



NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING

# HALL OF FAME

2025 NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING

**HALL OF FAME**

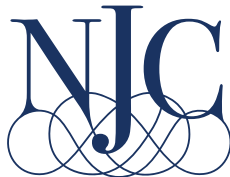
NOMINEES AND INDUCTEES

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**OFFICIAL  
PROGRAM**



Newcastle Racecourse is proud to be an official partner  
of the Newcastle & Hunter Racing Hall of Fame and  
congratulates all inductees and nominees.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING HALL OF FAME

Since its inception in 2017, the Newcastle and Hunter Racing Hall of Fame has proudly celebrated the rich heritage of Thoroughbred Racing in our region. The 2025 inductions mark the fifth round of inductees, once again highlighting the depth, quality, and enduring legacy of racing in the Newcastle and Hunter area.

The contributions of individuals and horses from this region to Australian Thoroughbred Racing span more than a century and continue to shape the sport nationally. Notably, many inductees of the Newcastle and Hunter Racing Hall of Fame are also honoured in the Australian Racing Hall of Fame, further validating the region's significant impact.

The Hall of Fame website outlines the criteria used by the selection panel, with a strong emphasis on regional relevance. In summary:

- Trainers, jockeys, and associates may be eligible if they were born in the region, have been primarily based here, or have made a substantial contribution to the local racing industry
- Horses must have been trained at a racecourse within the Newcastle and Hunter Valley region during their careers

Following the 2023 inductions, the Newcastle Jockey Club introduced a new way of honouring Hall of Fame inductees. All past and present inductees are now commemorated on an honour board located in the 'Hunter' Winning Owners Room, a space rich with racing nostalgia. We warmly invite inductees and guests to visit and reflect on the legacy preserved within.

On behalf of the Newcastle Jockey Club and the Hall of Fame Selection Panel, congratulations to all 2025 inductees. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated members of the Selection Panel, who have served since 2017 and continue to play a vital role in the success of the Hall of Fame.



## **DUANE DOWELL**

Chairman, Selection Panel  
Newcastle & Hunter Racing Hall of Fame  
CEO – Newcastle Jockey Club



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**Saturday 18 October**

TLE Jungle Juice Race Day

**Thursday 2 October**

Mid-Week Race Day

**Monday 27 October**

Wine Country Race Day

**Saturday 1 November**

Maitland Rugby Race Day

**Saturday 15 November**

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**Thursday 20 November**

Mid-Week Race Day

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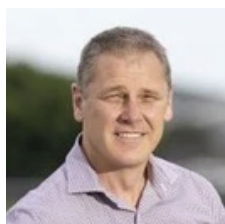
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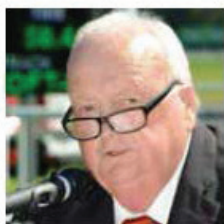
## NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING HALL OF FAME **COMMITTEE**

The selection panel is conversant with the thoroughbred racing industry both nationally and in the Newcastle–Hunter region and they have been invited to contribute given this vast combined pool of knowledge and their status within the industry. The panel comprises of Duane Dowell (Chairman), Gary Harley, Greg Radley, and Ray Thomas, with research by Sam North.

