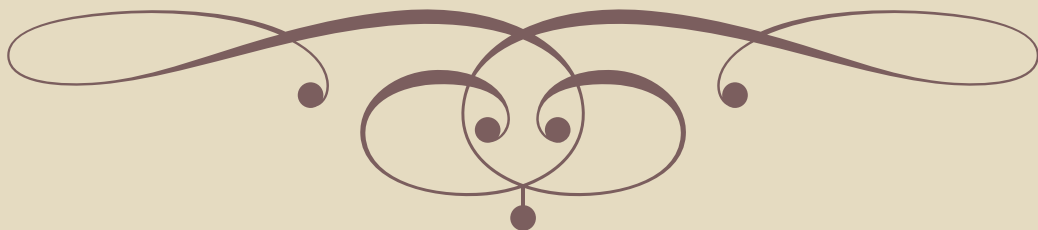




A COLLECTION OF INSPIRING STORIES

Our Horses Our Community

CELEBRATING THE STORIES OF PEOPLE
WITHIN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WHO HAVE
DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO OUR HORSES



CONTENTS

OUR COMMUNITY OUR HORSES	3
<i>Welcome</i>	3
CHAPTER 1	5
<i>Greg Bailey</i>	5
CHAPTER 2	14
<i>David Farmilo</i>	14
CHAPTER 3	20
<i>Betty Eastgate</i>	20
CHAPTER 4	23
<i>Malcolm Mitchell</i>	23
CHAPTER 5	29
<i>Sue Vivian</i>	29
CHAPTER 6	34
<i>Heather Slack</i>	34
CHAPTER 8	37
<i>Gary Slack</i>	37
CHAPTER 9	42
<i>Brian Slack</i>	42
CHAPTER 10	46
<i>Doug Rabig</i>	46
CHAPTER 11	53
<i>Peter Marshall</i>	53
CHAPTER 12	59
<i>Elizabeth Murphy</i>	59
CHAPTER 13	62
<i>Bill Hassam</i>	62
CHAPTER 14	63
<i>Julie Fiedler</i>	63
OUR COMMUNITY OUR HORSES	69

OUR COMMUNITY OUR HORSES

Welcome

Our Horses Our Community:

Celebrating the stories of people within South Australia who have dedicated their lives to our horses

About this e-book

Horse SA is a not-for-profit community based organisation which works with and for horse owners in South Australia. Key areas include horse health & welfare, recreation & sport community facilities & land, road safety, horse keeping and cultural heritage.

Horse SA participated in the 2011 “About Time” History Festival celebrations. The chosen theme was recognising those people who have dedicated their lives working with and for our horses.

A unique event was created to celebrate and recognise their achievements.

Volunteer writers responded to a public call made by Horse SA, with horse industry workers personally invited, cajoled or pleaded with to share some insights into their lives. Participants met at the Hahndorf Academy on a brisk morning of 6 May, writers where matched with story tellers, before dispersing over the township to find a warm coffee shop or pub to provide the two hour snapshot of their experiences.

This e-book is our tribute.

CHAPTER 1

Greg Bailey

After thirty years in the mounted division of the South Australian Police Force, Greg Bailey has accumulated a trove of newspaper clippings, awards, letters, cards, certificates and photographs, all of them carefully collated by his wife, Christine, for his fiftieth birthday. When I meet Greg and Christine on a cold Friday morning in Hahndorf, she shows me the folder they had brought with them. There are horses on nearly every page: children's drawings of horses, photographs of horses in proud police lines, and even a picture of a horse munching on Greg's hat. One newspaper clipping catches my eye: two horses in a paddock at Echunga, retired from policing in their mid-to-late twenties – a respectable age for a horse. They are formidable animals, but amidst all the greenery they look peaceful. Their working days are over. If only the same could be said of the man who used to ride and look after them.

As President of the South Australian Pony Club Association and President of Pony Club Australia, Greg is as busy as ever. He has just returned from Sydney, and will be travelling to New Zealand in a week's time, and then to Darwin at the end of the month. I have only a few precious hours with him this morning before he rushes off to a meeting with the local council. After fifty years at Royal Park, Greg's local Pony Club – the same club that he joined in 1976 – have been asked to vacate their grounds by the end of the month. They have nowhere else to go. For Christine, the decision doesn't match up with the government's current push to get children away from computer screens and enthused about physical activity. The Pony Club Association's primary aim is to support and encourage young riders. For those who are not as enthusiastic about sports like soccer and football, the association provides valuable opportunities to compete in equestrian events, where insurance is a difficult issue.

About the Authors: www.horsesa.asn.au click onto cultural heritage

Hahndorf Academy: www.hahndorfacademy.org.au

Design by elevenacross: www.elevenacross.com.au

Last updated 23/08/11

Copyright: Our Horses Our Community: Celebrating the stories of people within South Australian who have dedicated their lives to our horses © Horse SA 2011 www.horsesa.asn.au

All rights reserved. No part of this document can be copied and distributed in any way, mechanical or electronic, without permission from, and with acknowledgement of, Horse SA.

Disclaimer: Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the content herein is accurate, Horse SA does not assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product or process disclosed in this document. Although every effort has been made to ensure the correctness and accuracy of the information, no warranty express or otherwise is given. The content is provided in good faith.

‘He’s fighting, though,’ says Christine. ‘He’s ringing up everyone he knows, so we may be lucky. We’ve got our fingers crossed.’

Christine is unofficially in charge of our discussion this morning. It is she who leads the way to the café, makes sure we get the table right beside the open fire, and orders the coffees. She keeps the folder close at hand, ready to pull Greg out of his reveries and move the interview along. ‘We’re going through this, because your memory’s not too good,’ she teases.

To me, though, Greg seems to have a bottomless memory. He remembers dates, people, plenty of stories and even the names of the horses he’s worked with. He’s a modest man, but clearly passionate about his work. ‘No horse is born a police horse,’ he tells me. Police horses are trained, and the training requires a lot more work than simply breaking them in, putting them out on patrol and hoping they won’t jump over a car.



Greg recalls one horse, Heroic, who would return to his old ways just when it seemed the training, had paid off. One horse, Kilarny came to mind, who tried to avoid having his wolf teeth taken out, and this horse jumped a three-foot-high yard fence after only one look at the vet. ‘Frightened the hell out of him and Tim Dodd,’ says Greg. Back to Heroic who had a habit of unseating riders in the manège, including Daryl Moss, former Glenelg football player. At the suggestion of instructor Tim Dodd, Greg tried an unusual approach; he rode Heroic on the lunge¹ with two whips, one in each hand. Unable to hold onto the reins, Greg was left hanging on by his legs alone, attempting to use the whips whenever Heroic lashed out with his hinds. ‘I felt like I was a contortionist!’ he says. ‘But he turned out to be a nice horse.’

No matter how many stories he tells about bad horse behaviour, Greg has nothing but praise for the horses themselves. To him, the solution is simply time and effort. When Testify, another difficult horse, was about to be let go after dumping a rider at the Echunga training reserve, Greg stepped in. He ended up riding Testify at Wayville Showground, alongside the police band in the annual musical ride. The horse’s behaviour was flawless – but only because Greg worked him for an hour before every ride, while his fellow officers relaxed at the showground and drank coffee. He and Mr. Dodd, even had an extra piece custom-made for Testify’s bridle. He jokes that he would have accepted a parachute if he’d been offered one – anything to slow the horse down.

Christine shows me a photo from the Grand Prix, where Greg rode Testify right on the side of the track, three years in a row. ‘He tried to put earplugs in Testify’s ears,’ she says, ‘but he wouldn’t have a bar of that. He kept on flicking them out.’ SA was the first Country to have police horses on the inside of the track for the first year then every other year on the outside perimeter

On the next page of the folder is a certificate, awarded to Greg’s daughter’s Pony

¹ A long training reign that lets a horse walk in wide circles around the trainer.

Club horse, Highlander, who became an honorary police horse for a day when the Queen visited South Australia in 1992. The mounted division of the South Australian Police were responsible for providing a royal escort, but they had only thirty one horses, and they needed thirty two. Greg, who was working in S.T.A.R. Force at the time, was seconded back to the mounted to ride in the escort. Highlander underwent three months of special training, and despite the other officers making fun of 'the Pony Club horse', he was placed second in the section right behind the Queen's car. 'He never put a foot wrong,' says Christine proudly. 'He was absolutely brilliant.'

Greg even speaks endearingly of the horses who have injured him. One horse in particular, Dancer, ('A good horse,' says Greg,) was running a cross country event and attempted to jump straight over a ditch, when he should have run down one side and up the other. The result: Greg went over Dancer's head, and Dancer's chest came down on top of him. The riders had been briefed on what to do in this situation: 'Don't move. Don't be a bloody hero and jump up. Wait for the others to come and make sure you are OK.' But as Dancer scrambled to get out of the ditch, he kicked Greg in the side of the head, and Greg decided he was getting out of there as well.

The fall had happened so quickly that the rest of the team thought both Greg and Dancer must have broken their necks. Greg remembers his friend George Wayne, a rider with asthma, running up to him, puffing and panting and threatening to kill him when he got his breath back. 'And when I got back to the barracks,' Greg says, 'Jack Cawley had a go at me for trying to kill one of his horses.' All the horse had was a nick on the chest, while Greg was covered in scratches, his shirt torn right down the front.

