



# FEBRUARY to JULY 2013

## NEWSLETTER

### NEXT MEETING

**TUESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER at 6.30pm start in AGENT'S ROOM—Upstairs in the CATTLE-MEN'S PAVILION, Toowoomba Showgrounds.**

**Please bring a small plate to share with tea and coffee.**

*QUOTE: "If your horse says no, you either asked the wrong question, or asked the question wrong." Pat Parelli*

Firstly huge apologies for not getting a newsletter out earlier than this. As most of you are aware I had a nasty accident before I was due to perform with the Outback Riders at Toowoomba show on 11th April. I sustained a triple fracture to my left ankle which resulted in me having surgery and months out of action—not even able to sit at a computer, so I've had lots of work to catch up on also. I would like to particularly thank Judy Schneider, Sue Sutton & Peter Stenzel, as well as my husband Konrad for staying with me and offering moral support while I waited for the ambulance. Below is a picture of me after the ambulance officers had given me some drugs to ease the pain—that's why I'm smiling. Thanks so much for the lovely card and good wishes, and beautiful flowers from my teammates in the Outback Riders.

The Outback Riders performed at Allora Show on 9th February.

### WHAT I MISSED—THE OUTBACK RIDERS AT TOOWOOMBA SHOW:

Our Outback Riders performed every night of Toowoomba show from 11th to 13th April. By all accounts they did a great job thrilling the crowd each night with their precision moves and high speed manoeuvres under the direction of Mark Abra.



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## **STANTHORPE RIDE—27TH APRIL**

After this ride being cancelled once due to bad weather, a great weekend was had by all who attended the Stanthorpe ride kindly hosted by Carol-Anne Millar. Greg, Tina and Konrad made the trip down from Toowoomba and all came back to say that this ride is one not to miss. The first day 's ride was guided by Rebecca Poole who knows the trails through the forest well. After a lunch stop at the Poole 's property the group continued—joined by some others for the afternoon ride.

After the day 's riding was over Carol-Anne and Cedric Millar invited everyone to join them for dinner at their amazing Castle Glen Winery & Brewery which, by all accounts was a great night.

The next morning the riding continued until lunch time, this time taking a different route and ending up back at Castle Glen where Carol-Anne had lunch organised for the hungry riders.

Konrad remarked that this was amazingly beautiful country to ride in and a big thank you to Carol-Anne and Cedric Millar for hosting it and to Rebecca Poole for her expert guiding.

## **THE WADDLE & SADDLE** **26TH MAY**

The Waddle & Saddle is not a club ride but it is a ride that is done by various members of our club each year. It is held near Killarney riding the Condamine Gorge, and involves numerous crossings of the Condamine River. It is a very pretty ride and it open to walkers, push bike riders and horse riders.

Pictured right is Konrad Beer riding newly broken in Nikki on the Waddle Saddle.



&



Margaret Smith & Konrad Beer on the Waddle & Saddle ride.

### **RIDE TO GREENMOUNT PUB—1ST JUNE**

On Saturday 1st June Tina Schonhardt & Bevan Brown hosted a ride from Cambooya recreation grounds to Greenmount pub. The group broke into two with the faster riders blazing a trail to the pub, must have been pretty thirsty judging by their speed, everyone caught up and enjoyed a drink and lunch before heading back.

Margaret Smith's July ride unfortunately had to be cancelled at the last minute due to inclement weather. We will endeavour to get this one back into the schedule for the future.

The TTRC now has 5 new accredited tick sprayers who attended a course run on 9th July—they are: Greg Zirbel, Trevor Fowke, Bruce Gilbert, Tara Romer and Aaron Brown. Thanks to all who participated.

The Outback Riders were again a feature of evening entertainment at the annual Gatton Show on 19th July and were very well received. The weather threatened on and off all day but fortunately held out and we did not have to ride in the rain! Our performance was very well received by the crowd and feedback from the show committee has been all positive.

### **OUTBACK RIDERS ARE CURRENTLY PRACTISING FOR:**

**GOLD COAST SHOW**—Saturday 31st August & Sunday 1st September

**JONDARYAN WOOLSHED**—Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th September. In addition to our performances there, we have been asked by the organisers at Jondaryan if we would be able to provide pony rides for children on our horses while at the Woolshed for a gold coin donation, all proceeds to the RDA.