**[newcastlehunterhof.com.au](http://newcastlehunterhof.com.au)**



Duane Dowell



Gary Harley



Greg Radley



Ray Thomas



Sam North



# INDUCTEES



## NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING HALL OF FAME

### 2017

#### ASSOCIATES

**ATHOL ALBERT "BILLY" HILL**

Legendary Race-caller

**A.O. (ALF) ELLISON**

Racehorse Breeder

#### TRAINERS

**MAX LEES**

Trainer – Broadmeadow

**PAUL PERRY**

Trainer – Broadmeadow

#### JOCKEYS

**WAYNE HARRIS**

Jockey – Muswellbrook

**ROBERT THOMPSON**

Jockey – Cessnock

#### RACEHORSES

**ROGILLA**

Chestnut Gelding, foaled 1927

**LUSKIN STAR**

Chestnut Colt, foaled 1974

### 2019

#### ASSOCIATES

**DR BILL HOWEY**

Veterinarian & Administrator

**THE THOMPSON FAMILY**

Racehorse Breeders

#### TRAINERS

**KRIS LEES**

Trainer – Broadmeadow

**ROY HINTON**

Trainer – Broadmeadow

#### JOCKEYS

**BILL WADE**

Jockey – Broadmeadow

**JOHN WADE**

Jockey – Broadmeadow

#### RACEHORSES

**CHOISIR**

Chestnut Stallion, foaled 1999

**BEAUFORD**

Brown Gelding, foaled 1916



# 2021

## ASSOCIATES

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**BOB DAWBARN**

Racing Administrator

**GARY HARLEY**

Racing Broadcaster

## TRAINERS

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**PETER SNOWDEN**

Trainer – Randwick

**PAT FARRELL**

Trainer – Muswellbrook

## JOCKEYS

---

**RAE JOHNSTONE**

Jockey – Broadmeadow

**ALAN SCORSE**

Jockey – Broadmeadow

## RACEHORSES

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**ROMANTIC DREAM**

Bay Stallion, foaled 1973

**FASTNET ROCK**

Bay Stallion, foaled 2001

# 2023

## ASSOCIATES

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**JOHN MESSARA**

Breeder/Administrator

**ROY MAHONY**

Administrator

## TRAINERS

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**NEVILLE BEGG**

Trainer – Randwick

**CLARRY CONNERS**

Trainer – Warwick Farm

## JOCKEYS

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**ALBERT SHANAHAN**

Jockey – Newcastle

**JIM PIKE**

Jockey – Newcastle

## RACEHORSES

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**ORTENSIA**

Bay Mare, foaled 2005

**SAMANTHA MISS**

Bay Mare, foaled 2005







NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING  
**HALL OF FAME**

## THE MENU

### MAIN COURSE

Pan fried Barramundi, charred leeks, green beans  
and romesco sauce (GF, D)

12hr braised beef cheek, crushed chat potatoes,  
baby carrots and onion jam (FG, D)

### DESSERT

Lemon curd tart with mascarpone  
and seed crisp

Raspberry and chocolate fondant  
and freeze-dried raspberry

# BEVERAGE LIST

## BEERS

Tooheys New

XXXX Gold

Iron Jack

Summer Bright Lager

James Boags Premium Light

James Squire Orchid Crush Apple Cider

Byron Bay Lager

## SPARKLING WINE

Hungerford Hill Fish Cage

Sparkling Chardonnay

## WHITE WINE

Hungerford Hill Fish Cage

Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

Hungerford Hill Fish Cage Chardonnay

Hungerford Hill Early Bird Moscato

## RED WINE

Hungerford Hill Fish Cage Shiraz

Hungerford Hill Fish Cage Pinot Noir

A selection of soft drinks & orange juice





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## THE AWARDS

# PROCESS & OVERVIEW

The Newcastle & Hunter Racing Hall of Fame aims to recognise the contribution of both horses and humans that have helped shape the thoroughbred racing in Newcastle and the Hunter region over the past 119 years.

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Nominations were received across four categories including horses, trainers, jockeys and associates, with each category adhering to specific eligibility criteria that seeks to recognise the contribution to enhance the Newcastle-Hunter region or the wider Australian thoroughbred industry.

All inductees will be honoured today with a plaque on the Hall of Fame Honour Board situated in the Hunter Bar at Newcastle Racecourse.



NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING  

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HALL OF FAME

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2025  
**NOMINEES**

**ASSOCIATE**

Damon Guthrie  
Dr Harry Jarvis  
Aub Jones  
Lloyd Jones  
Mick 'Walter' Ling  
Arthur Mitchell  
Harry Mitchell  
Thomas O'Neill  
Brian Russell  
George Ryder  
Barrie Barnett  
Helen Sinclair  
Jim McLauchlan  
Jack Hibberd  
Harry Hayes  
Shane Cullen  
George Wells  
John Sinclair  
John Grisdale  
James White  
John Mayo

**TRAINER**

Ray Brock  
Ray Cashman  
Jimmy Johnstone  
Victor Oakes  
Alf Peters  
Les Small  
Ray Wallace  
Tommy Watson  
Betty Shepherd  
Keith Tinson  
Rex Bowdler  
Dawn Kelly

20



# 2025 NOMINEES

## JOCKEY

Joe Coffey  
Billy Lappin  
Merv Maynard  
Darryl McLellan  
Peter Burnett  
Doug Weir  
Hilton Cope  
Neville Tomlinson  
Stan Davidson  
Aaron Bullock  
Andrew Gibbons

## RACEHORSE

Adam  
Angst  
Bogan Hero  
Coronation Day  
Hans  
Impaler  
Manawapoi  
Old Rowley  
Razor Sharp  
Skellatar  
Youthful King  
Stratum  
Russia  
Reckless Tradition  
Swiftly Ann  
Welsh Jester  
Captain Cadet  
Brother Smoke  
Brandy Lad  
Lord Nolan  
In Her Time  
Lucia Valentina  
Le Romain

25



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NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RACING

**HALL OF FAME**

# 2025 **INDUCTEES**

Inducted into the Newcastle & Hunter  
Racing Hall of Fame on  
26 August 2025 for outstanding achievements  
in the Thoroughbred Racing Industry.



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Ascend Sales would like to congratulate all the inductees to the Newcastle & Hunter Racing Hall of Fame on their achievements.



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CATEGORY:  
**JOCKEY**

## BILLY LAPPIN - *tragedy strikes a gifted youngster*

The headline in The Truth was stark: 'Young Bill Lappin is dead'.

The date was February 10, 1940, and the 18-year-old Lappin was riding in the third race at Randwick.

The newspaper's graphic report told the story: 'This champion little horseman crashed to a tragic end when his mount Passport came down in the Ingleburn Nursery and half a dozen or more following close on Passport's heels made a veritable football of the lad.

The pounding hooves of those horses inflicted ghastly head wounds and crushed his chest. It was a tragic end to the brief career of one of the greatest lightweight riders the southern hemisphere has produced.'

It was a tragic end to a short but meteoric career for the boy from Charlestown.

His father owned a small farm on Lambton Road, where Billy spent his days riding a pony and dreaming of becoming a jockey. Shortly before Billy's 15th birthday his father wrote to prominent Sydney trainer Mick Poulson seeking an apprenticeship for his son. He was given a six-month trial and joined Poulson's Randwick stables in March 1936.

Lappin's family later moved to Sydney to be closer to their son, with the father becoming licensee of the Grosvenor Hotel in Ultimo.

Lappin was that rarest of things, a complete natural. He rode his first winner, J'Accuse, at Newcastle on November 8, 1937, a month before being granted permission to ride in Sydney by the AJC.

Despite missing the first four and a half months of the riding year, Lappin finished the 1937-1938 season with 21.5 winners and 14th on the Leading Jockeys' List. It was an extraordinary performance that provided a preview of an even more extraordinary season to come.

The struggle for the jockeys' premiership took racing from the back page to the front of the paper. On the last day of the season a record crowd flocked to Moorefield Racecourse to see just who would take out the crown.

At the start of the day Maurice McCarten led on 86 winners, with Ted McMenamin on 85.5 and the young apprentice Lappin on 85. McCarten rode the first winner, then Lappin booted home a double to leave them locked together on 87 wins each with just one race to go.





McCarten, the 38-year-old New Zealand born riding wizard – later to become an outstanding trainer – rode the winner of the last, with Lappin watching on from the jockeys' room as he did not have a mount.

