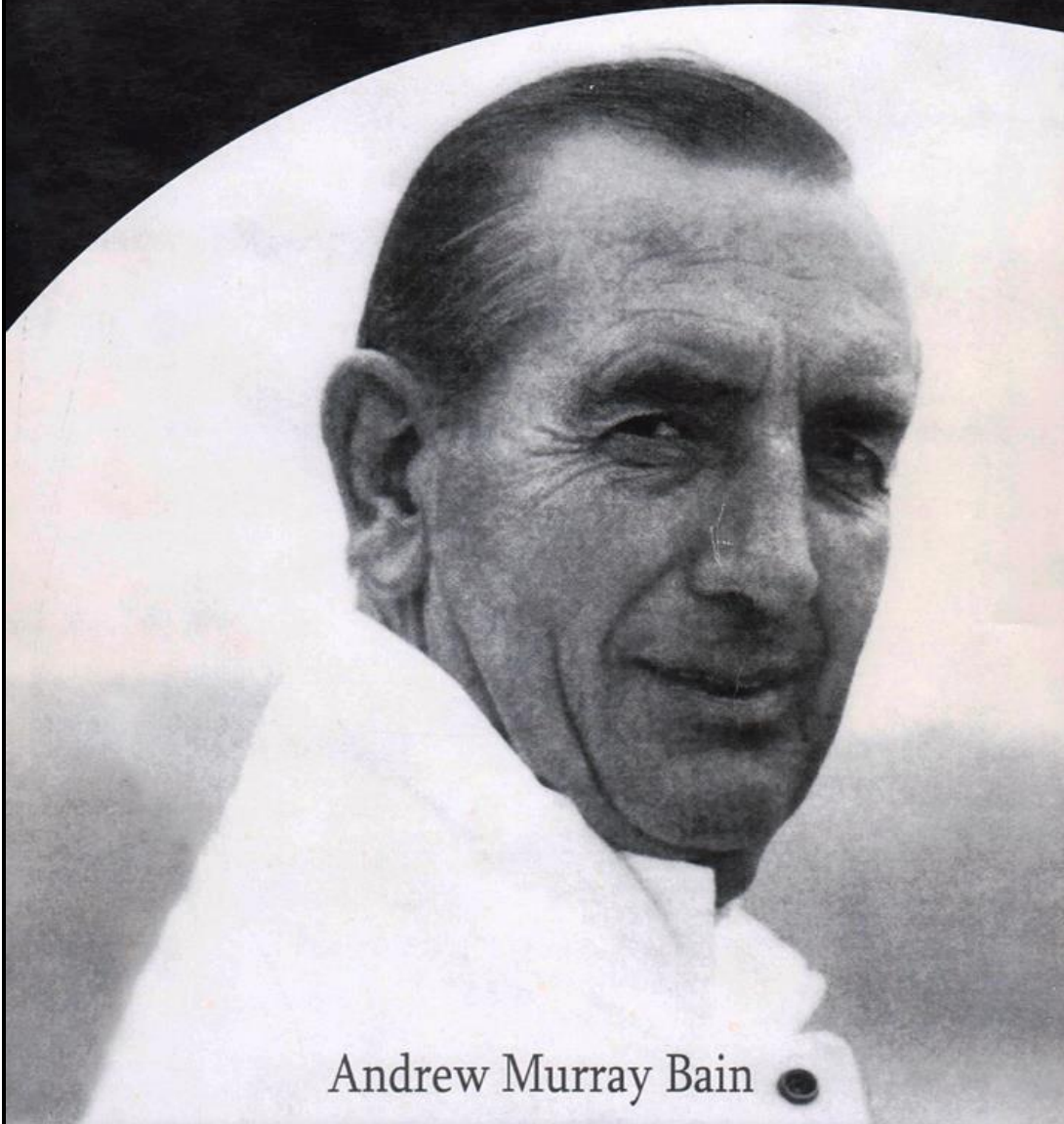


Andrew Murray Bain

*The Infinite History of*  
Veterinary Practice in Scone



Andrew Murray Bain

By W. P. Howey

## Cornucopia of Lillye: 'The Best of Bert'

There is little doubt the Damon Runyon of sports journalism in Australia during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Century was the late Bert Lillye. Universally acknowledged by his peers, admired and even adored by his expansive readership Bert was also a great friend of Scone and passionate about the Scone Cup Race Meeting. He is famously on record as saying he would rather come to Scone than attend the Melbourne Cup. His regular 'Around the Studs', 'Backstage of Racing' and 'Lillye on Legends' feature articles in the Sydney Morning Herald were an absolute 'must read' for more than just his avid fans and those who did not confine their interests merely to thoroughbred racing and breeding. Bert Lillye wrote about one legend of his acquaintance more so than any other and that was Murray Bain.

Bert stated his most unforgettable character in racing was Andrew Murray Bain. When this gangling, kind-hearted Scot died on March 17, 1974 he wrote: "A large warm slice of Scone died last Sunday because Murray Bain was Scone. If ever a man could be described as a thoroughbred, it was Murray Bain". This was lavish praise indeed from a hard-nosed Sydney racing journalist! More so than anyone else Bert captured in words the quintessential Murray and occasionally added the 'warts' as well! The following 'eclectic' is unashamedly plundered, purloined, plagiarized, pummeled and pulverized from the 'very best of Bert'. I do not think it is possible or even appropriate to attempt to improve on the eloquence of Bert Lillye's pen.

"It did one good to spend a little time with this remarkable veterinarian whether he was at work or leisure. He came from Bonnybridge in the Shire of Stirling north of Edinburgh yet was anything but a dour Scot; and he had every reason to be just that. For 23 years night and day he put himself at the beck and call of man, horse and most animals in the vast Hunter Valley and beyond. It was Bain who founded and then became principal of the large veterinary practice that serviced the Hunter Valley which is one of the largest thoroughbred nurseries in the world. It was always refreshing and educational to find that my friend Bain retained his enthusiasm for horse raising and racing no matter what. It is not difficult for any man to lose his enthusiasm when it means leaving a warm bed on a cold rainy night to travel 100 kilometres and more over dirt roads to succour a sick cranky mare.

Murray was a graduate of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College at Edinburgh, Scotland. Soon after his graduation he enlisted in the Shropshire Yeomanry and rose to the rank of major at one period serving as acting lieutenant-colonel. He served as a veterinary officer during World War II with the British Cavalry in Egypt but on discharge went to the USA where he gained invaluable experience working on 'Bull' Hancock's Claiborne Farm in Kentucky. He always described it 'as the best commercial stud in the world not a rich man's plaything but a highly commercialized project'. From there he went to New Zealand where for three years he managed the Alton Lodge stud for Sir James Fletcher.

'Alton Lodge was the showplace of New Zealand breeding' he said. 'We bred at least one champion each year I was there – Tauloch, Gold Script, Dalray and Zenith to mention just four'. Murray was still employed by Sir James Fletcher when he made his first visit to Australia on holidays. 'I came to Scone to study the stud routine and compare it to that in New Zealand. I was amazed to discover there was no veterinary surgeon in residence at Scone' he recalled at our first meeting. 'So I went back to Alton Lodge, resigned, and then returned to Scone where I set up practice in September 1950'. He remained there until his tragic death.

Murray Bain had the most expressive eyes of any man I have ever known. They could flash the warm fire of friendship or the cold steel of anger but he did not harbour a grudge. His veterinary work load was hard but he loved nothing better than to spend a relaxing late afternoon hour with his friends at the Scone RSL Club playing a game of snooker or enjoying a quiet drink. It was then you saw the warm soft side to the Bain temperament as he enjoyed a quiet but never harmful joke at his or another's expense.