Though he had been wearing a helmet, Dancer's kick had lasting consequences. Greg was driving home from his next musical ride when something flew through the open car window and struck him on the bridge of the nose. He still isn't sure

whether it was a gum nut or a bit of debris, but he does know that when he put his hand up to shield his left eye, everything in front of him disappeared. 'My right eye couldn't see the road,' he says. He points to the window behind me and tells me to imagine that someone is holding a tap over it, turning the street outside into a watery blur.

According to Greg's doctor, Dancer's kick had shattered a preexisting cataract, causing it to obscure the lens in his right eye. He would need an operation to remove the lens completely. Replacement lenses had not yet been fully developed, so for the next twenty years, he wore a contact lens in his right eye.

This was not Greg's first fall from a horse; nor would it be his last. Since joining the mounted in 1964, Greg has also had a knee operation and four pins in his wrist. Dancer has even given him a second kick for good measure – this one square in the chest, after leaping too energetically through a flaming hoop with Greg standing on his back. The cataract, however, was the injury that most affected Greg's career. Unable to let any dust or dirt irritate his eye, Greg was forced to give up mounted patrol work and move to an area where he would have 'no offender contact'. He spent his next eight years in the saddler shop.

Christine shows me another certificate: this one from an army cooking course. In 1979, when the victims of the Truro murders were discovered, Greg along with Sid Fischer were in charge of catering for the hundred and fifty officers investigating. 'We'd cook three hundred eggs and God knows how many pounds of bacon for their breakfast,' says Christine. 'Sausages, grilled tomatoes – they ate well.' He also catered for the reenactment of the Tolmer Gold Escort; a three week ride from Castlemaine to Adelaide.²

From the saddler shop, Greg moved to the logistics branch of S.T.A.R. Force. He recalls one training exercise in particular that didn't go according to plan. He was one of a group of 'dummies' being lowered from a helicopter to the ground

² In the 1850s, when South Australia was on the brink of financial ruin, Police Commissioner Alexander Tolmer succeeded in bringing gold from Victoria where previous attempts had been thwarted by bushrangers.

at Adelaide Airport, eighty metres below. Unlike the helicopters in Hollywood films, however, this one had a wall separating the pilot from the passengers. The Air observer was able to open the helicopter door or let the cable out by operating one of two switches with his thickly-gloved thumb. When Greg's turn came, the pilot held down the wrong switch by mistake, letting out ten metres of slack *before* Greg stepped out of the helicopter. One moment he was in the doorway; the next he was free-falling, but the training officer in charge, Brian Giles, had no way of alerting the pilot. The cable went taut, and a winded Greg was lowered the rest of the way down as though the whole exercise had proceeded without a hitch.

When he was safely back on the ground, Greg filed a report to the defence department requesting more sensitive gloves like the helicopter pilots and air force use; Nomex Kevlar gloves, at \$78 a pair. They were lucky to get them – so when Greg found out that the police snipers had been snipping off the index fingers for their own comfort, he was furious as the stitching would unwind.

'But I had a really good time in the police force,' he reassures me, probably worried that he's portraying policing as a dangerous profession full of dangerous people. 'I met a hell of a lot of nice guys – and women.' He adds 'women' as an afterthought for a reason; the mounted division was a boys-only club until the mid seventies, when the department decided to break with tradition by sending in one woman, Sue Bailey. Greg still disagrees with their logic; he thinks they should have sent two or three at once to make the experience less intimidating for Sue. Nonetheless, she and Greg became good friends. The fact that they shared the last name 'Bailey' was a complete coincidence, but they managed to convince the others that they were married. When Greg was leaving after night shift and Sue was arriving for the morning, he would call out, 'Is the electric blanket still on?'

Sue, who is sitting a few tables away, remembers it a little differently. 'He

used to harass me,' she says, grinning at Greg. "Leave the electric blanket on, darling!" When her own interview finishes, she comes over to reminisce. I chat to Christine. She and Greg were married in 1964, the year after Greg graduated from the Police Barrack Thebarton. He joined the Pony Club as an instructor in 1976, and she joined in 1980.

'I actually went over there to see what our second daughter was doing,' she says, 'because I knew she'd be up to mischief. I went in to see what was going on, and they said there was a meeting, so I walked out the secretary. I don't know how that happened.' Christine was secretary of her local club for ten years, and now does treasury work for the South Australian Pony Club Association. Eleven years after his 'retirement', Greg is still the chief instructor for his zone, and Christine's folder is full of cards and thank-you letters from children in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Whyalla, Broken Hill, Kangaroo Island and the Eyre Peninsula. He has instructed everywhere in South Australia, and many places in the Northern Territory as well. 'Pony Club is our whole life now,' says Christine. 'I don't know how we had time to go to work, actually.'

She and Greg have left a formidable legacy. They have three children, seven grandsons and one granddaughter, two who were riding at their local clubs West Wind up until 2005. Their youngest grandson is eight years old, and has just begun riding lessons with an instructor whom Greg himself taught to ride. The couple are often approached by former pupils whose own children are now taking lessons.

The love of horses, it seems, passes from generation to generation. As a boy, Greg spent Christmases with his uncle, who kept ten draught horses on his farm at Port Broughton. The horses were so well trained that they would line up each morning to be harnessed, without needing to be tied up or led anywhere. They pulled the farm equipment while the tractor rusted in the shed. Christine grew up with working horses as well; her father was a bread carter.

I interject at this point to ask Christine when she started riding. To my complete surprise, she says, 'I don't ride horses. I've never ridden a horse.' She prefers to keep both feet firmly on the ground. She has spent her life around horses – gearing them up, grooming them, shampooing them, plaiting their manes, feeding them, exercising them, lunging them, floating them – but she has never ridden them. Whatever the reason for this, it's clear she's far from intimidated by them. 'Your voice is your biggest asset with horses,' she tells me. 'They're like kids – you've got to let them know that you're in charge.'

She turns the page. Here again are the two retired horses at the Echunga training reserve – the reserve that Greg should have run until his own retirement. At the request of the head of the mounted division, Greg moved from S.T.A.R. Force to Echunga, expecting a tenure of at least ten years. A mere two and a half years later, the government sold the reserve. They did not receive anywhere near as much money as they had hoped for it, and if they had held onto it, this enormous slice of land would be worth much more today. As they fight to protect their own local Pony Club, Greg and Christine could be forgiven for feeling that the past is repeating itself.

Nonetheless, Greg seems to have come to terms with the fact that the mounted division is no longer as prominent as it once was. 'You do move with the times,' he says. 'You've got to keep up with the times.' Despite his passion for horses, Greg's attitude to the police force is first and foremost one of service. When I ask him whether he joined the force to become a mounted police officer, he frowns at me and says, 'No one does. No one applies to the police force and says they only want to join the mounted. You go into the police force to make a career.' Greg is convinced, however, that horses still have an important role to play, both tactically and ceremonially. Together with the police band, they embody what Greg calls the 'softer side' of policing. They help the force to be a positive presence to the community, rather than one that materialises only when things go wrong.

The last items in the folder are more certificates: one in Workplace Training and Assessment, and one from a Child Safe Officers Course. After nearly forty years of policing, Greg still had to have a police check for his work as an instructor – and he had to pay for it himself.

Finally, there are the three medals on the table: a South Australian Police Service Medal, an Australian Sports Medal and a National Medal for Service. Christine has also been awarded an Australian Sports Medal. They don't spend much time out of the boxes ('He never thinks of wearing them,' says Christine) but they are a valued reminder of Greg's dedication to his work, and his determination to share his passion with as many people as possible – even if it means a real retirement is nowhere in sight. Greg and Christine are still trying to figure out how they will split four medals between eight grandchildren, but their love for horses is something that they will pass on to all of their family members, and to a great many more besides.

Samuel Williams



David Farmilo

Whether your horse is barefoot or shod, there is every chance that you would know, have heard of or bumped into David Farmilo. I first encountered him through the pages of his book 'Horses, Shoes & Tales', and I could not believe that he actually lived in Oakbank and I had the possibility of meeting him. When he organised a couple of workshops about hoofcare and being a farrier, I decided to go and do just that – meet him in person. Although I prefer my horses barefoot, with hoof boots if necessary, I was sure I could still learn something from this workshop, and of course, I did. But the thing which impressed me the most, was David's passion for what he did, the meticulous care he took with his work and his teaching. What an excellent and generous teacher he is, because, for the good of the horse, he does not hold his knowledge close to his chest as some do, but willing shares what he knows. It is inspiring to see a horde of younger farriers ready to step into the shoes of those older men almost ready for retirement. Their bodies must be killing them by now- just cleaning out three horses hoofs, 12 feet, does me in! These men have been doing many horses feet in a day for many years.

The opportunity to write about someone with history in the horse world could not be ignored, and although I know of many worthy of having their story told, it was David who sprang to mind immediately.

Then it was just a matter of convincing David to allow this to happen, but that was pretty easy really, and even easier for me, was the fact that David has told parts of his own story in a number of places – his website for one www.horsefarrier.com.au (check it out for all sorts of fascinating information). However, in this article, I am presenting something his wife Anne gave me,

saying that this has never been published anywhere else before. So, here at Horse SA in History Week 2011 we are breaking news!

So, all that is left for me to say is grab a cup of coffee and sit down and enjoy a trip back in time as you read some of the high lights of David's life, written in his own words.

Thank you David, for your contribution to the horse world and sharing your knowledge that others may learn and grow in the skills you have perfected.