"I'm glad he won it," McMenamin was quoted as saying afterwards.

"He's one of the veterans of the game, and Bill Lappin is only a youngster. Bill will have his chance next year. He has his future before him, McCarten hasn't."

But Lappin's future was to be all too short. In September he had a fall at Rosehill, suffering a fractured skull. Back in the saddle after two months out, he broke his toe in late December after being forced into the running rail. After those extended breaks he returned and had racked up 26 winners, the final one being in the first race on Saturday, February 10, 1940.

The reaction to Lappin's death was unprecedented. The Daily News reported on the funeral, which was held on the Monday after the fall.

"At least 20,000 people, representing all sections of the community, paid a last tribute to a popular young sportsman at the funeral of jockey Billy Lappin," the paper wrote.

"Women wept, and men were visibly affected as the long cortege moved from St. Jude's Church, Randwick. More than 1000 people viewed the body during the morning before it was removed to the church.

"Long before the service was timed to commence, thousands of people gathered in Avoca Street, Randwick.

"Although seven extra Coogee trams were provided between 1 and 2pm, hundreds of mourners who could not squeeze on board were left behind and arrived late. Never in its long history had St. Jude's Church held such numbers as gathered for the service. Maximum capacity of the church is 800 people, but nearly 3000 sought to enter."

The pallbearers were a rollcall of Sydney's greatest jockeys: McCarten, Billy Cook, Jack Coutts, McMenamin, Ted Bartle and Darby Munro. After the service "people swarmed on to balconies, shop awnings and the roofs of motor cars to catch a glimpse as the funeral moved off."

So great were the crowds that motorcycle police, helped by 50 constables on foot, were required to keep the lane clear as the funeral procession proceeded past Poulson's Randwick stables, where it paused, on its way to Randwick Cemetery.

Lappin's death greatly affected Poulson, who described Billy as "more than a boy in my employ. There was something about him that drew you to him."

"There will never be another like Billy Lappin."



## MERV MAYNARD - *the Darby Munro of the bush*

They call it the sport of kings and on October 11, 1952, the first running of the newly named Queen's Cup provided a pivotal moment in the life of a 19-year-old apprentice jockey from Broadmeadow named Merv Maynard.

First run in 1927 as the King's Cup, the race was inaugurated by King George V. A weight-for-age event that was to be run in rotation by the States, it boasted a trophy provided by the reigning monarch.

The race lapsed in 1951 following the death of George VI but was revived the next year by the AJC as the Queen's Cup, after the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth II confirmed she would continue the tradition. She was originally scheduled to visit Australia to present the trophy, but her father's death resulted in a change of plans.

The race was seen to be a match between the champions Hydrogen and Dalray. Maynard, aboard the 70-1 outsider Salamanca, had other plans, stealing a break at the turn then striding away to win. It was a proud moment for the young man, tempered by the disappointment of not meeting the Queen.

It was however indicative of the mark Maynard had already made on the industry.

Born in Sydney in 1931, Maynard was one of seven in the family of outspoken Aboriginal activist Fred Maynard and his wife, Englishwoman Minnie Critchley.

After his father died, Maynard spent time living with various aunts and uncles, including at Chatham Road, Broadmeadow, across the road from the racetrack. It was there that he spent much of his spare time, making the acquaintance of leading trainer Keith Tinson

Back in Sydney at the family home, he was looking through the fence at Canterbury racecourse when he spied Tinson, who had a couple of runners.

"Mr Tinson!", the shy young boy called, thereby changing his life. The trainer prevailed on the gatekeeper to admit the lad, who spent the day helping Tinson with his runners. Impressed both by his keenness and his 27kg weight, Tinson offered Maynard an apprenticeship.

Maynard showed a natural aptitude. His first winner was at Wyong in April 1949, and by the end of that season he had notched eight victories. The next season he rode 10. The following season – 1950-51 – he really hit the limelight, winning the AJC Shorts at Randwick and the QTC Lightning Stakes (by three lengths), both on Warrah King.