It became an ANZAC Day and St. Andrews Day Race Meeting ritual for Murray to produce a bottling of his own make; a silky, slinky drop of creamy velvet known as Atholl Brose. He took weeks to brew the ingredients and it slipped down a man's throat with the taste of ambrosia although it contained the kick of two mules as many of the 'innocents' who tested it can verify. If for no other reason the legend that grew around Atholl Brose made friend Bain an institution at Scone.

Murray had other interests but many channeled into the world of horse racing and breeding. He was Vice-President of Scone Race Club and it was his enterprise that enabled the club to secure more land to improve the racing circuit. Murray had big plans for his beloved Scone Race Club as he did for setting up his own commercial breeding farm. It was Murray's planning and knowledge of bloodlines that led to his widow 'Mace' breeding and racing Dark Eclipse, winner of the 1989 Golden Slipper Stakes at Rosehill. Murray bred many earlier winners and those that he raced himself carried the famous Black Watch tartan. Brood mare Ragged Blossom was given to Murray by Jim White of Edinglassie when he selected her from a group of 12 cull mares and against the advice of the owner who considered her a hopeless proposition. Ragged Blossom produced Tod Maid, Derelict, Valediction, Scarlet Kingdom, Little Gum Nut and Obelia.

One of the last foals bred by Murray Bain was the Biscay – Obelia filly born on November 8 1973 which was about the time the gentle Scot went to Sydney for his first operation that killed him. It was not long after Murray's death that they found Obelia's little filly foal entangled and mangled in wire and mesh ..... and in a bad way. She had taken fright during the night and in her panic had crashed through the fence. One leg was fractured below the elbow, the other carried along gaping wound ripped open by the wire. I was in Scone when Murray's fellow veterinarians worked hard to mend the little filly's injuries. They had a special incentive to save their friend's horse and they did; but she would never race. I must admit I was shaken when I first saw the filly. It could have been said she was marked by the hand of fate! Running almost the length of her face was a curiously shaped white blaze. Believe me when I tell you that it was in the shape of a Scottish thistle!

You will walk many a crooked mile before you come across professionals who are more dedicated to their calling than veterinary surgeons and the horsemen on the large thoroughbred breeding farms. Theirs is a life devoted to the well-being of the horse in all its stages; from embryo to foal, to weanling, to yearling; then as broodmare or stallion. It is a life that embraces long tiring hours and being on call at all hours of the day and night. I like nothing better than to relax with the vets and stud workers in the cool of the evening and yarn over a can of beer, or two. I had spent the day at Murrurundi. We came back to Scone to relax and talk got around to that magnificent man, the late Murray Bain, a tall Scot with his own sense of humour, propriety and indignation. Get Murray mad and he would draw himself up to is full height, then give forth with a roar that would make a Black Watch sergeant major resemble a timid field-mouse.

But Murray could charm the lace-up boots off a suffragette if the mood took him and no one appreciated a good joke more than he, even if it was played on him.

Murray, who had no peer when it came to veterinary skill with breeding thoroughbreds, had magnificent flair and he exercised it in everything he did. There was his one particular way of describing to the stud laymen the condition of the follicle when he tested mares waiting to be bred to the stallion. Murray would use his expressive big hands to better his explanation that the follicle in its early stage was the size of a grape, then a golf ball and, when the time was near, a 'ripening orange'. This routine would be carried out day after day during the breeding season and it became part of the daily boredom until 'Curly' had a thought to liven proceedings. When Murray's car was seen on the horizon the next morning and heading towards the stud 'Curly' went to work. He cleaned out the mares' tract then carefully inserted an orange followed by a golf ball. The mare was then placed fifth in order of entry to the crush to await Murray's inspection. They say that Murray's face when his probing fingers closed around a golf ball then an orange was a picture no artist could capture! There is a sequel to the story. Murray put the orange on the side of the crush and went about his work but only after he had enjoyed the prank as much as the onlookers. Later that day one of the stud workmen came along and took a fancy to the orange. He knew nothing of the prank so you don't have to be told what happened!

The vets who service the expansive thoroughbred breeding centres such as the Hunter Valley of necessity work as a team which generates great comradeship and respect for each other. Murray Bain they loved because it was he who started many young vets on the way to highly successful careers; but young men fresh out of college can be high-spirited. At times they loved nothing better than to prod Bain's majestic manner but always in good fun and respect. There was the time a studmaster brought in a worm for identification. One of the juniors offered the opinion that it was an immature round worm. Murray came back with the crushing reply; 'if that's an immature round worm, I'm the Archbishop of Canterbury'! The worm was sent off for further examination. When the report came back it was confirmed as an immature round worm. No one said a word when the letter arrived at the Scone clinic with the verdict and Murray did not broach the subject. The next morning when he entered his office there was a memo on his desk. It was addressed, 'Your Grace.....'! 'Cheeky young bastard' was the predictable retort! [The author was the 'junior vet'!]



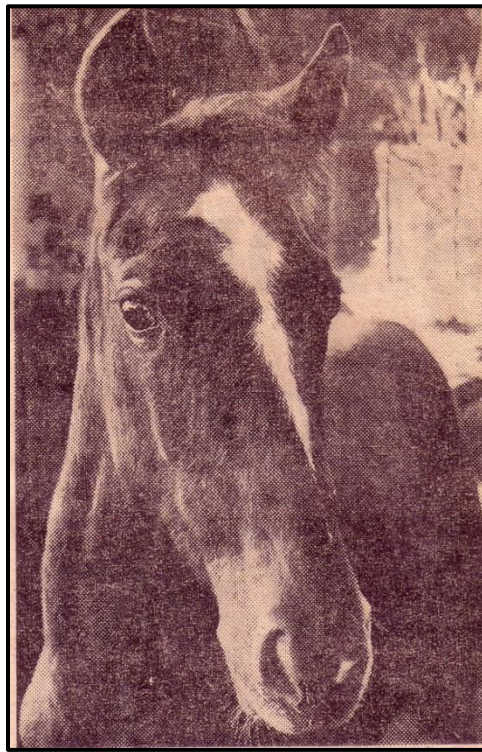
Mr. Bert Lillye, turf writer for the Sydney Morning Herald, presents Mr. J. W. 'Bim' Thompson of Widden Stud with the owner's trophy, who accepted on behalf of himself and co-owners Messrs F. L. Bragg, W. Parry-Okeden, F. Wilson, F. Thomas and R. Mann after their horse 'Idol' won the Bert Lillye Lightning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



### ‘She Bears the Mark of Fate’

The following is an unabashed plagiarising of the original masterpiece penned by Bert Lillye in his ‘Around the Studs’ series in the Sydney Morning Herald. This emotional tribute was printed in the SMH on Saturday 8 June 1974 although it contains some mildly embarrassing ‘self-aggrandizement’ references.

“In the dark days of superstition they would have said the filly was marked by the hand of fate. An unusual white blaze begins in the centre of her forehead and runs down her sad face. Study it closely, use the smallest bit of imagination and you will recognize it as a Scottish thistle. Which must make you wonder, when you learn that she was bred by the late Murray Bain, the grandest Scot I have known. And there is more.....



The Biscay-Obelia Filly with her intriguing “Scotch thistle” marking

The Biscay-Obelia weanling filly was born on November 8 last year (1973), on the lovely little thoroughbred property Murray and his wife Mace were setting up on the outskirts of Scone town. He had been struck down with a dreaded, crippling illness. But November 8 was about the time they took Murray to Sydney for hospitalization and operation. Murray came home to Scone – to die, on March 17 a wasted figure far removed from the merry gangling Scot his friend shad known so well. And it was not long after this they found his little filly foal entangled and mangled in wire and mesh ..... in a bad, bad way. She had taken fright during the night and in her panic had crashed through the fence. One leg was fractured below the elbow, the other carried a long, gaping wound ripped by the wire.

