmarket'.



Paul & Peter Snowden

**Peter Snowdon**

Scone Bred Champion



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## Mecca of Racing



Scone Race Club

I rediscovered this article when I was searching for some information on Herbie Eveleigh. It reminded me of the loss of Harley Walden; commemorated so well in the ‘Thoroughbred’ reiteration. I acknowledge the source in [www.scone.com](http://www.scone.com). The commentary is both classically and quintessentially Harley. He retained a lifelong love of the Scone Race Club in particular and racing in Scone in general. I cannot recall a more devoted patron who wrote so passionately on his favourite topic for so long. Vale Harley.

May 13, 2016

<http://www.scone.com.au/mecca-of-racing/>

By Harley Walden

SCONE, less than 200 kilometres from Sydney, served by air and fast modern trains, lies at the northern end of the fabulous Hunter Valley cradled against the distant peaks of Barrington, Woolooma’s Mount Royal and the Liverpool Range.

It has been described as one of the most magnificent stretches of country in the southern hemisphere, dominated by its rich grazing land and is the equivalent of the famed Blue Grass country of Kentucky, USA with its host of famous studs.

One of Australia’s great racing journalists Bert Lillye, who died in 1996, was a great advocate of the Scone Cup meeting held every year since 1947.

Bert often spoke of Race Week in Scone as the Mecca of Racing.

The first Scone Cup meeting was a task for men who had gone out on a limb, not only to build the race track, but to run something of this proportion that the town had not before experienced.

A one-day event turned into two and then in 1987 another milestone was achieved when the Cup Carnival was run over three days.

Prizemoney for the Cup increased with every running from the 300 pounds that Precise won in 1947 to around \$120,000 plus trophies the winner will receive this year.

The Cup winner's trophies were also unique down through the years, from silver and gold cups to canteens of cutlery and at one presentation, a set of ladies and gents wrist watches.

In the early years the two day meeting saw the running of three feature races – The Sire's Produce Stakes, Scone Guineas and the Scone Cup, events that were sponsored by local studs and always patronised by horses they raced.

The Cup has always been the flagship of the Carnival but the Scone Guineas when it was run over the Cup journey of 1 mile and 100 yards is a race probably highlighted by the great performance in 1952 of the winner Neat Andrew, owned by leading Sydney bookmaker Jack Mandel.

The chestnut colt backed up the next day to take out the Scone Cup, the only time the feat has been achieved in the running of the two events.

Ironically, it was Jack Mandel who that year donated the Cup trophy.

Down through the years feature races have been dropped and new ones added, but the Cup steeped in history and tradition is the event that everyone wants to win.

Some great performances have been established to win the trophy.

Granada's effort in 1954 under the impost of nine stone 8 pounds (61kg) to give jockey Ernie Walmsley his third Cup success and also a record; and wins in the 1969-71 Cups by country champion Merry Jack to give northern NSW trainer Arthur Gore his third in the race.

In 1981-82 saw a unique performance when Bridgeman made it back to back Cups for jockey Kevin Gover, a feat equalled by Brave Prince and Jamie Innes in 2000 and 2001.

Local horseman Martin (Herbie) Eveleigh wrote his name in the history books to become the first Scone jockey to ride a Cup winner aboard Sky Sailor in 1967 and again on Norm Park in 1977, the Cup meeting being postponed and held on a Saturday in June.

The Scone Cup Carnival over the years has been blessed with the array of horsemanship that has been on show through the years with the likes of the greats: Jack Thompson, Ray Selkrig, Mel Schumacher, Arthur Ward and Muswellbrook's famous Wayne Harris who all had success in the Cup.

Patrons were also privileged to witness the riding feats of Darby Munro, George Moore, Neville Sellwood and Des Lake.

In recent years at the old White Park track and the complex at Satur have seen wins by Gavin Eades, Jim and Larry Cassidy, Glen Boss and a former exponent of the pigskin in Darren Beadman.

The bush has also produced its share of top horsemen like Cecil (Skeeter) Kelly, Leon Fox, Barry Smith, Doug Weir, Ernie Walmsley and Robert Thompson who all rode with success over the Cup meetings and proved they could mix it with the best on the city tracks.

Leading Sydney trainers Tommy Smith, Jack Green and Jack Denham along with Victorian Lee Freedman were great campaigners at the Carnival in the early years.

Nowadays the support comes from the new breed, Gai Waterhouse, Ron Quinton, Peter Snowden and John Hawkes with Newcastle trainers Paul Perry and Kris Lees are up there with the best of the metropolitan trainers.

In 2009 Paul Messara rang up number one for the bush when he became the first Scone trainer to win the Cup with Obvious Choice.

Although it should be noted that Charlie Dodd who prepared Piccadilly Lad to win the feature event 1949 was a Scone-ite but his horses were prepared at Newcastle.

For many years a ladies place in racing was expected to be a quick parade in the Fashions of the Field or the sashing of the winners.

But at the Cup meeting in 1984 a few eyebrows were raised when Sydney lass Debbie Packwood led in four winners over the two-day carnival, including Donna Lydia, winner of the co-feature race the Bim Thompson Lightning Stakes.

The Lightning Stakes, as it was known when first run in 1962, has carried the name of many of the club's stalwarts and local studs who have sponsored the race through its time on the club's agenda.

As time moved on more and more women began to play a larger role in racing and lady riders began their part in the Sport of Kings.

Into the 2000's the girls were well entrenched and leading Sydney female horsewomen Kathy O'Hara announced their arrival when she became the first female to win the Scone Cup, not once but twice, 2006 aboard Fighting Fund and again in 2007 on Spy Zaim, both horses prepared in Sydney by the late Guy Walter.

Two thousand and three Wyong trainer, Louise Munce put her name on the leader board, when she became the first female conditioner to win a Scone Cup with Full on Magic.

A thousand stories could be related about the Scone Cup Carnival – racing, training, riding feats, the characters, the highs and lows – the list goes on.

One may never know what it was that drew Bert Lillye on his annual pilgrimage to Scone each year.

But everything above may easily have prompted the journalistic icon to refer to the Scone Cup Carnival as the "cordon bleu" – the blue ribbon of country racing.