Before he had turned 21, he had ridden in three successive Caulfield Cups and the Melbourne Cup, had run a photo-finish second in the 1951 Epsom Handicap, had saddled up in Doncasters, Metropolitans, the Doomben 10,000, Doomben Cup and the LKS Mackinnon Stakes.

The press called him "Tinson's goldmine" and "the Darby Munro of the bush".



Maynard was in demand from top Sydney and Melbourne trainers. He received an offer to become stable rider for a leading trainer in Singapore and Malaysia, only to be forced to turn it down because he was not yet 21 and under the iron control of the AJC. Athol Mulley took his place.

He formed a great association with the country gelding Alinga, combining with the 'bush champion' to win 19 races, including several in Sydney and the 1953 Grafton Cup and Sydney Turf Club Cup.

After Alinga broke down Maynard decided to concentrate on the country circuit, winning two premierships in Newcastle and taking out a host of country cups throughout NSW. He twice rode five winners on a program, at Broadmeadow and Wyong.

In 1958 he accepted a year-long engagement to ride for trainer Larry Wiggins in New Zealand.

On returning to Newcastle, he won the NJC Newmarket on Ammanulla and the 1960 Newcastle Gold Cup on North Row.

Shortly afterwards he accepted the position of stable rider for Keith Daniels in Singapore and Malaysia, with Maynard and his wife Judy spending more than four years in Asia.

Major wins there included the Penang Cup and Sultan's Cup. The couples' son, Professor John Maynard, recalls that at one six race meeting in Penang his father rode three winners while English great Lester Piggott rode the other three.

Maynard returned to Australia in 1964, but racing started to take a back seat when the couple established a bloodstock agency, selling mainly through the connections they had established in Asia.

The winners did not completely stop. Judy took out a trainer's licence in 1981 and the pair made history in winning at Randwick with No Score, the first time a trainer-wife and husband-jockey combination had won on a metropolitan racecourse.

Maynard handed in his licence in 1994, but not before one final, unexpected act completed his outstanding career.

In 1992 Judy hung up after receiving a phone call at home: "Some bastards having a go at us," the couple's son John recalls her saying. It took a follow-up call from AJC Chairman Bob Charley, a family friend, for the Maynards to finally believe that the person claiming to be from the Premier's Department was telling the truth when he told her Queen Elizabeth II had specifically requested that she meet Maynard during her forthcoming visit to Australia.

So, 40 years after the running of the first Queen's Cup, Maynard again found himself at Randwick for another edition of the race, this time spending 40 minutes in conversation with the reigning monarch.

Maynard, a proud inductee into the Aboriginal Sports Hall of Fame, died in 2017.



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CATEGORY:  
**TRAINER**

## JIM JOHNSTON - *group 1 trainer with a knack for speed*

Some call it 'the knack,' others talk about 'the eye' while still others say, 'he's just got something.'

However you want to label it, Jim 'Bubby' Johnstone had it as a trainer and it caused him to turn out a succession of high-class gallopers over the 40 plus years he trained at Broadmeadow.

Born in Cessnock in 1931, he moved to Hamilton as a teenager and obtained work as a shunter at BHP, while driving taxis at night. More importantly for his future career he also started working with Newcastle trainer Ray Cashman, one of the most astute horsemen to come out of the Hunter.

Known as the 'Newcastle death-adder' for the money he plundered from the Sydney bookmakers, Cashman won a string of high-class races, including the 1950 Doomben 10,000 with Rim Boy, the 1937 Sydney Cup with Mestoravon and the 1931 Doncaster with Sir Christopher. He also proved an able mentor for Johnstone.

In his late 20s, Johnstone set up a stable at Popran Lane, near Broadmeadow, later moving with his wife Dorothy to a home in Dumaresq St, Broadmeadow, with stables at the rear of the two-storey residence.