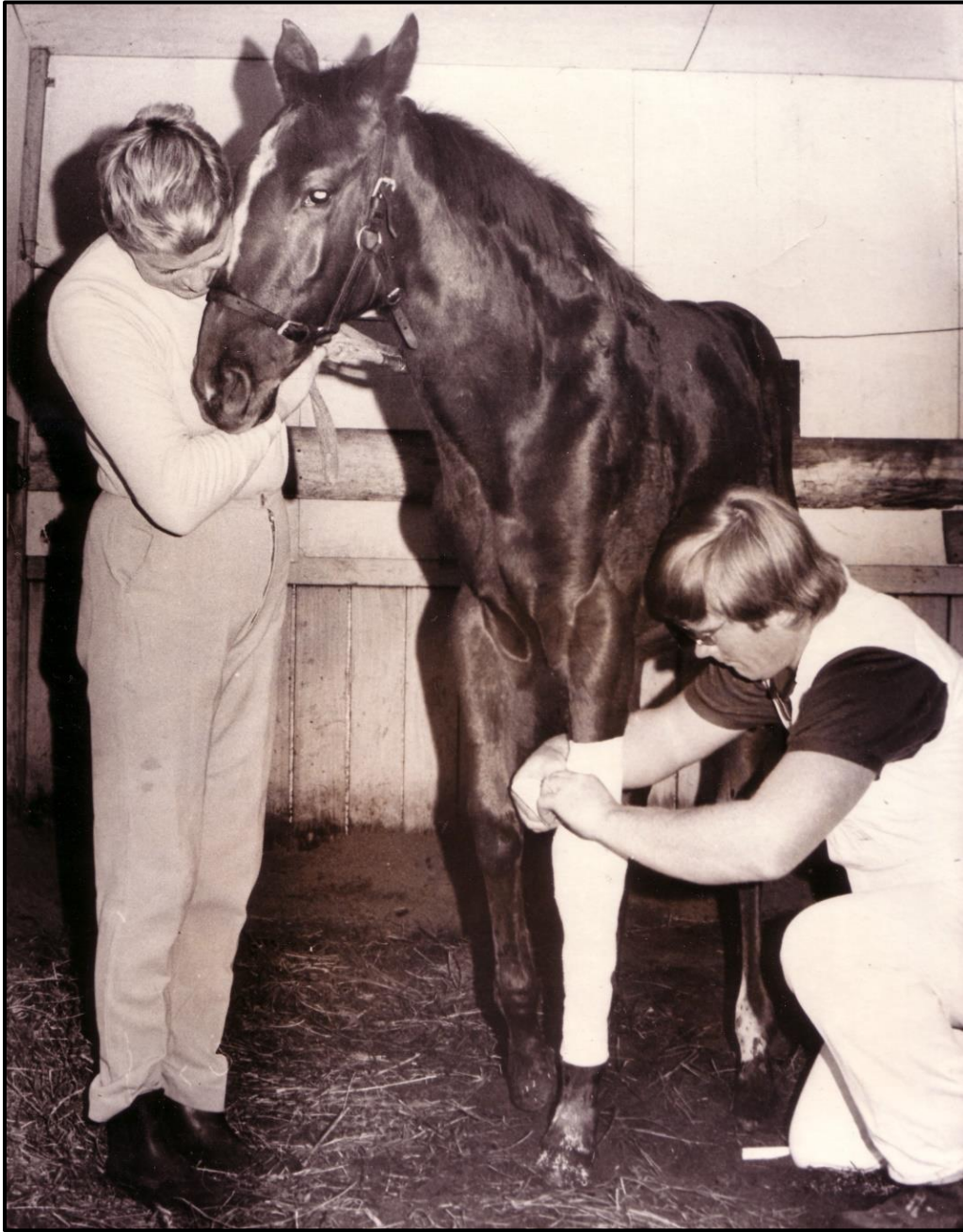
A veterinary surgeon could not have been blamed if he had ordered the filly's destruction. In the past it would have been automatic. But not Bill Howey. As a friend and veterinary associate of Murray Bain, he had a special incentive to try to save the filly. So he treated her injuries, then tranquilized her with drugs so that she would lie on the ground and not aggravate her injuries. He next enlisted the help of Betty and Arch Shepherd, animal lovers extraordinary and good friends of the Bains. They were happy to stable the filly close by their home so that she would not be disturbed by other horses and where she was under constant surveillance. Each morning Bill Howey came to dress the wounds. All through the day the Shepherds applied physiotherapy to the wasting shoulder and leg muscles. In the morning they bodily lifted the filly to her feet; at night they laid her down to rest. There was always feed close by the filly's head because she had taught herself to eat lying down. The filly will never race but she is getting stronger by the day. Bill Howey and the Shepherds, by their devotion, have saved her life and she will breed a treasure trove in itself because the filly comes from one of racing's most successful families.



On her feet at last. The bandage protects the 10-inch wound, but also strengthens the leg which has to take the weight from the leg that was broken. Note how the shoulder muscles have withered above the leg that was fractured below the elbow

All this had its beginnings in 1958 when Jim White, in disgust, gave Murray Bain a mare who had disappointed him first on the racecourse, then at the stud. Her name was Ragged Blossom and her only racecourse success in 16 starts was in a \$50 maiden at Muswellbrook. Then she failed to get in foal in her first three matings.

But, in fairy book fashion, Ragged Blossom became a priceless orchid for her new owner. She produced him 10 foals eight of which he sold for \$63,575. The two he kept were Obelia and Little Gum Nut. Obelia won five races for \$13,265 in stakes for him, then produced the promising two-year-old Little Obelia and her ill-fated "thistle" foal. Little Gum Nut, now also at stud, won for her breeder three races and \$21,105 in stakes. So who's to say that the Scotch thistle is not a better talisman than a four-leafed clover".



Changing the bandages. The author and Betty Shepherd at 'Trevors'.





Physiotherapy: The author and Betty Shepherd at 'Trevors'

## Hungerford Encomium Epistle



If Sir Ian Clunies-Ross is the 'Bradman' of the Veterinary Profession in Australia then T. G. ('Tom') Hungerford is his able deputy and 'second on the batting averages'. Tom is legendary throughout the country and indeed the globe for his seminal treatise 'Hungerford's Diseases of Livestock' now extended to nine editions. His exceptional professional career also embraced periods of practice with poultry, horses and general pastoral enterprise. Additionally Tom was lecturer at the 'old' Hawkesbury Agricultural College at Richmond NSW and as such exerted enormous influence on successive generations of young men embarking on a career in agriculture. Murray together with Tom, Vic Cole and Ron Churchward of the AVA were largely instrumental in establishing the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science within the University of Sydney. Tom also 'doubled' as a dynamic lay-preacher and committed Christian of exceptional repute.

On 24<sup>th</sup>. November 2001 I received a covering letter (and copies of other letters) from Tom completely 'out of the blue' which I adduce verbatim as follows:

Tel. (02) 9487 2732



*Dr T. G. Hungerford*, OBE, BVSC, FACVSC, HDA  
Veterinarian

*"Fairleigh"*  
38 Burns Road,  
Wahroonga, 2076

24.11.01

Dr. Bill Howey [*He actually misspelled my name 'Howie' – not uncommon!*]  
Director  
Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science  
University of Sydney

Dear Bill

Murray Bain's daughter has sent me a magnificent letter, enclosing a write up of on Murray which I sent 27 years ago. I enclose both.

Murray, I feel, has never been sufficiently acknowledged. Maybe (or maybe not) you could make some use of it.