Jan Dodds

In June 1954 I was dispatched by my father to Angorichina Station in the Flinders Ranges to become a jackeroo. It wasn't a matter of choice, as the alternative was the Magill Reformatory for bad boys, and in father's eyes I definitely was one of those. I was as happy as a clam to escape milking cows along with escaping Dad, and had wonderful visions of becoming a cowboy and riding into the sunset.

Angorichina Station was then owned by Ken Lord; over the years Ken became my mentor, giving me enough rope to feel I was independent, but he was always in control without me knowing. He took over from my father while Mrs Lord became my mother figure as I grew up; I learned without realizing I was being taught.³

On the station everyone shod their own horse, and my first effort resulted in Sinbad losing all 4 shoes within an hour of my first ride. It also resulted in a fierce determination from me to find out how to do a perfect job of shoeing a horse, and this determination moulded my career over the next 55 years.

On the station, I discovered an old chap called Joe Love, who was born in that

³ Para from 'Horses, Shoes & Tales' by David Farmilo

area and was then around eighty years old, and lived in his own little house over past the ram paddock. It was my job as jackeroo to deliver the papers to him each week, then each Sunday I drove him back to the station where he would spend the day with us.

Old Joe became my mentor on anything to do with shoeing horses, as I soon learned that he had a wealth of information about the early days of the area. His recollection of the tough old days of bullock and horse teams kept me fascinated for hours. Old Joe had a habit of going to sleep in mid sentence, but I soon worked out that if I got him talking about his own exploits with horses, he would get excited and talk for hours, and I was hungry for knowledge.

On his Sunday visits, I would get him to sit down on the stump in the blacksmiths shop, and with the help of a horse which needed shoeing, I would get him to explain in detail all he could teach me about the basics of shoeing horses. Even now it is very humbling to realize that he had probably forgotten more than I could ever learn.⁴

Old Joe never told my WHY anything should be done in a certain way, just that it should be done that way, and I never questioned it, but faithfully reproduced my work exactly as he told me to.

Over the years I continued with Old Joes methods and observed, measured, replicated and refined my hoof care methods. Forty years later when I started teaching, it was necessary to explain WHY things had to be done a certain way, and my years of replicating Old Joes methods had enabled me to determine the answers to all those questions.

It became apparent that in the old times, those old fellows guarded their secrets jealously, and very little was ever written down about the correct methods of hoof care, so much of all that knowledge virtually died out after the advent of the automobile. Old Joes legacy to me enabled me to then hand that knowledge on to my students in my teaching years.

In 2009 Anne and I drove to Alice Springs, detouring through the Flinders Ranges, and we stopped at Ken Lords 'holiday' house which is next to Old Joes cottage, hoping that Ken would be there. Sadly noone was home, the nearby cottage was now derelict, and 5 years of drought had obliterated surrounding growth except for an old quince tree which still lived on while the native plants were nearly dead from the ongoing drought. Old Joe used to have a great vegetable patch on the other side of the creek, and the creek was still neatly walled with stone. Joes tiny cottage was made of pug and pine with one side of the cottage was built in stone with a big fireplace. I recalled that the slab floor in the cottage was always uneven, and old Joe would curse like crazy when he tripped on a slab, as it hurt his bunions.



Outside we found a small memorial stone to Old Joe, which read:

Jonah Love

Sheep farmer, station worker,

Miner and prospector.

Family took up this Nilpowilla land in 1902

Died Orroroo 1966 aged 87 years

Erected by Ken Lord 2003

So Joe was born in 1879, and was only actually only 75 when I was first at Angorichina Station.

We drove on into Blinman, stopping at a café for coffee, and bumped straight into Ken Lord coming out of the gallery next door. Fate is a wonderful thing.

Ken, who is now in his 80s, told us that Old Joe had 2 brothers, Bill and Bob, they all lived in the old cottage which was their family home, and had worked in the copper mines at Blinman. Joe's brother moved to the Orroroo Nursing home, and Joe lived on at the cottage by himself. When he got too old to live alone, they moved him back to Angorichina Station into the bunkhouse where I used to camp when I was first there.

Old Joe died at Orroroo and was buried in the Orroroo cemetery with no headstone. In 2003, Ken Lord went to the council and found the records of the plot number, and erected a headstone there. He also had a memorial stone made and put it near Old Joes cottage, even surrounding it with copper rocks to signify Joe's time spent working in the mines.

I believe that people live on for as long as they are remembered, and I talk about Old Joe at every course that I run, and I am indebted to him for passing on his knowledge of how to correctly balance the hoof.



CHAPTER 3

Betty Eastgate

The Betty Eastgate Horse Riding Arena at Lockleys was officially named in July 2008. It marked the culmination of an active association with horses, which began with Betty's early years at Redhill. Her schoolfriend would ride a pony and Betty a bicycle. When they met up they swapped mounts and Betty rode the pony to school.

Before silos, bagged wheat was stacked at railway stations awaiting transport. A draught horse was used to build the stack. At the end of the day Betty and her brother Leland would ride home bareback on the draught horse. A motor cyclist rode past and the horse bolted. Betty and Leland performed unintentional emergency dismounts, fortunately without mishap.

The family by now had moved to Adelaide, and when Betty married Frank they moved to Netley Avenue, Lockleys, where they have lived since, in sight of the arena. Betty's daughter Andra was promised a pony when she reached the age of 10, and Betty taught her to ride.

Betty continued to ride for pleasure on the Lockleys oval which in those days was no more than undulating sandhills. Gradually they were developed into a sports complex, and Horse Shows were held there until the sports people objected. With the assistance of Mr Slatterly, an architect, an area was set aside for the arena and the Lockleys Riding Club was formed some 45 years ago.

Betty and her daughter Andra were both studying dressage and regularly travelled to the Victorian Equestrian Centre in the Dandenongs. Floating Andra's horse Khan through the Adelaide hills before the freeway gives an indication of their dedication and enthusiasm.

Andra qualified as Junior National Champion of Dressage on her horse Khan (Nantawarra). Now living in Canberra, Andra is on the committee of the Canberra Royal Show where her 4 children are competitors. The achievements of Andra and her children are a testimony to Betty's expert influence over the years.



By now Betty's wealth of experience was well recognised and her skills were put to use by the Equestrian Federation of Australia at the Adelaide Royal Show. More recently she was asked to judge at the Western Districts Riding Club.

Betty is patron of the Lockleys Riding Club, and the Betty Eastgate Horse Riding Arena sign on the gate, serves as a reminder to members as they use the arena that they have Betty to thank for it.

A card of appreciation from LRC rider Victoria Langton follows.

CHAPTER 4

Malcolm Mitchell

Stockman Stock horse breeder, breaker, trainer and competitor.

I was born at Muloorina Station in the 1950's. It's a 2000 square mile outback station bordering Lake Eyre South and Lake Eyre North, about 50kms from Marree. When I was growing up there were 6 houses and 11 kids on the station so we had a government teacher. I'm the eldest in my family and the only one that continues with horses today. I've always had a love for them.



Muloorina Station

I was given my first horse at the age of 4, called Fanny, from a drover when there was still droving down the Birdsville Track. Toot Churches lived on a neighbouring station and he was really good with horses and taught me, (and then later I met Gordon McKinlay who changed my life with horses). When I was 8 or 9 Brian Oldfield gave me my first saddle, it was brand new and I still have it to this day. He also gave me a really good pony called Bimbo. I am a true believer in that if you get the right horse at the right time you will really go ahead, get the mix wrong and you'll go backwards.



As kids we entered gymkhanas and would ride the 50km to Marree for the weekend with our packs, and then ride home after. The horse was always quiet on the way home and so were we... not having much to say about the wins we had missed out on!



Wet lands on the Frome River at Muloorina

Later when I was 18-19 I had a lot of success with breeding and training my own race horses. I use to jockey them too until I got too heavy. It took me 5 years to win the big Oodnadatta Cup but I did it. The country up there helps with training – sand hills, swales, gibber plains and huge paddocks – not a stable in sight.

I bred all my race horses, I would have bred around 200 horses and would have broken in a similar amount. Beaushapo, Desert Storm, Toll Storm, Saturn were some of my successful horses. I travelled most of Northern SA dragging the family around. I raced horses at Tarcoola, Oodnadatta, Cooper Pedy, Kingoonya, Maree, Birdsville and Yunta. I also trained horses for other people and won several Leading Trainer awards. I continued with racing until around the mid 80's. I raced horses for 15-16 years, they took up a fair portion of my

life, I don't have Thoroughbreds anymore.

I started drafting in the late 70's before I quit race horses altogether. In total I have won 5 open drafts and several novices and maidens. I haven't really kept track, I won a couple of Stockman challenges at Mt Pleasant too. I started with quarter horses and then in the mid 80's I bought my first stock horse stallion, Desert Fox. Now I'm into Stock Horses – breeding, breaking, training and competing.

I've been with horses all my life and have wonderful memories of growing up on the Station.

When we mustered cattle there was often about 10 of us, we could be gone for about 3 weeks at time. We would take about 5 horses each and swap them over at smoko or lunch time. One of us would 'tailer' the herd of 30-40 horses and we would hobble them at night. The cook would take the landrover with the camp gear and our swags.