It was from there that the quietly spoken, private Johnstone really made his mark on the racing industry.

His most successful galloper was the brilliant sprinter Razor Sharp, twice the winner of arguably Australia's greatest sprint, the Group 1 Newmarket Handicap down the 1200m straight at Flemington.

In winning in 1982 and again in 1983 both Johnstone and Razor Sharp landed themselves in elite company, becoming just the fifth to win the great race in successive years. Just for good measure, Johnstone prepared Razor Sharp to win three successive Group 2 Challenge Stakes (1000m) at Randwick, winning that event in 1981,82 and 83.

His grandson Phillip Johnstone said his grandfather "only ever had 10 or 12 in work, but there was a stage where he had 12 horses in work and 10 of them were last-start metro winners or had won two starts ago.

"He was a boutique trainer, but just had a lot of good horses, good sprinters."

Despite his undoubted regard for Razor Sharp, Johnstone's grandson said the trainer always considered Salaam to be his best horse.





Salaam was an out-and-out flying machine. After finishing fifth in the Breeders' Plate at his career debut, Salaam rattled off seven consecutive wins including the 1997 Group 1 The Galaxy (1100m) at Randwick, defeating one of the best fields ever to line up in the race. In second place was 1975 Golden Slipper winner Toy Show, third was 1976 Golden Slipper winner Vivarchi and the beaten brigade included multiple Group 1 winner Scamanda.

Salaam went on to win 11 of his 22 starts. He came out on top in his last two runs, defeating Steel Blade in the Group 2 Missile Stakes (1200m) at Rosehill then downing Mighty Kingdom in the Group 2 Premiere Stakes (1200m) at Randwick.

Salaam was an integral part of an extraordinarily successful partnership Johnstone had with the Cobcroft family.

Successful thoroughbred breeders from Willow Tree in the Upper Hunter, John Cobcroft and his wife Denise provided Johnstone with a string of winners. The Blazing Saddles filly Supaburn won 10 races and was the granddam of the brilliant speedsters Hot As Hell and Flaming Hot.

Under Johnstone's astute tutelage they both won nine races, with Hot As Hell's efforts including wins in the 1997 Group 3 The Shorts (1100m) and successive wins in the Listed June Stakes (1100m) in 1998 and 1999. Flaming Hot took out the 1997 Listed Carrington Stakes (1000m) and was runner up in the 1994 Group 2 San Domenico Stakes (1100m) both at Randwick.

Highly regarded and popular with his peers, Johnstone handed in his licence at the start of the 2005/06 season, saying he was then in his 70s and was ready to quit. At the time he was one of just a handful of non-metropolitan trainers to hold a No 1 licence.

He died, aged 91, in 2023, having left an indelible mark on the Newcastle and Australian racing scene.



## **BETTY SHEPHERD** - *a woman making history from Scone to Melbourne*

The scene was simple enough. It was 1953 and there was Betty Shepherd leading a horse around the parade ring at Tamworth.

The horse's registered trainer was Shepherd's husband Archie so chief steward Ken Thomas sidled over and suggested (in the sort of manner that said 'I'm being nice here, but you'd better do what I say') that perhaps it would be a good idea if Betty would apply for a stable hand's licence if she was going to continue to strap the horses at race meetings.

Shepherd was then aged around 21 and displaying the same the forthright attitude that would see her fronting A Current Affair's cameras in her 80s as she fought against a rezoning issue in her hometown of Scone.

According to the couple's daughter Georgie Lim, "My Mum's reply was something along the lines of, 'Why would I apply for a stablehand's license when I'm training them all'. So, it was agreed she apply for a trainer's license and that was it."

And through such an unremarkable encounter history was made, with Shepherd becoming the first woman to be licenced as a thoroughbred trainer in Australia, paving the way for the likes of Gai Waterhouse, Betty Lane, and Sheila Laxon.