Anyhow I send it on impulse only. W. P. B. it if you feel the letter has had its day, @ no harm done. [W. P. B. = 'Tomspeak' abbreviation for 'waste paper basket']

Best wishes

Tom

P.S. If you used the letter at all maybe you should get Morag's permission first.

T. G. H.

The letter was written in Tom's precise lucid hand writing but bearing evidence of the rather scratchy 'scrawl' of an aging person. I retain the original.

The copy of Morag's letter is the most eloquent tribute by a daughter about a father I have ever read. The large clear hand writing and expression are also 'unmistakably and indelibly Morag'. The letter is repeated with her permission exactly as herewith:

16 Mantwood Drive  
Lennox Head 2478  
22<sup>nd</sup> November 2001

Dear Mr. Hungerford,

Over my life I have heard people speak so highly of you and today I understood why. I had the privilege of reading a letter you wrote to my mother Mace Bain, over 27 years ago, following the death of my father Murray. The letter came into my possession as Mace has moved into a Hostel close to me as she has Alzeihmers [*sic as spelled*] Disease. I suppose I always knew there were a lot of letters but the time had never seemed right to read them. As I read yours. The tears streamed down my face as they did with my children's faces.

What a wonderful gift you gave us. I have photocopied the letter and given copies to Fiona for herself and her 3 children and to my 5 children.

My dad was my hero; I was his shadow and it was an incredible loss that I still find hard to deal with but your letter has filled my heart with so much warmth. I thank you for writing it. It is a priceless possession.. I spoke with Bill Howey today and he informed that you were still at the same address. He said that you are now 90! How wonderful and congratulations. Please know that the letter you wrote so long ago will be treasured as part of the life of AMB by his children, grand-children and soon to be great-grandchildren. May God bless you and keep you safe, happy and well.

With fondest wishes

*Morag Borsje*

Morag Borsje

PS. Unfortunately I wasn't blessed with Dad's gift for writing and this does not express my true thoughts and gratitude as well as I would have hoped, but thank you again.

M.

When I received copies of these letters I knew 'destiny had beckoned'. This is the eventual outcome.

At the time of Murray's death Tom was inaugural Technical Director [CEO] of the Post Graduate Foundation: a post he filled with great distinction. Tom attended Murray's funeral in Scone and the day after sent the following letter to Murray's widow Mace on his richly embossed letterhead resplendent with the Hungerford 'Coat of Arms'. The letter is characteristically redolent of Tom's eloquent rather prolix prose style. The original is retained by Murray's eldest daughter Morag Repard-Borsje who supplied this copy by facsimile and also via Tom. It was with considerable emotion I was able to tackle the task of re-formulating the letter for publication.



Fol. 48.3153  
Bus 26-1075  
26.2122



*"Farleigh"*  
38 Burns Road,  
Wahroonga, 2076

*T. G. Hungerford.* B.V.Sc., F.A.C.V.Sc., H.D.A.

T. G. Hungerford BVSc FACVSc HDA  
"Farleigh"  
38 Burns Road  
Wahroonga 2076

21<sup>st</sup>. March 1974

Mrs. Mace Bain  
297 New England Highway  
SCONE NSW 2337

Dear Mace,

Yesterday, at the Presbyterian Church at Scone, I thought what a mighty tribute it was to Murray. The assemblage of people from far and near, with such a great number who had come specially 350 miles return from Sydney to honour him, passed off like "a glorious roll of drums" to mark his outstanding career.

The Church filled 10 minutes before the service, extra seating was brought in, and then there was an overflow of people. These were from hundreds of miles away, busy practitioners, academic leaders with a full life, business men under stress of time, and so on. It portrayed the honour and esteem felt for this leader of the profession, as an outstanding horse and cattle veterinarian, and as a great man.

I did not include your family circle, but thought I would write to express my deepest sympathy to you, and Morag and Fiona.

Twenty years from now, the thought crosses my mind – will the children of Morag and Fiona wonder about their unknown grandfather. I know I do about mine, Thomas Hungerford, a pioneer at Baerami Creek, three times a member of parliament – quite a man, died twenty years before I was born, and I would desperately like to hear an appraisal of him by his colleagues – fellow graziers, fellow members of parliament, and soon, who knew him as the leader he was.

With this in mind, I thought I would write a letter at length about Murray which, with the splendid write-up in the "Herald" and the write-up which will no doubt appear in the Australian Veterinary Journal, can be placed amongst the papers with the information for Murray's descendants. If this seems silly, just waste-paper-basket this letter, and no harm done.

Murray Bain only entered the veterinary scene here about 1950, and yet from 1950 to 1974, he had such an impact that when the saga of veterinary science in Australia is told, he will always have a high place in it. He is one of the great clinicians – perhaps the greatest.

I commenced veterinary science in 1930. For 50 years before this was the era of the equine veterinarian, proverbial for precise, accurate, detailed, clinical observation and acumen. So much that an idiom of the English language was coined – thus “to vet” something, means to scrutinize it and check it over with absolute perception. From 1930 onwards, this great habit and precision was almost lost to the veterinarians as they drifted away from the horse era. There were several from 1930 to 1950 who specialized in horses, but from 1950 onwards, there came one – Murray Bain – a Scotsman, in the full tradition of the acute, shrewd, and discerning veterinary surgeons of old. His nature was balanced, kindly, and dour. His motivation was that of compassion, of “caring”, and of concentration of the task in hand. His background was that of the discipline of the Army, of learning from the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh, and of greatness of character inherited from his Scots forebears. He was nobody’s fool. He was a leader who would take charge of every trainer and every owner, to guide and motivate their thoughts, to direct their attentions, and to guide them in the paths of action which they should take in their own interests, and in that of their horses. He was a clinician wrapped in his subject, wise in experience, profiting from the contact with his fellow professionals to a maximal extent, perceptive in diagnosis, and unfailingly wise in advice. As I heard another great clinician at the funeral (a winner of the Gilruth award\*) say, “Murray was quite a bloke”. In the context of the terminology used, this was the highest praise that one Australian can give another, and Murray, though a Scotsman, was truly an Australian, having adopted the best traditions of both cultures and races. He adorned them both.

As a veterinarian, he was outstanding amongst his fellows in that he thought individually, and failed to limp in futile imitation of others. He pioneered new approaches in everything he touched (things such as regarding worm infestations as the cause of foal pneumonia\*\* and equine colics\*\*\*. and other revolutionary concepts, which are invariably proved right, or partly right). Not only was he a great veterinarian, he was a great teacher. Seldom is a practitioner and clinician able to break into the teaching of his fellows in the profession. Murray was sought after by the Australian Veterinary Association, by the Post-Graduate Committee of the University of Sydney, by the Faculty of Veterinary Science, and by similar organizations in places other than New South Wales\*\*\*\*. His impact through lectures and articles in New Zealand and in Australia, and through the veterinary journals, was strategic and impressive.

I recall being invited with Murray to lecture to the final year students in veterinary science at Sydney University on “The Successful Running of Mixed Practice”. Murray was speaking on “The Successful Running of Equine Practice”. I gave my lecture and then sat down to listen, charmed by such an exposition of how to run and equine practice as I had never dreamed of hearing. I, as a fellow lecturer, became the student at his feet, and plagued him with questions as much as all the rest of the students for more than one hour at the end of his lecture. He was a maestro.

One of the great features of his outstanding capacity, knowledge and acumen, was his overriding humility. The say, “A man wrapped up in himself makes a very little bundle”. Murray was a great man. Never did littleness or any taint of being “wrapped up in himself” mar the great picture of his character and stature.

I feel that every colleague who worked with him in his practice, every member of the New South Wales Veterinary Association, who heard and watched him at demonstrations, is the great gainer. The gain is not only in knowledge and know-how, but in attitude and approach.

Murray adorned our profession in that he lifted its ethical standard, he lifted its image in the eyes of the public and he gained the love and respect of every client to whom he rendered service.