When I was a kid about 10yo, we brought cattle from down the Birdsville track from Cinnabar Swamp down to Kopperamanna bore on Etadunna Station. I was with Brian Oldfield and he had one fella called Lesley and another bloke Bobby. The 4 of us brought the cattle all the way down to Kopperamanna and we were yarding them up. It was just on dark and we were trying to get the cattle in but we were having trouble with the gates. Brian handed me a Scobie whip (made of Kangaroo leather and renowned around Australia, sought after by stockmen). We were chasing the cattle around trying to get them in and it was getting dark. I was only 10, I couldn't carry the whip and hold the reins at the same time so I chucked the whip, intending to get it later. It was very dark when we finally yarded the cattle and I had no idea where the whip was. We made camp on the edge of the Cooper. Brian was mad as hell at me, I still remember it to this day. Because it was made of leather we thought the dingos might carry it off, but we found it the next day and it was OK. I don't think Brian ever really

forgave me, but he learnt not to give a Scobie whip to a 10yo!

We had country between Lake Eyre North and South and when the lakes filled we couldn't cross. In 74 we could swim the horses, but in 75 we couldn't as the water had dropped and it was too boggy. So we took the horses to Maree and loaded them on the train to Coward Springs, near Coober Pedy. Glen Hughes went on the train with the horses and Gary Hughes and myself drove up in the Landrover to meet him there. We had all the gear in the landrover – saddles, ropes, swags, tucker box and the camp gear. On the way up we struck a thunder storm, we could see it was black in front of us and then we were in it. We got bogged in a creek and couldn't get out, luckily the Landrover's nose was on the bank, as the water came up to the tray. We had to sleep in the front cabin. The next morning we got the ute out and then 2km further along we got bogged again. It was 2 days before we got to Coward springs and meanwhile Glen was at the trucking yard with all the horses and nothing else – no food or water or ropes. But the train from Alice springs had come through and the guards gave him some food and water. The horses unfortunately went without.

On another trip, around the mid 70's, we were walking about 500 head of cattle back out from Coward Springs. It's about a 5 day walk and on the 4th day we got to a dam called One Box. We were watering the cattle before we were going to yard them for the night. Gordon Litchfield, Glen Hughes, Barry Price and myself were sitting on our horses just talking together behind the wall of the dam, waiting while the cattle were having a drink. I was on a young filly and had split reins. Anyway she shook herself and the reins dropped to the ground and spooked her and she took off, went straight up and over the dam wall, split the cattle and went into the water. When the boys came up to see what had happened all they saw was my hat floating on top, the filly and I were on the bottom! I raced her later and she won 4 races at Maree. She was called Gold Crown, bitch of a thing she was!

When we drafted cattle, sorting them out the stock for sale from the breeding herd, one person would in the 'camp' and he would ride through the herd of cattle and cut one out and then a couple of blokes on the face would take that beast over to the cut (the truckers mob).

This day we were drafting, we were about 2kms from the yards. There were other horses in the yards which were surrounded by another paddock. My brother Trevor was riding a cream mare called Sandy. His bit broke, just fell out and he had nothing. The mare panicked and took off, she headed for the yards and was just going flat out straight for this paddock gate. Trevor bailed out – he just sort of stepped off the side - and she cleared the paddock gate and then galloped to the yards and cleared that too and was in with the other horses. It would have been 4.6". It was hard limestone ground but luckily Trevor wasn't hurt.

Gordon McKinlay, a horseman from Queensland and the best in Australia, changed my life totally with horses. We had ridden horses all our lives but were never really taught, we could ride but we really didn't have horsemanship skills. I met Gordon later in life but he totally change my way with handling, breaking, riding and training, I haven't looked back. I still remember every word Gordon said, because it's what I wanted to know. Gordon use to travel around Australia's outback training Jackaroos and station hands, there wasn't anyone like him and won't ever be. Sadly we lost Gordon in November 2010, the horse world won't be the same - a magic horseman.

I like the breeding side of horses and I love breaking them in. I love getting a young horse up to the going stage, it means more to me than winning a ribbon. It's just something I feel, I seem to know from the first ride or two if the horse is likely to go to the high end of its career

I have an old mare April, when I broke her in it's like a connection, and it's still there. One of April's fillies, Bella who is five now was a tough nut to break in a few years ago, she doesn't concentrate, but she's quiet. Stevie, another mare I'm

breaking is magic, hasn't put a foot wrong and I'm really enjoying working with her. I have a yearling I didn't think much of but since I got her in the yard to start her I've changed my mind, she'll be good!

I love working with horses, I could do it every day. I love mucking around with young ones. To make a living out of it I would have to have too many but then I might lose that love. I have trouble keeping them - people want to buy them and so I sell them, sometimes I don't leave myself enough to compete on!

For now horses are my life and I think I will continue with them forever, I can't imagine not having them around.



Green Gully Rolex. Standing at Stud at Edeneyre, Angaston

CHAPTER 5

Sue Vivian

Jumping Hurdles in the Horse World

Sitting at the back of a quiet cafe in the Adelaide Hills town of Hahndorf, fifty-nine year old Sue Vivian holds out her hands for inspection. They are petite but lined and unmanicured – a physical legacy of forty tough, and often trying, years of working with horses. Sue has ridden, jumped, raced, hunted and bred horses in and around Adelaide ever since her love for the creatures blossomed in her early youth. Having worked as stable hand, trainer, musterer, jockey and mounted police officer, Sue now runs an award-winning business with her husband Doug from their home at Four Oaks Farm (just outside of Littlehampton and a half hour drive from Adelaide), running pony parties for children, trail rides, holding farm visits and teaching riding lessons. However her life has in no way slowed in pace; Sue works seven days and the business, which began almost twenty years ago, continues to grow.

From an early age, Sue was determined to learn to ride. At the age of six, she emigrated with her family as a 'ten pound tourist' from England to Adelaide in 1957. The family lived in a housing trust home for five years before relocating to a property in the Adelaide Hills. Although they acquired work horses for ploughing upon purchase of the new property, eleven year old Sue longed for a pony of her own. But for a family of six children and modest means, such an expensive hobby was not a high priority. Sue jumped this first hurdle by making a deal with her neighbour: she would clean out her neighbour's stables every night of the week in exchange for one riding lesson each weekend. However the 'beginning of the end' arrived years later in the form of a skewbald pony named Sebastian (Popeye for short) – a gift from Sue's brother. Smitten, Sue joined the

local Pony Club and began working part time in a fish and chip shop in Stirling to pay for her hobby.

Sue's clear eyes light up as she recounts her teenage summer holiday adventures on horseback. With her younger brother and a girlfriend from school, Sue would head to a sheep station in the Flinders Ranges to go mustering. They would catch the seven-hour train in the late afternoon and arrive in the middle of the night at a train siding 'in the middle of nowhere', where station workers would be waiting in their ute in the dark. 'The only way they had of alerting the train to stop was to flash their headlights,' Sue says. She laughs as she tells of her heart thudding at the prospect of being 'forgotten', of having to hop off the train in the dark, thirty-five kilometres from the homestead at which they were based, near Beltana.

After a couple of days of preparation, Sue, her brother and girlfriend, and three of the boys from the station would rise at five a.m. and embark on the 'double fleeces muster' – mustering the sheep whose heavy fleeces slowed them down and separated them from the lighter sheep. 'The boys' mother would make us sandwiches using bread about two inches thick and slathered with dripping'. The youths would stop at creek beds to fill their billycan, camping out wherever the sheep yards were. 'It was fantastic,' Sue grins and shakes her head, 'but I don't know how my mum ever let us go on the train by ourselves like that'. Sue tells of experiences ranging from witnessing 'crook old brawls between the stockmen and the Aborigines' to feeling unsafe and finding a sleeper, where they lay Sue's brother and their bags against the door so that no one could get in. Although Sue describes her time mustering as 'exciting', they certainly involved experiences 'you would never dream of letting your kids do now'.

Arriving home from the mustering trips only two days before the school year begun, Sue's life resumed its routine. It was while back at work at the fish and chip shop that Sue chatted with the local policemen and discovered that women were

soon to have the opportunity of joining the mounted police force. Continuing to involve herself with horses, Sue rode and also took part in 'combined driving' – a harness competition with Shetland ponies. As Sue reveals, combined driving is a discipline made popular by the Duke of Edinburgh, and which involves three stages – endurance, a dressage test and finally an obstacle course – totalling thirty kilometres in distance. However, the idea of joining the police force had deeply embedded itself, after years of working and riding, Sue, now twenty four, joined the police force with the idea of eventually joining the mounted cadre.

In her first year of training for the police department, Sue began to ride track work for various horse trainers in Adelaide. It was also during this first year that the first race in South Australia to ever allow female riders was scheduled. To qualify as an 'approved lady rider' (women were not called 'jockeys' until they were officially allowed to ride with men; at one stage they were even going to be called 'jockettes'), Sue had to ride three trial races in front of the stewards. Although two of the races coincided with Sue's rostered time off work, Sue was forced to 'take a sickie' in order to ride in the third, for which she 'was damn near kicked off the police force'. Fortunately Sue's boss was fond of sporting events and let Sue off with a warning. She qualified and rode in the Ansett Lady Riders Race at the Morphettville Racecourse on 18 May 1974.

Although Sue's love of both horses and of the challenge of variety in the workplace meant that she had always looked to becoming a mounted police officer, the opportunity did not arise within the next nine years. She instead worked in other fields: uniform patrols for four years, the rape squad for two, and later became attached to the CIB for eighteen months.