Shepherd grew up outside Tamworth. As was the case in those times, horses were an integral part of her life. She rode to and from school every day and after moving to Scone became even more steeped in thoroughbreds on meeting and marrying Archie.

They lived all their lives together at the 10-acre property they had in Phillips St on the outskirts of the town. There her husband bred and raced a few thoroughbreds, hiring jockeys to ride them in their work.

When Betty came along, she would ride one and lead one (or two) through town every morning to the old White Park Racetrack where Archie would time her as she put them through their paces.

Shepherd became engrossed in training horses under her husband's name. That created problems because without a licence there were areas of a racecourse to which she could not be admitted.

The licence, Lim said, "changed everything because prior to that she had to work around a lot of obstacles."





She quickly made public her ability with horses, with Quick Knock, the first horse she prepared under her own name, winning six races.

Despite only ever having two or three horses in her stable, Shepherd made regular trips to the winners' circle but she really made her mark in the big time when she and Archie purchased a horse they called Trevors, which Betty broke in, forming a remarkable bond between the two.

Bought privately as a young horse, Trevors won 14 races in total with wins including the STC W J McKell Cup, as well as second in The Metropolitan and AJC Summer Cup, and fourths in the celebrated Epsom Handicap and Hill Stakes, all in Sydney.

In 1966 she made the decision to take Trevors to Melbourne for the Spring carnival, where he ran an unlucky fourth in a blanket finish in the Caulfield Cup before finishing third in the Hotham Handicap on VRC Derby Day and running midfield in the Melbourne Cup.

With those appearances in the Caulfield and Melbourne cups, Shepherd became the first woman trainer to have a runner in either event.

It wasn't until 2001 that then New Zealand trainer Sheila Laxon became the first female trainer to win the Caulfield and Melbourne cups, with her stayer Ethereal taking out the double. In 1938 another New Zealander, Catalogue, won the Melbourne Cup with Allan McDonald being named as the trainer. In fact, McDonald's wife Hedwick Wilhelmina McDonald was the gelding's real trainer, but females were unable to be licenced in Australia. In Britain, the Jockey Club took until 1966 before deciding that licences could be issued to 'suitable women'.

While Shepherd was rightfully feted for her trailblazing, her daughter said the fact that Archie was happy to take a back seat made theirs the perfect partnership.

"Mum was the brains. She had all the knowledge and was the mad horsewoman while dad really was best doing the books," says Ms Lim.

"So, he was happy for her take the limelight which, at the time, was unusual. You know, this was the fifties and sixties.

"Most men preferred a wife in the kitchen and looking after the house, but dad was very much happy to let mum shine because she was very good at it."

Shepherd died on Australia Day 2021, aged 89, just a year after her pioneering role was honoured at the Scone Horse Festival.



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ASSOCIATION



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CATEGORY:  
**ASSOCIATE**

## ARTHUR & HARRY MITCHELL - *bred for success*

The temptation for the uninformed or envious is to look at the growth of Scone's Yarraman Park Stud under the tutelage of brothers Arthur and Harry Mitchell and ascribe it to sheer luck.

After all, surely there is more than an element of luck behind stallion I Am Invincible turning out to be a super sire? True, but that discounts the effort and planning that went into his selection, just as it was with Star Kingdom and Sir Tristram, two of the other super stallions to have stood in Australia and New Zealand over the past several decades.

Patrick Hogan scoured the thoroughbred world for the bloodlines that he wanted before selecting, sight unseen, Sir Tristram, while Stanley Wootton, Alf Ellison and Reg Moses wanted a horse who would get fast maturing two-year-olds who would handle the pace and turns of Australian racing and who might go strongly up to a mile.

Yarraman Park – Yarraman means horse in Indigenous dialect – began as a stud more than 100 years ago and in the mid-1990s the brothers took over its running from their father, former English farmer and horse breeder Major James Mitchell, who in 1968 had purchased the stud from former champion jockey George Moore.