Research men can be honoured with doctorates, academics with a professorship, and there are noteworthy awards for all except the clinician. The clinician/practitioner is the man who determines the esteem of the profession in the eyes of the public, and if we could have only 10% of practitioners as noble as Murray, then the standard of our profession would steadily rise.

The write-up in the "Herald" is a beautiful little "cameo" of his life but is necessarily inadequate. The few remarks made by the Minister at his funeral service were only a small fraction of that which was being said by his colleagues for the next half hour outside. Taken altogether, the truths spoken would compound into a picture of one of the outstanding men that has graced the veterinary profession.

We think of men like Max Henry, Gilruth, Ian Clunies-Ross, Seddon, Bull, and perhaps five or six "greats"\*\*\*\*\*, and Murray's name will join this list as one who has stabilized and uplifted veterinary practice in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Century.

He has presented a vision of service to his fellow man of care and help to horses and animals he loved, and of value to the Australian nation that he adopted.

Mace, no great man can make the grade without the support of his wife, and you can take great credit as you look back on this professional pageant of triumph. Morag and Fiona can look back with a flow of pride and appreciation on this their father, a leader in his profession.

May God's grace and comfort enfold each one of the three of you.

Very sincerely yours

*Tom G. Hungerford*

T. G. Hungerford

\* The Gilruth Award is one of the most prestigious granted by the Australian Veterinary Association. The speaker was almost certainly pre-eminent veterinarian V. G. ('Victor') Cole who was associated and promoted by (Sir) Ian Clunies Ross early in his career. Vic and Murray were very close friends and professional colleagues. Tom, Muray and Vic were the prescient driving force behind the formation of the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science of the University of Sydney. I fell immensely privileged to have enjoyed the benefits of a very close association with all of them and to have followed Tom – eventually – as third Director of the PGFVS. According to a story promulgated by Vic Bill Rose's mother-in-law was the only person to momentarily divert Murray's passion for the PGFVS!

\*\* This referred to a seminal paper published in the New Zealand Veterinary Journal where migrating Habronema larvae were demonstrated to be closely associated with severe lung pathology and the development of acute 'Rattles' [*Corynebacterium equi*, *Rhodococcus equi*] in a young foal.

\*\*\* Murray was a great advocate of the work of Glasgow Veterinary Parasitologist and researcher Dr. Jim Duncan who elucidated the arcane trammels of the migration of *Strongylus vulgaris* [Large Redworm] larvae throughout the horse's body.

\*\*\*\* Murray spoke at the British Veterinary Association Conference in Edinburgh in 1965 which is when I first heard of him and 'sowed the seed' for what was to become my journey in life. I attended as an impecunious final year undergraduate student. His paper was entitled "The Role of Infection in Infertility in Thoroughbred Broodmares" and planted the name Scone, Hunter Valley, NSW, Australia firmly on the 'International Map of Veterinary Science'.

\*\*\*\*\* Tom very modestly omits his name from this list. It would probably rank second in the pantheon.



Dr. 'Hughie' Gordon was another iconic contemporary and friend of Murray's. He is seen here with the author at his 'Fairlight' home a few months before he died. Hughie is displaying the 'Golden Fleece' awarded for his contribution to the Australian Wool Industry. Dr. Gordon was also a guest speaker at the 'Scone Scots'.



Alfred Owen Ellison

*Ellison modestly passes much of the credit for Baramul's success to his close friend the late Murray Bain, who ran a veterinary practice from the nearby township of Scone. Ellison appointed Bain as the stud's chief veterinary advisor and he says that was one of the best decisions he ever made. "Murray Bain was not only a warm-hearted, enthusiastic man he was also a great innovator. He introduced stomach tubing, manual pregnancy testing and many other practices that are now adopted as standard procedure on the top studs around Australia."*



Elegance, grace, poise and svelte style – country fashion  
The sociable quintet at the Muswellbrook Picnic Races in 1964  
Murray Bain, Julie Coutts (NZ), Mike Moses, Mace Bain and Judy White  
comprise the eclectic group. Très soignée!

## **The First International Symposium on Equine Reproduction at Cambridge University 1974**

### **Professor Twink Allan Tribute**

The First International Symposium on Equine Reproduction was held at Cambridge University (UK) in 1974. Murray Bain and Bill Howey were co-authors of two papers. The following obituary to Murray was printed in the *Journal of Reproduction and Fertility Supplement No. 23 – Equine Reproduction – Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Equine Reproduction*. An identical tribute appears every year in the annual Proceedings of the Bain-Fallon Memorial Lectures of the AEVA named in his honour.

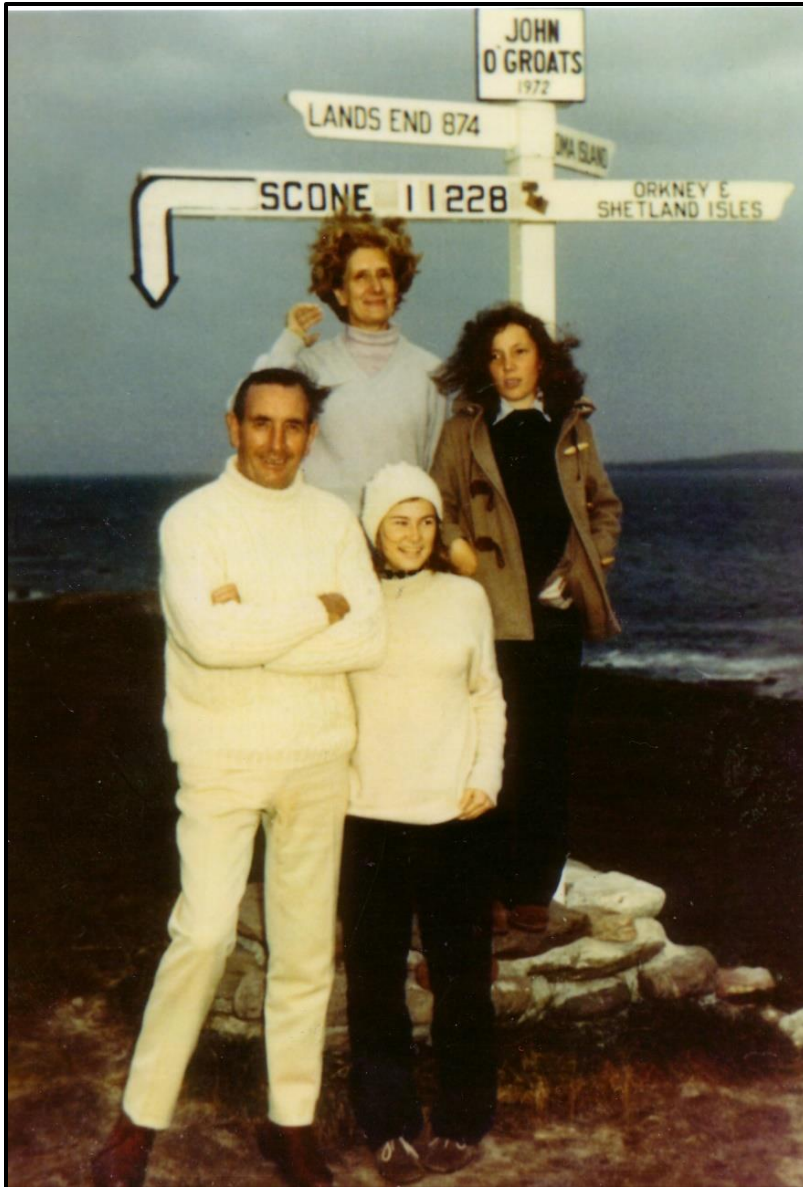
*Andrew Murray Bain BSc MRCVS*

*Murray Bain died at Scone in New South Wales on 18 March 1974 after a long and painful illness courageously endured.*