Finally, on 7 January 1982 at the age of thirty-one, First Class Constable Sue Vivian 'succeeded in jumping the 144 year old hurdle of "men only" in the Mounted Cadre', becoming the first woman to be accepted in the South Australian Mounted Police Division since its inception in 1838. The initiation

was in fact prompted by a sexual discrimination inquiry into the SA Police Force. Now married and experienced in the ways of the force, Sue was asked to join the SA mounted cadre to 'break ground'.



As one woman amidst about seventy men, it was a trying time in Sue's career. 'Things weren't very good. It was tough,' she says. Being the only woman in a previously male-only domain meant that a small percentage made it very difficult. However, 'ninety percent of the men were very supportive', she says, and although she made lifelong friends, her time in the cadre was short-lived. In 1982 while on a Police Training Camp in Echunga, Sue suffered a head injury in an accident while completing a jumping exercise. The girth had given way and Sue had fallen backwards off the horse, was struck unconscious and taken to hospital. As a result of the injury Sue was invalided out of the Police Force.

Since this time Sue has suffered numerous other concussions from horse riding accidents. 'My local doctor said to me, "You know, Sue, you can't keep banging your head like this"'. Sue stares down at the table. 'But you know what it's like telling a horse person not to ride'. After her accident, Sue started a family and eventually bought ponies for her own children. Her daughter Claire, 26, now runs her own riding school. Sue loves introducing children to horses. 'They see pictures of them, but so many don't get the opportunity to get close and smell and touch.' This hands-on interaction with horses, getting out in the fresh air amidst beautiful scenery is fundamental to Sue's wellbeing. 'If you don't get on a horse at least once a week, you're...' – Sue waves her hands about. 'Riding is good for your soul. It slows your life down.'

By Jacqui Lawson

CHAPTER 6

Heather Slack

(formerly Bonnett)

What would equestrians do without saddlers? Riding bareback grasping a mane for a lengthy period would steadily become rather tedious.

And so saddlery came into being, as a trade of great importance.

Try to imagine, as recently as 1955, when there were 19 saddlers in the Adelaide square mile, and Currie Street with so many stock agents was the rural heart of the city. Horses arrived at Mile End and were then brought to the sale yards at what was recently discovered as the old Queen's theatre.

Conveniently located alongside was Bonnett's saddlery conducting business in the very narrow fronted building, which is there to this day. Bonnett's was first established in 1843 in Grenfell Street.



Heather Bonnett worked part-time at the shop doing accounts and helping in many ways. Heather's soon-to-be-husband Brian joined the company in 1955 (they married in 1958), then when Heather's father suffered a heart attack in 1956 Brian took over the reins.

When Heather's father died in 1966 Heather worked in the shop full-time. As a milliner by trade, Heather's special interest was in riding clothes.

Bonnett's were agents for Caldene, a clothing company in Yorkshire U.K., and for the local company R.M. Williams.

Saddlery in those days was a highly regarded and essentially manual trade. Nevertheless the staff would arrive at work, not in casual wear but more formally attired in suits. They would settle to work at their respective benches performing, for the greater part, what amounted to high grade stitching. The saddlery in the early days occupied only a section of the ground floor, with other tenants above, and carpenters in the large shed at the rear.

Nevertheless the police patrols on their greys were always welcome for a morning 'cuppa', but because they were not permitted to dismount on duty they ducked their heads to get through the doorway and likewise when backing out, after their tea break.

Water for the tea meant a trip to the only tap at the far end of the carpenters' area in the shed. The water in the billy was heated on a primus stove, a handful of tea thrown in and with a few taps on the metal the renowned billy tea was produced.

Bonnett's, Currie Street premises were sold in 1988, largely because of the lack of parking space in the vicinity.

Premises at 242 Hutt street became the outlet for retail sales, with manufacturing taking place at their Kensington factory. Later on the manufacturing moved to Norwood, and at one stage as many as 69 staff were employed. Inevitably cheaper

imports brought about a decline in the manufacturing side of the business and the move to Magill Road, Stepney followed where it is mainly a retail outlet.

In 2000 Heather and Brian's sons, Gary and Greg, became joint managing directors with Brian as chairman.

In addition to Magill Road, Stepney there are Bonnett's stores at Mount Barker, Seaford Meadows and Gawler.

Heather and Brian retired from active involvement in 2007.

CHAPTER 8

Gary Slack

With Adelaide city streets congested with cars, buses and new tramlines, it's perhaps difficult to appreciate the once enormous role of horses. The streets you see today have not evolved from well-worn convict tracks through the bush, but from the careful and methodical planning by surveyor Colonel William Light.

In the decade following Proclamation in 1836, there were 69 saddlers in the city square. Not 69 people, but 69 saddlery premises between the four terraces. By all accounts they did a roaring trade in the burgeoning city.

By the 1840s, the city was taking shape. Local sandstone was used to construct buildings, adding a dignified appeal to the city. During this decade, the eclectic needs of the new cosmopolitan city were reflected in her new buildings: Government House, Ambassadors Hotel, Holy Trinity Church, the Old Adelaide Gaol and the War Memorial.

Historical illustrations of this era show wide streets and open spaces. The one common element to all images is the presence of the horse and cart. Early etchings show horses ridden and tethered on King William Street and later photos show carts, carriages and drays up and down the city streets. A city with a growing population and a booming building programme needed transportation and it required an industry to service it. Two saddleries from that era are still in operation today.

In 1843, seven years after Proclamation, Edward Albert Bonnett opened his saddlery business in Grenfell Street. At the height of his trade, he had a team of 60, a huge workforce for the day. His business was mainly manufacturing

harnesses. 168 years later, manufacturing is still an integral part of this pioneering equestrian business.

Bonnetts has continued as a family business. Brothers Gary and Greg Slack, are the great-great-great grandsons of Edward Bonnett and the proprietors and managing directors.

Bonnetts is the oldest family business in South Australia. It is the oldest saddlery in Australia and the fourth oldest in the world. Business Review Weekly lists them the fourteenth oldest business in Australia, founded not long after Elders and the State Bank of Victoria, and 26 years after the Bank of NSW (Westpac), Australia's first company.

'From the 1860s to the 1880s, we were more a manufacturing business,' Gary Slack explains. 'There was only one retail store.'

Since 1843, Bonnetts have had premises in the city, either in Grenfell Street, Currie Street or Hutt Street. Today there are four retail locations: Stepney, Seaford Meadows, Mount Barker and Gawler. Three of the stores include retail and manufacturing and the wholesale base is from the Stepney branch.

Although a family business since inception, Gary had to earn his stripes, starting work early and ingloriously. 'After school my brother and I would sweep out the manufacturing shed in Kensington,' Gary says. The two boys followed their parents, Brian and Heather (Bonnett) into the business. 'My parents were workaholics and my work ethic comes from them.' Gary did an apprenticeship as a saddle and harness maker and went on to complete a business management degree.

Married to Nici and father of three, Gary sets himself a dizzying pace. He is joint managing director of Bonnetts with his twin brother Greg and shareholder and deputy chair of the Saddleworld buying group. Gary is also deputy chair of Horse SA, an industry-based organisation representing the horse community

and liaising with State, Federal and Local Governments. Gary also consults regularly with other key industry companies including Riding for the Disabled, the Equestrian Federation and local pony clubs.

'We believe that sponsorship is an important part of business,' Gary says. He has active involvement as well as sponsoring many equestrian events in South Australia, including the Adelaide International Three Day Event.

In addition, last season Gary coached five junior sport teams, is a board member of the Kensington Cricket Club and is building a new house at Skye.

Gary is involved with Bonnetts from saddle fitting to advertising, manufacturing to profit margins, but considers his strengths to be in business and marketing. Although now spending little time at the bench saddle-making, he isn't bound to a desk and will literally enter the field to work with his customers. 'We are constantly in search of new and better ways to serve our customers. We have a genuine care for and are interested in our customers and their horses.'



Online forums back this up: 'He drove all the way here (4 hrs) and brought all his saddles for a little try on session for one person. How awesome is that?', 'He is the only person in SA that I'd trust' and 'After dealing with Gary personally I can't recommend him highly enough.'

In his busy life, is there time to ride? With a laugh he confesses he is a poor rider. 'But my wife is an excellent rider. She competed at local horse shows and used to breed Caspian ponies.' And their children? 'They have not shown much interest in riding, much to the amusement of our customers. They've all had plenty of opportunities but no real interest.' This is surprising, but not something Gary is worried about. '[Our children] are passionate about other things.'

It's something they get from their father. Gary speaks with passion about his family, Bonnetts and the equestrian industry. He counts as friends (and sponsors) Olympians Gillian Rolton, Andrew Hoy, Wendy Schaeffer and Megan Jones. He speaks with emotion about his uplifting personal involvement with Riding for the Disabled. 'I go there and help out. They are largely a volunteer organisation who offer a fantastic service. It is a privilege to be a part.' He is a people-person, an industry expert and an advocate for both horse and rider. 'We want to see the horse industry go from strength to strength.'

Bonnetts is synonymous with the equestrian industry. It is a recognisable brand, Gary says, 'the Nike of the industry. We want the industry to continue to grow. But we are a family business, too. I would love [Bonnetts] to continue with the family and continue to be a creative, proactive, flexible and visionary business.'

