

Spring Newsletter

Thoroughbred Racing History Association Inc.

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From the President

WHILE you haven't heard much from us in recent months, the Association has been fairly busy. COVID had some impact on our activities, but we have managed to keep pace with chores associated with running the Racing Museum at Eagle Farm and the Racing Archive & McGill Library at Doomben.

Your Association hosted its annual National Heritage Festival event early in the winter carnival, titled Staying The Distance and highlighting the memorable stayers and staying races of past winter carnivals. Former leading jockeys Graham Cook and Tony Erhart, trainer Brian Smith of Balmerino fame and Lem Bann, once apprenticed to Tommy Smith and strapper to the mighty Tulloch, were our special guests.

Despite the shadow of another lockdown developing, we pushed ahead with our AGM within the regulatory timeframe.

At the AGM, the committee for 2021-22 was elected: Steve Bermingham, Paula Burnett, Michael Connolly, Nev Hacker, Bruce Halligan (treasurer), Peter Howard (president), Peter Lindeberg, Ray Moriarty, Christine Morrison (assistant secretary), Paul O'Grady, Alayne Peterson and Julie Anne Standfield (secretary).

Last month, we hosted our first major tour party since the pandemic. Our visitors numbered 43 and were from a Probus club in Nambour. The group had travelled by bus to Brisbane, and visited the historic Eagle Farm Convict Women's Prison and Factory Site nearby before coming around to Doomben.

The Association remains in a strong financial position. As reported at the AGM, the Bernborough Club continued its support for our activities with a donation of \$5000. The Club has been an enduring benefit to the Association. In addition, the Brisbane City Council provided the third tranche of a three-year grant to the Association under its Historical Organisation Assistance Program. Its latest grant amounted to \$4700 which will enable the Association to pursue several enhancement projects for memorabilia.

We have gratefully accepted several significant trophies and other memorabilia for display in the Museum collections.

Among them is the 1962 AJC Summer Cup trophy, a magnificent silver tea service, won by the Mal Barnes-trained Alspick. The trophy was donated by Catherine Elliott, the daughter of owner R.C. Kent. You can read more about Alspick and his

progression from a country performer to success at Royal Randwick on Page 4 of this Newsletter.

Another trophy is from the 1965 Queensland Oaks won by Kulali, which was presented to winning trainer Vic Franks. It has been donated to the Museum by his son Barry.

We also gratefully accepted a saddle stamped "Hill Nundah", indicating it was made by F.J. Hill whose saddlery (pictured) was adjacent to the Prince Of Wales Hotel in the centre of Nundah early last century. Hill's son Syd later moved the business to Queen Street in the heart of Brisbane and later to Hamilton.



SHOP . . . F.J. Hill and his staff at the Nundah business.

The saddle belonged to jockey Maurice Dowd who began his career apprenticed to Louis Dahl at Hendra. He later rode in south-east Queensland and for several years in Adelaide. Morrie Dowd's saddle was presented to the Museum by his sons Kevin and Colin Dowd.

These additions are being displayed in an imposing period-style cabinet that has been donated to the Association by life-long racing enthusiast John Loth.

We are always looking at ways to promote what we have on offer for racing folk,

either at the Racing Museum at Eagle Farm or at the Archive & Library at Doomben.

The Museum is open by appointment, and the Archive & Library is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10.30 and 1.00 or at other times by appointment. There is a lot to see and you are welcome to come in and inspect.

Peter Howard

With a Wiggle like Marilyn's

Continuing the series compiled by Mark Mazzaglia on the History of Queensland Racing by the alphabet

Champion two-year-old filly Wiggle joined an elite group of Stradbroke Handicap winners when she trounced the older horses in scoring a brilliant win in the Group 1 sprint over 7 furlongs (1400m) at Eagle Farm during the 1958 Brisbane Carnival.

She became only the second two-year-old filly to win the Stradbroke Handicap after Sweetheart collected in 1899 while the Rego filly became the fifth juvenile to win the famous sprint following the wins by the male two-year-olds, Fitz-Grafton (1903), Line Gun (1913) and Amberdown (1916). Their successes came when the race was run over six furlongs.

Wiggle was so-named because she walked with a wiggle like Marilyn Monroe, the legendary film star. The filly had lacerated her hind legs when she got caught up in a fence as a foal, and walked so gingerly while the wounds mended she developed a pronounced wiggle.