*Murray graduated from the Royal (Dick) Veterinary School, Edinburgh, in July 1937 and after service with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in the Middle East during World War II, followed by brief periods spent gaining experience of thoroughbred breeding in Kentucky and New Zealand, he settled at Scone, NSW, in 1950 where he worked until his death. In this time he built up a large group practice, based primarily on work with thoroughbred breeding. His particular interests were infertility in the mare, diseases of new born foals and the many management problems associated with thoroughbred breeding. He kept detailed records of all his cases and over the years published many authoritative papers based upon his observations. He took an active interest in post-graduate education and was one of the foundation members of the Post-Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science of The University of Sydney. He was a gifted speaker and gave many interesting lectures to veterinary surgeons and horse breeders throughout Australia, New Zealand, America and Great Britain. He was awarded the Seddon Prize by the Australian Veterinary Association for his major contributions to clinical veterinary medicine.*

*Despite many years of life in Australia, Murray was always a proud Scot, remaining conscious of his early upbringing in Scotland and his training at 'The Dick'. He was strong, agile, energetic and tremendously able as a practicing veterinary surgeon. By the time of his death he had acquired a great fund of knowledge and experience in equine veterinary medicine which gave him the confidence and decisiveness so well known to all those who knew him as a friend or sought his professional help and advice. He had an ordered mind and was clean and tidy in his work. He enjoyed life to the full and always encouraged others to join in with him. He took a lively interest in a wide field of activities and was especially prominent in making Scone the active centre of thoroughbred breeding as well as racing in Australia that it is. He was full of praise for things well done and equally intolerant of anything that he thought was wrong.*

*Murray became ill at the height of his career and to this end felt frustrated and disappointed that his life should ebb away when he still had so much more to contribute. He hated the sickness that overtook him and fought hard and courageously against it.*



The Bain Family at the 'Top End'

Murray was temporarily mortified when Morag announced just prior to leaving on this trip to an elite Scone gathering: "Daddy is taking us back to Scotland so we can learn to speak properly"! Just for a fleeting moment even Murray was lost for words!

Murray was a vocal and avowed atheist but may have wavered near the end? He was temporarily recuperating following the first bout of surgery and chemotherapy in the Seventh Day Adventists' Sanitarium at Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga. I used to visit him there after routine work at Woodlands every Wednesday. It was long day! He said to me: "you know these people here (the nurses) are special and might have something". I think you might have reached him Tom?

## Swanney Tribute

The following obituary was printed in the British 'The Veterinary Record' on April 13 1974. It was supplied by Mr. Jim Swanney a fellow Scottish veterinarian whom Murray befriended in New Zealand between 1947 and 1950.

Bain In a tribute to the late A. M. Bain Mr. J. Swanney writes:

The veterinary profession has lost a distinguished member and many of its members a very good friend.

Murray, as he was universally called, came to occupy a unique place in bloodstock breeding circles, not only in his adopted country of Australia, but in most countries of the world where horse are kept.

He was born in the Stirlingshire town of Bonnyrigg and educated there and at the Royal "Dick". He qualified in 1937 and graduated BSc at Edinburgh University in the same year. While in practice with Captain Barker in Hereford, he joined the Shropshire Yeomanry as a trooper and was called up for military service at the outbreak of the war. Later he transferred to the Royal Army Veterinary Corps and saw considerable active service in the Middle East. These years were to set the seal on the future pattern on Murray's life, namely to work with horses. In New Zealand he took charge of Sir James Fletcher's stud at Alton Lodge, an unusual position for a veterinary surgeon. Very quickly his professional approach to his work attracted widespread attention and soon his particular skill in the reproductive field of bloodstock breeding became established. During these years he became a familiar sight, dressed in immaculate white overalls driving his jeep with the corn bucket swinging from the rear hook.

Australia, however, fascinated him and after a few years he moved to the Hunter Valley to start his own practice in Scone, New South Wales. There, he continued to expand his work, and his opinion was frequently sought in areas far removed from his normal practice district. But it was in other fields also that he will be so sadly missed by his friends; firstly, for his great sense of humour and secondly for his love of children. On many occasions one could be involved in serious professional conversation, but as children appeared the discussion had to stop. Another characteristic, which he inherited from his father, was his love of wild life. Nothing gave Murray greater pleasure than to roam through the wilder and remoter parts of his native country with a pair of field glasses. His knowledge of wild birds was quite outstanding.





Bain Family at Surfers Paradise 1961  
Murray in his element with his beloved family and 'feathered friends!

Some years ago, he turned to bloodstock breeding on his account and here again he was soon rewarded with remarkable success. More recently he acquired a property and was in the process of establishing a pedigree Aberdeen-Angus herd. It was a wonderful experience to accompany him on his rounds in practice; to watch his skillful approach to his work; to discover the high regard in which he was held by his clients. Whilst he never lost the common touch, he was not the one to suffer fools gladly. Woe-betide the smart groom who tried to mislead him.



Murray Bain and 'Birthday Card' 1964

Murray Bain had such an infectious zest for living that all who knew him felt it was a great privilege to have his friendship. Our deepest sympathies go to his widow, Mace, and his daughters, Morag and Fiona.

Jim Swanney returned to Scotland and earned enduring fame as the principal of the world renowned AI Bull Breeding Centre at Scone, Perthshire. It was he who interviewed the author on behalf of friend Murray at Glasgow Airport in 1967 for 'suitability' to emigrate to Scone NSW. I managed to impress on Jim a few 'fine malts'. It must have impaired his judgement because the report was favourable ['He has a sense of humour which will stand him in good stead'] and I was offered the job! I still retain the 'aerogramme' letters typed by Murray [Mace?] with details of the job and his expectations. Murray had been 'amazed' to receive my application within 7 days of his having placed the advertisement in the 'Veterinary Record' [UK]. Remember this was 1967!

"Chivers"  
Scone NSW  
Australia

12 June 1967

Dear William Howey

Many thanks for your letter and I wonder if you could give more details. As this practice is largely thoroughbred horses with a nice balance of beef cattle work, a little bit of height in the practitioner is useful in dealing with thoroughbreds. I have written to a friend of mine Mr. Jim Swanney, Veterinary Surgeon, A. I. Centre, Perth, Scotland and I have asked him if he could see any applicant on my behalf. If necessary, would you be prepared to go over to Perth to see him at my expense?

With regard to coming out to Australia, you can have an assisted passage. The Government proviso is only that you stay for a period of 2 years. I do not think you would find that hard when you see Australia.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

*Murray Bain*

A. Murray Bain B.Sc. M.R.C.V.S.

In the interim I had my interview with Jim Swanney at Glasgow Airport as we agreed to meet 'part way'. I had traveled from Strabane, C. Tyrone NI and flew from Belfast. I don't think I ever retrieved my traveling expenses! As I explained Jim Swanney's report was well 'lubricated' and I soon received the following correspondence.

164 Kelly Street  
Scone NSW  
Australia

24 July 1967

Dear William Howey,

Thank you very much for going to see Mr. Jim Swanney who wrote me details of your meeting.

Would you be prepared to come to Australia as soon as possible? In this coming season the work will be almost entirely with horses and there will be numerous opportunities to learn and become proficient. There is actually a stud outside Sydney [*Kirkham Stud, Narellan*] at which I have been asked to do consultation work and who are prepared to accommodate someone like yourself to do routine work. Naturally, you would not be left there all the time nor would we put you there before giving you a good grounding but it would be one of the places where, for a young person, like yourself, a spell of 2 or 3 weeks watching teasing and doing all the rectal examinations required, would provide just wonderful experience.