Where will he and the Bonnetts brand go from here? 'We are a proud South Australian founding business. The horse was the mode of transport and we were there when it all started,' Gary explains. 'I want to make the horse riding experience the best for the horse and the rider. A better experience will mean more enjoyment, a better performance standard and a more regular rider.'

Great-great-great grandfather Edward Bonnett would surely recognise some of these ambitions, but other business directions would throw him right from his mount: upgraded websites, a worldwide saddle-fitting service, store expansions and an increased product range.

The horse industry has survived through unimaginable advances in transport and technology. Bonnetts is one of two saddleries in operation since 1843. The other? They diversified their product from the horse to the cart and are now known as General Motors Holden.

CHAPTER 9

Brian Slack

Anything but Slack

On May 16th 2011 it was announced that The Australian International Three Day Event is being relocated from Rymill Park to the Heritage Grandstand in Victoria Park. This adds even greater distance to its humble beginnings in Gawler.

Mr Brian Slack became a member of the Gawler Three Day Event Committee in 1986. It's no coincidence that the same year the Gawler world championships received approval by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (F.E.I.) as a four star event.

In 1988 Mr Slack became Chairman of the committee. During his 10 year seat, he was able to pull the committee from a large deficit. However, numbers at the event started to dwindle.

"We found that people weren't coming to the event. It was too far at Gawler" said Mr Slack.

Head hunted by the Government of South Australia, Mr Slack was asked to organise moving the event from Gawler into the city centre of Adelaide so that it was more accessible to the public.

After two years of resistance from everyone including locals, politicians and even environmentalists, Mr Slack was able to convince the Adelaide City Council to move the event and approval was given.

It was 1997 and the Adelaide International Horse Trail was born. The event grew substantially and gained worldwide recognition. By 1998 spectator participation increased to a reported 60,000.

Mr Slack continued as Chairman of the Adelaide International Horse Trail for upwards of two years and during that time, Mr Slack obtained approval from the F.E.I. to hold the first four star event since the 1986 Gawler Championships.

In 2007 the Adelaide International Horse Trail was renamed the Australian International Three Day Event to celebrate its tenth anniversary.

The F.E.I. ranking still continues today and Adelaide remains the only place in the Southern Hemisphere to host a four star equestrian event.

Before his work with the three day event, Mr Slack was already a pioneer of equestrian administration for special events and had achieved many amazing feats.

Most notably were his achievements at the 1975 Trade Fair Expo. Mr Slack was the events manager and coordinated the parade of 1000 horses along King William Street.

"They all formed up on South Terrace and then on the Saturday morning I had to organise... two Holden Utes to come along behind with six men and shovels picking up all the horse manure down King William Street" explained Mr Slack.

The parade concluded at the Adelaide oval where the Expo was launched in front of an audience including Princess Ann and Captain Mark Phillips.



All the while, Mr Slack was also Managing Director of family business Bonnetts, a role he held until 1990 where he passed the title to his twin sons Gary and Greg who still jointly hold this title today.

Mr Slack started working at his father in law's business in 1955 after dreams of a career as a jockey were hindered by a teenage growth spurt.

Bonnetts was established in 1843 and is the 4th oldest saddlery in the world. It was the first business to import world recognised brands into the country.

"We were wholesale suppliers, so if we didn't make it, we bought it" stated Mr Slack.

Mr Slack took yearly trips overseas to Equestrian trade shows ensuring that Australia was receiving the best products available. He led the way in the equestrian industry in terms of bringing product into Australia.

"Stubben saddles, I was the first person to import them into Australia...I was the first one to import the County saddles aswell," he said.

In January of 2002 Mr Slack received an Order of Australia and was presented with his award at Government House.

"I was very lucky at the time that one of the referees was the current Governor of South Australia, Dame Roma Mitchell, and another was Kym Bonython... but I didn't know this at the time." explained Mr Slack.

With a career that spanned over 52 years, and a rightly deserved Order of Australia honouring his achievements, Mr Slack retired in 2007.

When talking about his retirement Mr Slack says "for the first 12 months I didn't know what to do with myself."

South Australia is not known for many things but The Australian International Three Day Event puts SA back on the map.

Horses have worked alongside people for many years and aided in the development of man-kind. It is the human heroes however, who work relentlessly behind the scenes to promote the growth of the horse industry in South Australia and ensure that our horses are always recognised and never forgotten.

The Australian International Three Day Event is expecting upwards of 30,000 spectators this year. People travelling from all over the world will witness the event which is being used as an Olympic qualifier for 2012.

Even though the location has changed just slightly, the innovations that make this event special have not, and spectators will bear witness to something magical and unique brought to the centre of the city by a Mr Brian Slack.

Written by Bianca Joseph

CHAPTER 10

Doug Rabig

Tailer, Brumby Runner and Saddler

Who's Jackman?

"Where would you like to share your story?"

We're just off Mount Barker Road, Hahndorf's main street. There are countless coffee houses to choose from (unless, of course, you decide to count them), and a few pubs, if the interviewee would be so inclined (at 10:00am). I figure it best to let him decide the most comfortable place to have his life pried into.

"Story? What story? I haven't got any."

"Well, you could tell me how you got mixed up with horses."

He sighs. "A horse is a horse. It's my life. All my life. That's it."

Doug Rabig's not the most forthcoming of folk. Executive Officer Julie Fielder warned me he might be tough to break. We don't end up moving very far from our meeting spot – which is likely for the free tea nearby, to which Doug seems quite partial. Although, he's forced to take his tea unsweetened, as someone had forgotten to bring the sugar ("You bloody slacker, Julie!" calls Doug, more than once). I feared this would only encourage Doug's reservedness, but once the two of us had partaken in the tea, those stories – which a moment ago hadn't existed – come galloping out faster than I can record them.

"So – this horse business. How did it happen?" I ask again.

"Was born into it, mate."

"You didn't have a choice?"

"I had a choice. Ride... or walk."

And Doug chose to ride. His earliest memory in the saddle emerges from the fog of infancy – when he was only four years old, with legs too short to reach the stirrups. It wasn't until five years later he learned that a life of horses was a dangerous one. At nine, whilst riding, his nearly lost his foot.

"Got cut right to the bone."

Doug was out mustering with his dad and brother when a dust storm approached. His father sent the two of them back, but as they rode the ponies became competitive, and bolted. Doug's home at the time was what's called a Queenslander – erected on stumps to prevent flooding, which themselves are covered with a sheet of galvanised iron to protect against termites. His pony shot straight past the house, and Doug's foot had a meeting with the iron cover.

"Cut through all the tendons."

After it happened, Doug's father took him aside, looked him in the eye and, with a finger pointing skyward, said, "Don't cry."

"I won't," Doug promised. "I won't cry... if you get me a gun."

His father – with a chuckle – agreed. True to his word, Doug never cried and, as promised, he was given a .22 rifle for his fortitude. He was one of the few kids around with that kind of weapon. Never mind he had to travel all the way to Adelaide to fill up on ammunition – Doug had learned an important thing about his life of horses.

"You get hurt."

The pain seemed paltry when a reward for his hardships was fresh on his mind. At nine years old, the reward was material, but as Doug grew older the dividends became less corporeal. His wound was sewn up by his auntie and left that way for fourteen months. It kept giving him problems, though, so he was taken to

hospital to get it properly fixed. After the doctors did their best to reattach the tendons, Doug was made to use a walking frame for eighteen more months.

All this while he was working on the station with his family. He'd be returning home from school and going straight to work and what's more – no pocket money.

"No pocket money!?" I blurt out.

"Nah. It's family."

"Yeah but... no pocket money!?"

Despite his family values, he couldn't go his whole life without change in his pocket. When it came time, his father took him aside after school and told him:

"You're gonna get a job."

And without much complaint, Doug went looking for one. He didn't have to search too extensively. He found a nice little part time job packing bags. Satisfied, he reported back to his father.

"Packing bags?" asked his father. "That's not a job. Packing bags!? Roll your swags instead, I'll get you a job."

They went next door, eighty miles down the road, to Tanbar Station. Doug's father pointed to the door and said to his son, "Give it a knock and they've got a job for you."

So Doug knocked, and when his neighbour answered said, "My dad says you've got a job for me."

"Is that your dad?" asked his neighbour.

Doug nodded.

"You're a tailer, then."

And Doug, curious, asked, "How d'you know that?"

"Because your dad was one and his dad was one."

Doug tells me it's in the blood.

For those readers unfamiliar with the occupation, a horse tailer is essentially a drover. For those readers still uncertain, picture Hugh Jackman in Baz Luhrmann's 2008 epic Australia. Or... perhaps not.

"[Hugh Jackman] was pathetic!" Doug assures me. "And Nicole Kidman was the worst actor for the part too. Whenever anyone wants to get somewhere in that movie it takes 'em forever. Otherwise, they get there in no time. Bloody ridiculous."

Perhaps the reader shouldn't picture the movie at all.

A drover moves livestock over long distances, and the horse tailer is responsible for the stock horses. These were spare horses taking a break from being ridden – on their day off, as it were. I asked Doug if he ever developed emotional attachments with any of the horses. He explains that you change your horse every day. There's no time. You ride a horse like you ride a bicycle, or drive a car. There's nothing very romantic about it.