**BEENLEIGH SHOW**—Friday 13th and Saturday 14th September

**\*SHIRT RECALL\***- if you know anyone who has a club shirt that they no longer require please ask if they would like to donate it back to the club for another member to purchase.

*The Annual Carnival of Flowers Parade is coming up on Saturday 21st September. We are calling for ideas for the floral decoration of our horses for this year. Please note the majority of the decoration must be in fresh flowers.*

Ideas for rides are welcome—please give this some thought—it is your club so you have a say in where you would like to ride.

## LEGENDARY HORSEMAN & CHAMPION CAMPDRAFTER BOB PALMER SAVES THE DAY

I always enjoy reading the stories from the RAS Times, and the latest edition contains an article on the Ringmasters—one of the stories in it relates to the Grand Parade at Sydney Show one year in the 1990's.

"Of all the ringmaster's responsibilities, the ceremonial centrepiece of their work is the Grand Parade. After saluting the RAS President the ringmaster sets it in motion to follow serpentine patterns little altered from year-to-year. At a certain point the ringmaster blows a whistle for all to stand still. It's a photo opportunity. The tradition goes back to the days of box Brownie cameras when moving subjects would not be in focus. The audience is always asked not to applaud for safety reasons.



Animals entering ring for Grand Parade Sydney Show

Arthur Bragg, ringmaster from 1990-1995, says people underestimate the danger of a Grand Parade. With hundreds of livestock all in together the situation is potentially impossible to control if animals are spooked. The thought weighs heavily on all ringmasters and incidents do happen. Once, during Arthur's time, a led stallion in very light headgear got loose.

"Here we were with a raging stallion," he recalls, "with nothing on, nothing to catch it with, and there were kids screeching and this stallion was looking around to find a lady friend so he was bellowing and rearing and he was going to jump on anything he could possibly find. Luckily Bob Palmer, great horseman that he was, saw what happened."

Arthur called him over. Bob took off his belt. "We got him on the track, I mean this is a flat gallop, and Bob leant over with his belt and put the belt over the horse's head and caught it." Only spectacular horsemanship averted disaster." (Excerpt from the RAS Times, July 2013 Volume 11 #2, page 27, published by Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Sydney.)

## AMERICA'S FIRE HORSES



While I was incapacitated Jane Thomas very kindly loaned me some Equus magazines to read and I was particularly interested in an article on the fire horses of

America. This led me to looking up the website of the LA Fire Dept for some extra information. We had a similar set-up with horses pulling fire engines here of course. Anyway I hope you enjoy the information & stories.

Percherons took their places pulling fire-fighting wagons for city fire departments as soon as they arrived in the United States in the 1870 's. Their careers as fire-fighters lasted a full 60 years before motorized fire trucks took their place. After trying numerous harnessing techniques, the entire operation from the ringing alarm bell to hooves pounding the street took an amazing 30 seconds. A fire horse was one who had to be surefooted, as he had to run at high speeds over sleet and ice, rain or snow. Fire horses would respond to a driver 's commands, avoiding other horse-drawn wagons, trolleys, people, and holes in the roads. A good fire horse was an active-minded, fast-running puller.

## MAG & MIN

On a fine spring day in 1902, downtown Toledo was bustling with people, wagons and streetcars, when a fire alarm sounded: A store at the heart of the shopping district was ablaze. Within a minute, a coal-burning steam wagon, pulled by a pair of Percheron mares named Mag and Min, sprang from the fire station. But the driver quickly realized he had no control over his horses. The rookie fireman had forgotten to insert the bits into the mares' mouths. Now the team was galloping unguided toward the busy downtown.

The driver need not have worried. Mag and Min were seasoned fire horses who had learned the alarm codes – the number of rings indicated the location of the fire – and knew where to go. “They made the correct turn on Cherry Street and then onto Summit Street, wove their way through the many wagons ...and pedestrians that thronged the streets in front of them,” according to an account written by Bill O’Connor, historian of the Toledo Fire Department. “It all ended happily when the ladies pulled up directly in front of the fire and stopped.”