The salary to start with would be \$5000.00. There is a very nice flat available for rental in Scone and a car will be provided.

I am sorry about such short notice but if you are coming out it is essential you are here as soon as possible. The season starts in September and by mid-September we will be very busy indeed.

Would you please cable me immediately your acceptance or otherwise and if you require any help with regard to Australia House or coming out, please let me know.

It will be necessary to emigrate by air at a cost of 10 pounds sterling. I presume you will have enquired re. this from Australia House, London. The only contingency is that you are prepared to stay for two years. I am sure you will like Australia.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*Murray Bain*

A. Murray Bain B.Sc. M.R.C.V.S.



Murray Bain, Sue Greenwood, Richard Greenwood & Bill Howey; 'Chivers' @ Christmas 1968  
This was the genesis of what ultimately became Scone Equine Group; a global giant of equine veterinary practice

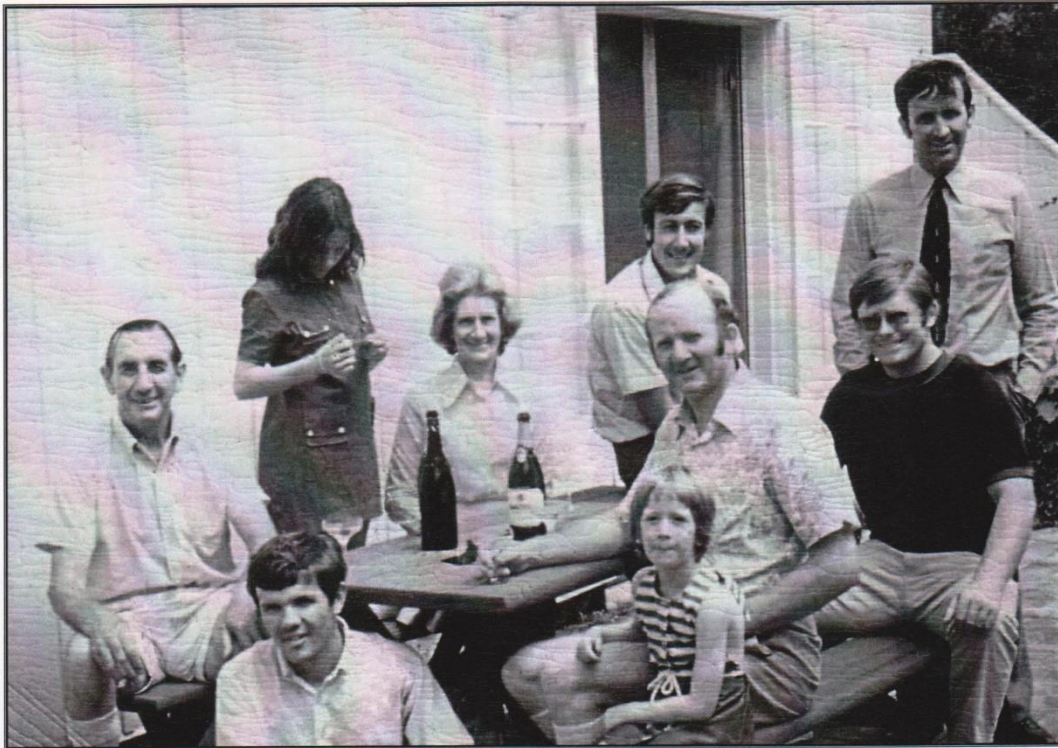
In retrospect after almost 40 years it is amazing how rapidly the 'wheels turned'. I arrived in Sydney via the USA and Pacific on 3<sup>rd</sup>. October 1967. I later discovered that local Scone neighbour and staunch Bain family friend Sir Alister McMullin of St Aubins may have played some part? Sir Alister was then President of the Senate. That could explain how the delegate from the Australian Consulate in Belfast came to Strabane, Co. Tyrone to see me rather than the customary reverse situation! He told me 'there is some urgency in processing your application and it seems you are required in Australia very soon'. This was much to the chagrin of some of my 'boozy' pub mates in Strabane many of whom had been waiting for eons for even a response from Australia House! It used to take 12 – 18 months to process the average application from a prospective '10 Pound Pom'!

It was with some trepidation I made the hasty journey! I had very few resources - like minus 250 pounds sterling! I did have 19 pounds in my pocket! When I arrived I discovered the Bain section of the Scone veterinary fraternity also lacked human resources! There had been a recent acrimonious 'schism' in the Sykes/Bain veterinary partnership. Both John Bryden and Treve Williams opted to leave Scone. Assistant Peter Beiers had just had his contract 'terminated'. James Crouch was on a Horse Race Betting Levy Board [UK] Scholarship for 3 months and had arrived a few weeks before me. He was the only other person in the practice. James was the first unofficial 'unwitting' shuttle veterinarian! To a certain extent with his Newmarket experience he was the 'saviour' that season. Later to achieve justified fame in Newmarket Richard Greenwood arrived 2 weeks after me in mid-October. The rest as they say is history! I never did go to Kirkham Stud but there was never an explanation.



The 'opposition' practice at this time comprised Frank Williams, Jack Francis [about to leave for Castle Hill], Norman Judge and Angus Cunningham. Level playing field?

Treve Williams went on to become Chairman of the Australian Jockey Club. John Bryden achieved enduring professional cachet in Melbourne. Peter Beiers set up practice in Charlestown, Newcastle where he was very successful. When the opportunity arose he studied medicine at Newcastle University and at one stage was Frank Williams' consulting physician in the John Hunter Hospital! I believe he has nurtured an auspicious career in human medicine.




Christmas drinks at Chivers 1972 - Bain and Associates  
Murray, Mace and Fiona Bain with Nairn Fraser, Kieran Bredin (Ireland), Bill Howey,  
John and Rebecca Morgan and Angus Campbell in front. Morag took the  
photograph. Kieran had not yet discovered the 'informality' of the Aussie Christmas.

## Dark Eclipse





Featured Image: Mrs Mace Bain from Scone leading 'Dark Eclipse' back to the winner's enclosure following a stunning win in the 1980 running of the Golden Slipper Stakes at Rosehill



STC GOLDEN SLIPPER STAKES    \$250,000

2YOs, set weights, Rosehill, NSW, 1200m. March 29

DARK ECLIPSE

(K. Moses) 51kg                      5/1    \$150,000 plus 3 \$350 trophies

JOY (Ire), (P. Hyland), 51.5kg, ch f                      15/1    \$40,000

Habitat-Inchmarlo (USA)

BAGLAGA MISS (W. Harris), 51kg, b f                      20/1    \$25,000

Estaminet (GB)-Autumn Wine

Then came: John's Hope (4th — \$15,000), Verdi (5th — \$9000) — other runners each receive \$1000 — Aare, Zephyr King, Fiancee, Scorpio, Shaybisc, Massacre, Culture, Lord Avon, Nassau, Definately Ours, Kabul.

Margins: 1¼ lens, ¾ len. Time: 1m10.4s.

Owners: Mesdames M. J. Bain, M. Campbell and Miss F. Bain.

Breeder: Murray Bain Investments, NSW.

Trainer: N. C. Begg.

Cost as yearling: Retained by breeder.

MATERNAL LINE

MARJORAM: Unraced sister to stakes placed Strong Queen (16 wins and \$28,610) and half-sister to Taj Rossi (9 wins and \$208,980 inc VRC Victoria Derby, George Adams Memorial H, Ascot Vale S, MVRC W. S. Cox Plate, Moonee Valley S, VATC Sandown Guineas). Family of Storm Queen, Storm Ruler, Anna Rose, L'Orage Boy, New Gleam.

1971: B/br c, Soumi, by Above Water (Ire), 1 win at 2250m.