Lightweight jockey Billy Camer rode Wiggle when she won the Stradbroke. He also won the Stradbroke on Karendi (1954) and on the heavily backed Divide And Rule (1970), which

pulled off one of the biggest plunges in the Eagle Farm glamour sprint.

The *Herald Sun's* Leo Schlink once described Camer as the smallest jockey in the world and that couldn't be disputed. He had no trouble stripping down to ride Wiggle at the featherweight of 7 stone 5 pounds, or 46.5kg.

Camer had Wiggle in the firing line for most of the race and said that he felt confident of winning on the home turn because she had travelled so well and had nothing on her back.

"I knew that I had the others beaten and the only worry I had was that something might come from behind," Camer told *The Sydney Morning Herald* after the race.

"Wiggle was always going well and was never worse than third."

Wiggle started at 12-1. She won by 2 ½ lengths from the champion New Zealand sprinter Yahabeebe who was 9-2 favourite.

"She [Wiggle] was an out-and-out freak," Camer told Max Presnell from *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

"More like a colt than a filly. She had a nasty streak. Not only was she built like a colt but [she] acted like one . . .

"From the first day I went to Warwick Farm and rode her work I said to [owner] Bill Godby, 'This is a bloody champion'. She gave me that feeling."

Godby was so impressed with Wiggle's win against the older horses in the Stradbroke that he set the wheels in motion to send the filly to America to race, but first wanted to see how she performed during the 1958 Spring Carnival.

Wiggle didn't disappoint and added four more wins to her resume during the Spring, including the Hobartville Stakes and Caulfield Guineas against the colts and geldings as well as the Edward Manifold Stakes and the Linlithgow Stakes.

The filly also collected four wins during the 1959 Melbourne Autumn Carnival, The Queen's Plate, the C M Lloyd Stakes, the A V Kewney Stakes and the Alister Clark Stakes, before heading to America where she won another seven races from 21 starts after being leased to US owner Ted Clifford.

In Australia, Wiggle started 24 times for 14 wins, 4 seconds and 2 thirds.



WIGGLE . . . 14 wins in Australia and seven more in the US.

Alspick was Darby's cup of tea



Alspick's Summer Cup trophy has been donated to the Racing Museum by the owner's daughter Catherine Elliott. Here is the story behind the trophy.

Alspick was a rags-to-riches story in the early 1960s. He won at his first two starts, a Maiden Handicap at Blackall as a two-year-old and an Improvers Handicap at Tambo as a three-year-old earning first prizemoney of \$20 each time.

His owner R.C. Kent arranged for the horse to be trained in Brisbane, sending him to Mal Barnes who operated from a rough-hewn stable at Cribb Island on the edge of Moreton Bay.

The suburb was a battler's estate, and eventually the land was resumed and the modest houses demolished for construction of the Brisbane Airport.

It was more than 12 months before Alspick won for Barnes, in an Eighth Division at Beaudesert in December 1960.

After two more wins in Novice and Encourage class at Doomben and Eagle Farm, Barnes set the horse to win the 1961 Ramornie Handicap at Grafton in which he was ridden by Barnes' apprentice Darby McCarthy.

After winning the Nolan Handicap over a middle distance at Ipswich, Barnes took Alspick to Sydney when he won the December Handicap over 10 furlongs at Randwick and then was beaten narrowly in the Summer Cup.

Barnes brought Alspick back to Sydney 12 months later and won the Summer Cup by eight lengths as well as the Tattersall's Club Cup, both over 12 furlongs and ridden in both by McCarthy.

McCarthy was 18 and his tactical ride prompted one racing journalist to write: "His horsemanship today should put him in top demand for classic events."

Before the decade was out, McCarthy (pictured) had won three Stradbrokes, a Brisbane Cup, an Epsom Handicap and AJC Derby.



IN DEMAND . . . Darby McCarthy caught the eye with his skill on Alspick.

Finding a winner

An uncaptioned photograph of a post-race trophy presentation at Doomben became a pleasant challenge for our volunteer researchers at the Racing Archive.



LONE LADY . . . the photograph our researchers were asked to identify.

The Racing Archive attracts plenty of queries from the racing public.

For instance, our volunteer researchers were asked to identify the occasion and the identities of people in the photograph above.