For roughly 80 years – from the mid-1800’s until the early 1930’s – fire horses like Mag and Min were a part of everyday life in many American cities and towns. But, as this anecdote shows, these horses were anything but ordinary. Strong, but agile, alert but tractable, fire horses never failed to answer the call to action, giving their all at any hour and in any weather.”

(Excerpt taken from Equus Magazine, September 2006, Issue 348, page 51 published by PRIMEDIA Enthusiast Publications, Inc.)

Right: [A steam engine pulled by 3 horses of the Los Angeles Fire Department.](#)



# Once a Fire Horse, Always a Fire Horse

by H. A. Herman

When I was growing up on a farm near Hannibal, Missouri, our family sold and delivered milk. The business grew steadily, since our milk had a cream line extending at least one-third the length of the bottle. Customers loved this rich milk then; I never heard cholesterol mentioned in those days.

We began our deliveries early in the morning because few people had iceboxes to keep milk fresh for very long.

One day, my father bought "Old Frank." He wasn't our first horse to pull the milk wagon, but he was the best. We purchased him shortly before World War I from the Hannibal Fire Department.

Why we called him "Old Frank" I've never known, but it was likely because the horse-drawn fire-fighting rigs in those days required young horses with speed, strength, stamina and intelligence, and Frank had apparently gotten too old for that job.

He was 9 years old when we got him. He had a teammate, "Fox," who was purchased for the milk wagon operated by our friendly competitor, Bross and Bier Dairy. Both were Percherons, and both had been through the training school for "fire horses."

## Still Slid Down Pole

The fire station housed the fire wagon, the horses and all the fire-fighting equipment. The firemen slept in a loft above the horses and equipment.

When a fire alarm sounded, the firemen hastily donned their outfits and slid down a pole to the pumper wagon.

Horses were stationed in front of the wagon with their harnesses suspended overhead. A pull on a lever dropped the harnesses in place on the horses, which were usually dancing with excitement and eager to run.

It was thrilling to see the fire wagon speeding down the street with the horses snorting and tugging at their bits, and "Mac" Megown stomping on the pedal that activated the bell to warn vehicles and pedestrians to stay out of the way.

Anyway, back to Old Frank. He was a proud horse and quick to learn. All we had to do to hitch him to the milk wagon was to lift the shafts, and he backed into place on his own so the tugs could be fastened to the singletree.

When we delivered milk, my father took one side of the street and I took the other. Frank soon knew the route so well he moved down the street and stopped at each customer's house without being driven -- he kept pace with us as we ran back and forth to the wagon.

One fine summer morning in 1914, we were making deliveries on what was known as upper Union Street, a steep, hilly area. Deliverymen from Bross and Bier were making deliveries with Fox on lower Union, a few blocks down the hill.

About 6:30 a.m. the fire bell at the station rang. It was loud and piercing; it could be heard for many blocks.

## Did as They Were Trained

The moment the bell sounded, Frank took off, broke into a full gallop and headed for the fire station. Neither Father nor I were near the wagon, so there was no stopping the driverless wagon.

As Frank pounded down the street, Fox pulled out and joined him. The two horses raced down the street, neck and neck, just as they did when pulling the fire pumper wagon. The two milk wagons behind them hooked wheels and eventually both turned sideways as spokes flew and the wheels crumpled.

Milk cans and bottles and milk were strewn along the route of the runaways. A few other delivery vans took to side streets as the racing team and wrecked wagons approached.

When the two horses reached the station, the fire engine had already pulled out and the doors were closed. Frank and Fox stood there looking confused, oblivious to the damaged milk wagons they had dragged for a half-dozen blocks and, no doubt, wondering why things had changed.

When Father and I got there, we calmed them down and unhitched them from the remains of the wagons.

If Frank and Fox were criticized, I am unaware of it. Most people said that the horses only did what they were trained to do. Both horses pulled milk wagons for the next 7 or 8 years.

Frank was "turned out to pasture" when he was about 20, and lived to be 25 years old. He never ceased to be a proud, intelligent animal. Few people who saw the "race to the firehouse" episode ever forgot it, and some of the old-timers were still taking about it years later.

Obviously, I vividly recall it today.--*Reprinted from Draft Horse Journal--(LA Fire Dept website)*



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