1972: B f, Camomile, by Biscay. Unraced at stud.

1973: B/br c, Bagalot, by Baguette, 3 wins 1000m to 1250m inc AJC

DARK ECLIPSE, b/br f, 2y

Baguette (br, 1967)	Rego (Ire)	Nasrullah	Nearco
		Missy Suntan	Mumtaz Begum
	Dark Jewel	Star Kingdom (Ire)	Tai-Yang
		Red Lace	Mademoiselle Satan
Marjoram (blk/br, 1968)	Major General (GB)	Court Martial	Stardust
		Red Shoes	Impromptu
	Dark Queen	Coronation Boy (Ire)	Excitement (GB)
		Solar Eclipse	Red Clover

Orangville H, SAJC W. H. Wylie H, 2nd VRC Ascot Vale S, STC Theo Marks Quality H, 3rd STC Canterbury S. Sire.

1974: Br f, by Alderney (GB). Exported.

1975: B/br f, Silver 'N Spice, by Bold Explorer (GB), 1 win, STC Canterbury Beverley Park H, 1900m.

1976: Br c, New Memory, by Baguette. Unplaced at only start.

1977: B/br f, Dark Eclipse, by Baguette, 4 wins at 900 and 1200m and \$188,450 inc STC Golden Slipper S, Magic Night Quality H, 2nd AJC Sires' Produce S.

1978: B c, by Crowned Prince (USA).

Sire: Rego (Imp) by Nasrullah ex Missy Sontan: Out of Dark Jewel by Star Kingdom ex Red Lace

Dam: Marjoram by Major General (Imp) by Court Martial ex Red Shoes; Out of Dark Queen by

Coronation Boy (Imp) ex Solar Eclipse

Dark Eclipse 1980 Golden Slipper Stakes Winner

Although Murray Bain was not listed as the official breeder of Dark Eclipse he was in fact fundamental in her conception. He purchased both her dam 'Marjoram' and a share in her sire 'Baguette' when the latter was syndicated by George Ryder to stand at Kia Ora Stud, Scone.

Racehorse Dark Eclipse was foaled in 1977 and was by [Baguette](#) out of the mare Marjoram (by Major General). 'Dark Eclipse' was actually bred at the Bain's small farm on Yarrandi Road, Scone. This is not generally known. The farm was later owned by fellow veterinarian Ray Gooley, then named 'Melness' when purchased by my late parents-in-law Bob and Ponty Mackay when they handed over 'Tinagroo' to son Ranald. Both 'Tinagroo' and 'Melness' are now owned by local-boy-made-good International Fund Manager David Paradise. David has a keen interest in thoroughbred racing and breeding nurtured during his 'gap year' at Widden in the late 1970s.

#### **Main wins:**

1980 [Tea Rose Stakes](#)

1980 [Sweet Embrace Stakes](#)

1980 [Magic Night Stakes](#)

Dark Eclipse was trained by Neville Begg and ridden by Kevin Moses. She was actually the 'second elect' of the two stable stars in the race. 'Fiancee' ridden by Ron Quinton was one of the favourites but drew a very wide barrier. You can view interviews with Neville Begg and Kevin Moses plus a video of the race on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCKiDehP9yE>

There is no doubt 'Dark Eclipse' was a most impressive winner.

#### **Murray Bain Thoroughbreds**

Murray Bain was a very successful thoroughbred breeder from a very small band of broodmares.

Winners included:

'Tod Maid': (Todman ex Ragged Blossom). Winner: Silver Slipper Stakes (Group II) 1966. Other winners of the Silver Slipper Stakes include: 'Baguette' (1969); 'Luskin Star' (1976); 'Triscay' (1989); 'Pierro' (2012).

'Obelia': (Sky High ex Ragged Blossom). Winner Keith Mackay Handicap 1969 (Group III; now Percy Sykes Stakes) and five (5) other races.

'Little Gumnut': (Sweet Moss ex Ragged Blossom). Winner AJC Reginald Allen Handicap (Listed) and 2<sup>nd</sup>; beaten a nose in the VRC Wakeful Stakes (Group I).

'Dark Eclipse': (Baguette ex Marjoram). Winner Golden Slipper Stakes (Group I) 1980. Murray died in 1974 but had purchased both the share in Baguette and the dam Marjoram as a yearling. Dark Eclipse was the first Golden Slipper winner raced in female ownership. (Mrs M. J. 'Mace' Bain and daughters Morag and Fiona were co-owners). Marjoram was from the same family which produced the then current champion 'Taj Rossi'.

'Dizzie Babe': (Major General ex Baby Carriage). Winner of several metropolitan races; raced in partnership with Mr & Mrs D Chrystal Jnr.

'Blossom Lady': (Kaoru Star ex Ragged Blossom). Winner.

'Camomile': (Biscay ex Marjoram). Unraced. Dam of Stakeswinner 'Lemongrass' (by 'Horbury')

Murray also had an 'interest' in the following:

'Chicola': Winner AJC Oaks (Group I) 1959

'Birthday Card': Winner Golden Slipper Stakes (Group I) 1962

#### Footnote:

'Tod Maid' was dubbed 'The Flying Pencil' by racing journalists. She was notoriously 'light on' when in full work and in winning form. She later came up for auction and Murray wanted to buy her back. The \$20,000 price tag was too much of an impediment. She was purchased by an American and exported to the USA as part of a small package. Being by Noholme's brother Todman was the potentially lucrative enticement for an American breeder. I remember examining her. There was 'something wrong'; possibly gonadal dysgenesis? She had ovaries like small hard pebbles. I don't believe she ever produced a live foal?

'Marjoram' went to stud as a 2yo; she had upward fixation of the patella ('stifle lock'). Her first foal by 'Above Water' was a winner: 'Suomi'





Ode to the Haggis

Hogmanay @ Tinagroo

L to R: Norma Archibald; John Archibald; 'Sep' Halliday; Betty Halliday; John Paradice; Bpb Mackay; Murray Bain; Unknown; Austin Halliday

## Address to a Haggis

Robert Burns



Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,  
Great chieftain o the puddin'-race!  
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,  
Painch, tripe, or thairn:  
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace  
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,  
Your hurdies like a distant hill,  
Your pin wad help to mend a mill  
In time o need,  
While thro your pores the dews distil  
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour dight,  
An cut you up wi ready slight,  
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,  
Like onie ditch;  
And then, O what a glorious sight,  
Warm-reekin, rich!

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an strive:  
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,  
Till a' their weel-swail'd kytes belyve  
Are bent like drums;  
The auld Guidman, maist like to rive,  
'Bethankit' hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout,  
Or olio that wad staw a sow,  
Or fricassee wad mak her spew  
Wi perfect scunner,  
Looks down wi sneering, scornfu view  
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,  
As feckless as a wither'd rash,  
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,  
His nieve a nit;  
Thro bloody flood or field to dash,  
O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,  
The trembling earth resounds his tread,  
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,  
He'll make it whistle;  
An legs an arms, an heads will sned,  
Like taps o thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,  
And dish them out their bill o fare,  
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware  
That jaups in luggies:  
But, if ye wish her gratefu prayer,  
Gie her a Haggis

*Have a great Burns night  
From all at*



**SCOTCLANS**  
[www.scotclans.com](http://www.scotclans.com)

### Address to a Haggis

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Scone Race Club's St Andrews Day Race Meeting @ White Park November 1974

L to R: Mort Holme (Drum Major, Cardiff RSL Pipe Band), Arthur Banks, Bill Howey, David Macintyre, Leading Piper Cardiff RSL Pipe Band

This was a 'Scottish' tribute to Murray Bain and his legacy. The trophy was donated by Morgan Howey & Fraser, Veterinary Surgeons, Scone and presented by the author.