Obviously, it was a trophy presentation at Doomben with the original Members' Stand in the background.

Closest to the camera was Dr (later Sir) Clive Uhr who was chairman of the Brisbane Amateur Turf Club from 1954 to 1974.

Another easily identified person in the picture was the popular State Governor of his time, Sir Henry Abel Smith, who was in office from 1958 to 1966.

Thus, it had to be a presentation after a major race between 1958 and 1966 – and the winning owner was a female, which was not a common occurrence in those times.

In fact, take a close look at the picture and you will see that the owner was the only female in the Saddling Paddock.

Our researchers began to thumb through the volumes of Turf Registers in the McGill Library and soon picked up that the 1959 Doomben 10,000 was won by Second Earl, owned by Mrs C. McGregor from New Zealand.

In the background of the photo was the jockeys' semaphore board for the next race and the names at the top were: F. Clarke, G. Podmore, R. Greaves and F. Reys.

Sure enough, when they plucked the 1959 Doomben 10,000 day's race book from the files in the Library, they discovered that the names matched those for the race immediately after the 10,000.

Second Earl became only the second New Zealand visitor to win the 10,000, following the success of El Khobar II in 1956. He beat the Sydney sprinters Blue Dart and Squander Lad.

Second Earl was ridden by Brisbane jockey Andy Tindall, who had partnered the three-year-old to win the W.J. Healy Stakes at his start before the 10,000

Racing quiz for seniors

1. The only licensee to win the Brisbane apprentice jockeys, senior jockeys and trainers premierships. Who am I?

2. Name the longest priced winner in Brisbane.
3. Who rode Brisbane's longest priced winner?
4. Inducted into Queensland Racing's Hall of Fame this year, which horse won the Sydney Cup and AJC Metropolitan Handicap in 1953?
5. Name the Queensland filly which won the 1944 AJC Derby. Who trained her?
6. Which Queensland stallion sired the Melbourne Cup winners Old Rowley (1940) and Rainbird (1945)?
7. Name the full sister and brother who won the McDougall Stakes and Hopeful Stakes in 1968 and 1969?
8. Incentivise's trainer Steve Tregua has won the summer feature Bernborough Handicap twice. Name the winners.
9. Can you name the three fillies who ran the trifecta in the 1969 Queensland Derby?
10. Name the trainer and jockey of the 1991 Doomben 10,000 winner Laurie's Lottery.

ANSWERS: On Page 8.

Our Banjo knew his stuff

By our book reviewer HN

Off Down The Track – Racing & Other Yarns. Angus & Robertson Publishers. 1986. 240pp.

A B Paterson's *Off Down the Track* is subtitled "Racing and Other Yarns" was published in 1986, but Banjo had died in 1941 aged about 77.

We find here a rich mixture of his varied working life including his term through the 1920s of being editor of the *Sportsman*, the Sydney racing newspaper, after having been a war correspondent in South Africa for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

As a bush youth he had ridden in steeplechase races, so he had the

necessary background to write convincingly about racing and he does it with a breezy style.

Paterson knew his stuff. Here are some examples:

- Women can get the best out of a horse.
- Racing attracts tricksters and rogues.
- The greatest need for the trainer of a thoroughbred is patience.

He offers fleeting opinions about all the good horses: Carbine, Abercorn which beat Carbine three times at weight-for-age, Phar Lap.

Jim Pike and Gordon Richards are praised for sparing the whip, and there's a wonderful anecdote about the new apprentice in Bill Kelso's Randwick stables who borrowed a book on race riding and started to copy it by hand.

Paterson remarked he copied enough to make himself a very successful rider who "at the age of twenty was earning more money than most barristers of fifty".

This book is an ideal coffee-table book as it invites browsing.

It contains a mix of factual reports, fictional stories, and much loved poems and classy illustrations, such as "In the Droving Days" and "Across the Black Soil Plains" by George Lambert. A piece of prose on page 95 could be seen as a prelude to the iconic "Man from Snowy River".



BREEZY . . . Banjo Paterson.

Bush club came alive again

The James McGill Library at Doomben is building steadily into a most comprehensive research library of hundreds of books and journals on all aspects of the racing industry.

A new addition to the shelves, *Wilpeena Races 1964 to 2008*, provides a valuable insight into bush picnic racing – albeit through the history of one entity, the Mackenzie River Amateur Picnic Races.