Doug spent two years as a tailer. After that, he went into Brumby running. He was employed by various stations in northern South Australia to clear properties of Brumbies – wild horses that multiply quickly and eat food meant for cattle. Once caught, the brumbies either end up in the meat works or are cheaply sold. When a horse knows its surroundings, it won't be afraid to go wild. Domestication relies upon unfamiliarity of environment. A foreign horse won't stray. Doug, his brother and his father would employ expert riding talents to rope in Brumbies and remove them to a new location.

"That sounds like an interesting life," I remark.

“It’s the best. I loved it.”



It wasn’t enough to catch them, the wild horses would have to be broken. Once again, this process isn’t as romantic as typical conception might suggest. The runners would rope the horse around the neck and choke them down. “Absolutely break their spirits.” Horses are majestic, beautiful creatures. So much so, it’s easy to forget that they’re large and dangerous. One kick from a horse can “kill you stone dead.”

Often times during this period Doug would have to ride a horse bareback. “It’d be hard to get back off, wouldn’t it?” I ask stupidly.

“There’s really only one way to get on,” he says. “And there’s about three thousand ways to get off. It’s easier to get off than it is to get on, that’s for sure.”

Sometimes, though, a horse wouldn’t suffice for chasing down Brumbies. That’s when the boys would administer motorbikes to help with the chase. That’s nothing compared to nowadays, where helicopters have come into frequent use. I can tell Doug doesn’t quite approve of these new methods. He’d experienced a helicopter ride.

“How was it?”

“For a bloke who likes to walk or ride – very frightening.”

The helicopters would get as close as thirty feet from the ground. And they hardly kept to open fields, the place could be littered with tall trees – each one a hazard.

Toward the end of Doug’s career of Brumby running, the fields were wracked with wet season. “Every cloud that came in the sky rained. There was no money in horses at that point.” But as Doug explained earlier, horses are his life. So amidst riding at rodeos and calf roping, he became a saddler by trade. He spent fifteen years under this employment and could make any kind of saddle, “if the price was right”. He’ll still make one if the right offer comes along, but it was during his years as a saddler he met Sue Vivian, his current partner and a fellow

horse aficionado.

“She was looking for a handyman,” he says with a grin.

The two now reside at Four Oaks Farm, only thirty minutes out of Adelaide, where they host pony parties for children. And it keeps him busy.

As my time with Doug is beginning to run out, I ask him if he has any memories that stand out from the rest. When a tailer’s looking after a mob of horses, he’ll tie a bell around the mare’s neck. Despite regular depiction, horses pertain to a system of matriarchy – where a mare goes, the geldings will follow. So long as the tailer can hear the bell he knows the mob is nearby, and that he won’t have to spend half the next day chasing after it.

“Lying next to the campfire – alone or with you mates around you – listening to the bells of the mares... It’s the best sound you’ll ever hear.” After a small breadth of silence, Doug goes on. “A horse – a steed – is a mighty animal. Every bit they’ve got... if you ask for it, they’ll give it to you.”

Mario Pilla

CHAPTER 11

Peter Marshall

For Want of a Nail

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.

For want of a shoe the horse was lost.

For want of a horse the rider was lost.

For want of a rider the battle was lost.

For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.

And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

Proverb

“The French meaning of the name Marshall is one who tends horses, so well I never had a choice really” said Peter Marshall.

With a family history of working with horses there were no surprises when Marshall left school to pursue a career as a Farrier.

Then 13, Marshall was provided with an exemption from school due to a string of coincidences.

Given an honorary exemption from school due to a mix up of names, the Education Board at the time allowed him to leave school due to the death of his father.

It was not Marshall’s father who had in fact died, but a classmate, David Marshall’s father who had been ill for quite some time.

Though the Headmaster Mr Mitchell caught on to the fraud; the mix up of

names allowed Marshall to leave school and pursue his working life with horses.

Leaving late in the year, he became the only registered apprentice registered farrier in South Australia in the early 1960's.

He was trained by his father, who had become a farrier after several earlier pursuits into the horse industry.

The five year apprenticeship with his father saw him hand making horse shoes, with the use of shoe turning machines to speed up the process.

Marshall saw the trade evolve from the hand making of shoes to machine made shoes, though the basic principle of shoeing a horse remains the same.

Recalling the evolution of the art of shoeing horses Marshall reflects on some of the trainers he has shod horses for, including Bart Cummings and other Melbourne Cup Winning trainers.

"I shod harness racing horses, ponies, draught horses" said Marshall speaking fondly of South Australian Horse Racing.

Marshall also proudly remembers shodding Just A Dash for Tommy Smith in 1981 when he won the Adelaide Cup.

1981 was quite the year for Marshall also shodding Murdoch Miss who went on to win the Harness racing cup or Len Sugar as well as shodding the show jumper of the year for the Bruggeman family and the show horse of the year for Pam Barret.

"We in South Australia held our head up high because, the community of South Australia love their racing, it's still a great tradition Oakbank, Adelaide Cup Day..."

Marshall speaks of his families ongoing involvement with horses, his brother and nephew still working as farriers.

Although retired, he still shoes his own horses, though his time is consumed as

a property developer.

As a lover of horses Marshall wished to give back to the horse community.

"I wanted to give a bit back so I've been a lobbyist, so horse groups could get a better deal from governments."

As well as being a lobbyist Marshall was a long term chairman of the South Australian Harness Racing Club, though his only current involvements are with Horse SA.

Being the only president of the South Australian Harness Racing club to oversee two Inter Dominions, he looks fondly upon the 1997 series.

"With Our Sir Vancelot winning one of three legs, yeah that was something special... with a big crowd"

With the trotters and the pacers final held on the same night, a first for the Inter Dominion Series, Marshall refers to the trotters race as one of the great races of all time.

"5 of the top trotters in Australasia crossed the line with a neck between them."

While his time as the President of the South Australian Harness Racing society brings back warm memories; so too does his time as farrier for the South Australian Mounted Police.

Farrier at the time of a Royal visit in 2002, Marshall described the 36 horse escort for the Queen as tremendous.

"That was a tremendous moment to see them on the parade ground at Thebarton all lined up, ready to escort the Queen... The Queen and the Duke really love their horses."

Marshall appreciates not only his own involvement with horses but Australia's history with them as well.



"I'm very, very privileged and proud to be involved with horses, it's been my passion, still is and it's been one of the great things to be involved in, with the people I've met."

"The strong connection of the horse in the history of our country, it's well recorded, horses were bred for sport were bred for military..."

The Australian Light Horse Infantry is well respected within military circles, with the Waler horses being privy to this.

"The Australian Light Horse took what they called the Waler... they were a mixture of thoroughbred and brumby bred horses from up north and they were a tough very strong obedient animal."

"The Australian Light Horses, were very much respected for their toughness and work" said Marshall with the experience of shoeing several Walers that worked at the abattoirs and cattle yards.

"They were very much a one on one horse, y'know they were a horse that respected a rider for life, I can see very easily it'd be very sad for the lighthouse people to put their horses down before the come back to Australia, but they wouldn't have left em."

Marshall sees Australia's strong link with horses continuing, with the help of organisations like Horse SA.

"I'm confident Horse SA will grow in stature continually and engage other players as it already has."

Marshall believes Horse SA has played a huge part in creating links for horse owners with the Federal government; particularly in putting plans in place for future cases of Equine Influenza.

Marshall brought with him to Horse SA his experience working with government negotiating better terms for horse owners within South Australia.

Marshall sees the involvement of horses in life as more than just races and carnivals.

“It’s really at home at the stable that you get that connection with the animal”

An experience with children’s television brought this home for Marshall, signing an actor’s waiver to appear with Humphrey B Bear he was not allowed to speak during the filming.

“I had to not talk and you know, point to the shoe and point to the nail and a lot of people ribbed me about that, me with Humphrey B Bear for about ten years.”

Marshall has many fond memories of his time working with horses and intends to continue working with horses for pleasure.

“I mean, well its funny, today we were down at Weigall Oval driving our horses, my dad is 83 still drives the harness racing horses for a hobby, Weigall Oval when I was a kid you know 13, 14 driving the horses around Weigall, so at 62 i’m still driving the horses around Weigall, Plympton.”

Reflecting on his working with horses on a whole “What more can you say you’ve shod horses that have reached greatness and horses that haven’t but have been lovely animals.”

CHAPTER 12

Elizabeth Murphy

Once upon a time, well, isn’t that the way all good fairy tales begin? As this story unfolds, elements of a fairy tale are evident... a bit of romance, adventure, some wonderful creatures and even ‘they lived happily ever after’. How would it be if you could not decide whether you were dreaming your life, or living your dream? It is hard to tell a story about just one person and where living and working begin and end. It is a story about Liz Murphy, her husband Mike Keough and the Coopers Brewery Clydesdale team. The following story has been developed from a combination of interviewing Liz, reading a number of newspaper articles written about her and studying a myriad of photos. It can only be a glimpse of the fascinating lives of Liz and Mike.

Let it begin with Liz, who in 1987, bought herself a cart, thinking she would like to buy a Clydesdale horse and traipse around the countryside living out her girlhood dream of a gypsy lifestyle. The only problem was she had never had anything to do with horses! Yet it was her dream so a little thing like that was not going to stop her. Off she went then, to buy her horse from a bloke called Mike Keough. Well, that was the beginning of a journey, but not the one she had envisaged. She and Mike fell in love (there’s the romance!) and he began to teach her all about Clydesdales. Then in 1988 Coopers Brewery sponsored them to pretty much do what they were already doing just for the pleasure of it. Driving a team of Clydesdales. So for the last twenty three years and to this day, Mike and Liz can be seen driving the team through the streets of Adelaide visiting the pubs, that in days gone by, would have received deliveries from just such a team. They attend Shows, either purely for publicity, or competing. If they win, (and often they do!) Coopers Brewery of course, get some of the kudos. Can you imagine a truck large enough to accommodate the cart, the

horses and living quarters for Mike and Liz... well, it is parked at their property and you need a ladder to climb up to the living section.