Despite what the title suggests, the history dates back much further than 1964. It recounts the founding of the Mackenzie River Amateur Picnic Race Club on Honeycombe station near Dingo in 1926.

That club went into recess with the outbreak of World War II and it was not until 1964 that the annual race meeting was revived – and that came about in unusual circumstances.

With the club remaining dormant, a few remaining members got together in August 1964 to decide on disposing of the club's assets.

The first item was the piano, the centrepiece of the traditional dance that continued the festivities after the last race. It was donated to a local church.

Then one of the members suggested that the club resume racing, and 10 weeks later the first meeting in the new era was held at Wilpeena station.

Racehorse owners Alan and Jennifer Acton have donated two books to the McGill Library that provide a wonderful record of, in one instance, their family's dynastic involvement in the central Queensland cattle industry and, in the second book, *Wilpeena Races* - the history of the Mackenzie River Amateur Picnic Races.

The latter sits comfortably on the shelves of the McGill Library. The work on the history of this, singular bush picnic meeting held annually is a treasure for the ages.

Oxenford and Harbutt off to a flying start



Here's a gem of a picture that has been added recently to the files in the Racing Archive at Doomben.

It shows Caution, ridden by John Harbutt, winning the Fifth Division Handicap at Oxenford racecourse in February 1946.

It was reported to have been the first registered meeting held at the Oxenford track – and for Harbutt, an apprentice jockey, Caution's success was the second win of his career.

Caution had been his first winner, too, as he had won on him previously at Albion Park.

He was not long in Brisbane from Julia Creek and at the start of a lifetime involvement in racing.

Harbutt died this year, and his family have loaned his scrapbook to the Archive for copying. It is an engrossing collection of newspaper clippings and photographs that illustrate racing as it happened in the post-war era.

Harbutt was a regular jockey for the champion filly Eye Liner and won the 1965 Champagne Stakes at Randwick on her. He also won the Queensland Oaks twice, on Eye Shadow in 1964 and Kulali in 1965, a McDougall Stakes on Tudor Glow and the 1960 Queensland Cup on Sir Delville.

He rode overseas for five years, taking up contracts for leading stables in India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

The picture of Caution winning at Oxenford revived memories of the course that was on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway almost directly opposite the Oxenford Hotel.

The eight-lane M1 now runs past the site which has been developed into industrial and residential estates.

The picture is fascinating. A crowd on the infield pressed against the running rail. Bookmakers' umbrellas can be seen in the

background, as can a handful of slouch hats obviously worn by returned Diggers.

The Gold Coast Bulletin reported on the success of the inaugural meeting: “There were upwards of 1300 present including over 900 men and approximately 300 ladies while a number of servicemen were guests,” the newspaper reported.

“Approximately 250 travelled by special train from South Brisbane and another 50 were picked up enroute so the guarantee was more than satisfied in this respect although the club gained no benefit from the excess revenue.

“There were over 60 bookmakers operating so the club reaped considerably over £300 from this source. The publicans, refreshment and light luncheon booths were practically cleaned out and the ladies and men who looked after these accessories had a very busy time under very trying weather conditions.”

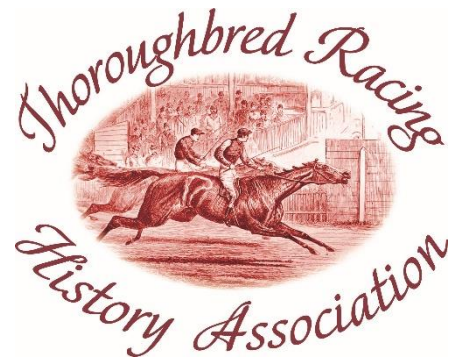


CHAMPAGNE . . . John Harbutt and the champion filly Eye Liner.

Answers to the quiz

1. Noel Best. 2. Magic Wind. 3. Bob Clarke. 4. Carioca. 5. Tea Rose and George Anderson. 6. The Buzzard. 7. Sunset Sue and Gunsynd, were sired by Sunset Hue from Woodie Wonder.s. 8. Bergerac (2018) and Niccanova

(2019). 9. Intrepid Clipper, Setaria and Paola Pisani. 10. Michael Nolan and Michael Pelling.



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