The other fascinating vehicle parked on the property is a drover's wagon, the one Liz finally got to use on her travels along the stock routes of the Riverina, following the Murrumbidgee River, the journey she had dreamed of doing so many years ago. This wagon, originally built around 1908 for an Adelaide Milk company, then sold in the 30's and used as a mobile shop til a wheel failed around 1945 and it was left for fifty years on the edge of the Simpson desert near the beginning of the Birdsville Track. After discovering it, Mike and Liz retrieved the wagon and had it restored by a NSW coach builder faithfully replicating what it might have looked like originally. In the meantime, horses especially designed for such a trip, had been bred and trained. Clydesdale quarter horse crosses, Jess and Belle who still live on the property.

In 2006, Liz, at 52 years of age, decided it was now or never to begin the trek. Mike, although having doubts as to the wisdom of this decision, drove Liz and everything she would need to Borambola Park Station, her starting point. From there, she would travel east to Adelong, then west toward Adelaide. Her other companions were Bundy a friendly red heeler and two chickens. For most of the journey, Liz travelled alone, but from time to time was visited by her family

and friends. When asked whether there was any time that she was worried for her safety or afraid, Liz recalls only once, when the creatures were unsettled, and with every noise she felt sure someone was going to burst into the wagon. She sat up all night, fearing the worst, but when the sun broke through in the morning, she was able to laugh at her fears. To this day she does not know if there was anyone, or anything there, but, she chuckles, remembering, it was likely just a possum or something!

After six months, word came through to Liz that her father was ill, so she cut short her journey and returned home to be with him before he died.

Liz says those days were the best of times living the drovers life but she also loves her everyday world of being a teamster alongside Mike. When asked about retirement she grinned and said 'yes, one day, because it is quite heavy work' but when questioned as to what they would then do in their retirement, the answer was easy, 'drive Clydesdales!' That says it all... and they lived happily ever after.

Jan Dodds



CHAPTER 13

Bill Hassam

Bill Hassam grew up surrounded by horses.

His Dad was a self-taught farrier and he recalled his days helping to shoe Clydesdales on his family's farm during the 1930s.

A vivid memory was that of Military officials coming to the farm and conscripting their horses to the war.

"The Army came and chose suitable horses, told my Dad to shoe them and then they would be taken away."

Mr. Hassam left the farm when he was sixteen but dedicated his free time to hackney harness horses.

He assisted with the clipping, grooming and educating of the horses for the Sydney Easter Show among other interstate competitions, and the Adelaide Show where they took home nine first prizes.



Grand Champion Clydesdale stallion 1922-1923 & 1924 'Barron Bill', and right Bill Hassam riding champion show horse 'Lucifer Princess'

CHAPTER 14

Julie Fiedler

A career built from a love of horses.

At a young age Julie Fiedler discovered a passion for horses. As only a fence separated a paddock of horses and Julie when she was in kindergarten, she recalled herself always being drawn to that side of the yard.

"It probably started when we had horses next to our kindergarten at Tea Tree Gully, spent all my time on that side of the playground."

But unlike many of those who have earned the majority of their income by working with horses, the underlying yearn to be around equines was not inherited nor was it overly encouraged by Julie's parents.

"I'm first generation horse industry, mum and dad and the family had nothing to do with horses," she said.

During her school years Julie took riding lessons and helped out at stables whenever she could but it wasn't until she was sixteen that she packed her bags and headed to a property in Kingston to work as a jillaroo.

"It was endless work, my girlfriend use to say we were just like tractors, you turned us on in the morning and we would go all day and turn us off at night."

Julie describes working as a jillaroo and learning how to muster and drench sheep and cattle as huge learning curve. Especially during the wet half of the year when the property was under water and the cattle could only be reached by horses as the water was too deep for vehicles.

"Usually to the cattle yard they had a good road but to actually go get the cattle, you couldn't even use motorbikes, the water was too deep. It was up to the

horse's knees it a lot of spots, for miles and miles."

The process was sometimes made all the more difficult by one of the horses Julie rode.

"Princess was a Palomino Quarter Horse without much cattle sense," she laughed.

After a year working as a jillaroo Julie left the property but little did she know working in the south east would turn out to be the first of several horse related jobs.

She then gained employment at Sheoak Hill Riding School in Belair, where she instructed riding lessons and lead trail rides.

Whilst there she also became qualified as an Equestrian Level One Coach and proceeded to stay there for eight years.

There was never a dull moment during this time as she also did "odd jobs" at yearling sales and racing stables which usually entailed strapping, grooming and holding horses.

These odd jobs provided extra income for Julie, who by this time owned her own horse.

However, despite her dedication and constant employment, Julie's parents struggled to accept a job working with horses as a wise career path.

"My mother still asks me, when am I going to get a career?" she said.

Nevertheless, Riding for the Disabled became Julie's next venture.

Based in Blackwood, RDA provides the opportunity for people with disabilities or behavioral problems to ride and be around horses.

Julie was a full-time employee and worked with over sixty volunteers and, together, they dedicated their time to teach ninety to one hundred and twenty

people each week how to ride horses.

The horses were not just used for recreation but also acted as a means of therapy for many.

"It was really about character and behaviour and learning about bonding and relationships. Horses are really good at facilitating that, watch their ears, watch their tails," said Julie in relation to working at RDA.

Julie found working at Riding for the Disabled really motivating and thoroughly enjoyed combining her passion for horses with helping young people and making a difference to their lives.

She also learnt a lot about behavioral issues and discovered that many of the children were acting out as a result of low self-esteem.

"A horse is a really good way (to build confidence) because when you are up on a horse, you're up higher and it makes you feel good about yourself. And each horse doesn't have a pre-conceived idea about that person."

There was also a strong focus on using the horses to teach people with disabilities things that we take for granted such as action and reaction.

Julie and her colleagues taught this by using the mirrors in the indoor arena so those involved could see their reflection.

After working at RDA for ten years, Julie remained working in the horse industry but in a completely different sector, instead of being outdoors teaching, she was now behind a desk working for TAFE SA in the Horse Skills Centre.

This took a bit of adjustment on her behalf as she had to learn things she had never needed before, such as computing skills.

"That was when my life changed to administration... It was so different, I found it challenging," Julie said.

Julie spent eighteen months writing learning guides, doing resource development and overseeing traineeships.

However, during this time Horse SA was being established and she was associated with the first board.

Horse SA is a non-for profit, community based organisation that works with many aspects of the horse industry including, trails, horse health, keeping, education and facilities.

Julie worked as a Horse Industry Administrator and later became the Executive Officer of Horse SA in 2001.



When asked about working for Horse SA, Julie said it is challenging and entails a huge variety of different tasks.

“You could be doing bio-security and animal health in the morning and road

safety in the afternoon, or out in the field talking to council about trails in the morning and then in the afternoon, doing local government by-laws.”

“It’s interesting working across a whole range of horse organisations and businesses, local, state and national,” she said.

Julie believes Horse SA’s success has a lot to do with the fact that it had a good strategic plan to start with, which is essential to an organisation that deals with such a wide range of horse related issues.

She often deals with the vocational training side of the racing industry and has twice coordinated the National Racing Training Conference, which is held annually in a different state each.

Horse SA also works in areas such as cultural heritage.

The areas dealt with are often matters that horse businesses and organisations do not have time to thoroughly examine.

However in saying that, Julie reiterated the importance of South Australia’s horse businesses.

“Horse SA only functions in partnership with other horse groups.”

One of the main problems Julie and Horse SA are currently dealing with is the establishment of horse riding trails throughout the state.

“The ability to access public land with horses is increasingly difficult.”

Julie believes that it is progressively more complicated to get the government and councils to address horse related issues because these days there are many people who have never even come into contact with a horse throughout their lives.

“We are up to the third generation of people now, who might not have ever touched a horse so the ability for people to understand horses within their community and how horses are a part of your fabric has almost disappeared.”

But this is something she will continue to work on into the future along with perusing her mission of finding others who have dedicated their time to the horse industry to ensure that their stories are heard.

“They are the living books... If we do not recognise these people and what they do, then we are not recognizing ourselves as an industry,” she said.

By Rebecca Opie

OUR COMMUNITY OUR HORSES

Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoyed “Our Community Our Horses”.

Purchase of this e-book supports the ongoing work of Horse SA including ensuring many of our publications remain free.

Horse SA is a project based organisation. Enquire today if your organisation or business has a potential opportunity related to our core business.

Visit our websites where information, events and merchandise is available.

Horse SA: www.horsesa.asn.au

The Kidman Trail: www.kidmantrail.org.au

Horse keeping: www.horseslandwater.com

Equine Research DGR Fund: thehorsetrust.com.au

Affiliate enquiries in relation to e-books sales are welcome.

Horse SA

E: horsesa@horsesa.asn.au

© Horse SA 2011

ISBN: [978-0-646-57096-9]

ISBN 978-0-646-57096-9