The stud had made a middling living with European imports like Straight Master, Sirocco, Picollino and Desert Style, and through Australian sires such as Pilgrim's Way and Beaches, but Arthur and Harry considered it needed something special to lift Yarraman Park out of the pack, to change the focus from middle distance performers to the Australian speed style.

They thought the answer could be Catbird, the 1999 Golden Slipper winner. He was Australia's leading first season sire in 2003–04 and sired 25 stakes winners in his first three crops before he unfortunately died from laminitis in 2007.

The Mitchells also stood Magic Albert, a crack sprinter whose failure to win a G1 made him affordable. Despite not getting the best mares, he threw five Group 1 winners and 24 Stakes winners among 663 individual winners and progeny earnings in excess of \$58 million.

The search that finally turned up I Am Invincible started with a couple of clear premises. They set themselves a target of finding a horse that they thought they could initially stand for around \$20,000. It had to be a horse with speed and some Black Type form, preferably Group 1 placed because a Group 1 win would price them out of the market. Strong bloodlines were essential, as were good looks because at that level of the market mare owners could afford to be selective with unproven stallions.



After much research they were recommended I Am Invincible, who had won at five of his 13 starts, including two stakes' victories, and had finished second to the champion sprinter Takeover Target in the 2009 Group 1 Goodwood Handicap in Adelaide.

He was the son of the Irish shuttle stallion Invincible Spirit, from a Canny Lad mare, with Canny Lad providing the sort of speed influence the market prized.

Arthur and Harry flew to Melbourne to inspect the horse.

"As soon as he came out of the box we said, 'Yep, we're going to stand this horse'," Arthur says.

"He was a fast horse, but he was just so good looking. He was then, and is now, a magnificent horse."

Mare owners were initially attracted by the stallion's looks and service fee of \$10,000. He was well received, getting 133 mares in his first season, a number which continued to grow as the resultant foals inherited their sire's looks.

They had also inherited something more; with I Am Invincible becoming Champion first season sire.

That was just a taste of things to come: to date he has been Champion Sire in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 and is leading all sires with 81% winners to runners and 9.5% stakes winners to runners.

In the 2023/24 season his runners won 175 races and prizemoney of \$32,162,170.

As the legend grew, and the winners and titles piled up, so did the service fee, jumping from \$10,000 for the first four seasons to \$25,000, then \$50,000 and \$100,000 to a peak of \$250,000 before the Mitchells dialled things back this season to \$200,000 - all figures exclusive of GST.

That restriction is another example of the Mitchells' husbandry of the stallion. They have resisted the temptation to shuttle the horse, giving him ample time to recover from each season's mating's, and although the stallion remains in great health this year's reduced fee and reduced book of mares is an acknowledgement that at some time things will come to a close.

But as always with Arthur and Harry, the emphasis is on the future. I Am Invincible's son Hellbent, one of nine I Am Invincible sons at stud in Australia, is already making a name for himself as a Yarraman Park stallion, as is the Japanese bred Brave Smash.

The stud is a showpiece, and the next generation of Mitchells are preparing to honour the family name and the family legacy.



## GEORGE RYDER - *a true visionary*

If you want a classic rags-to-riches story, go to the life of George Ryder.

If you are looking for a person who did more than most to democratise Australian racing, then George Ryder is your man.

And if you are searching for someone who changed the face of the Australian breeding industry . . . well, it's George Ryder again.

Born in 1905 in the tiny hamlet of Tingha, near Inverell, Ryder grew up poor. His father was a tin miner, and the family home was a slab hut with a dirt floor. Leaving school at 13, among his many jobs was one driving the local dentist by motor bike on his rounds throughout the countryside.

Around 1928, Ryder moved to Cessnock and got a job driving a bus. A year later he borrowed money to buy his own bus and over the next few years took over most of his rivals in the Hunter Valley to end up with a fleet of 45 buses operating as Rover Motors. He also gained his pilot's licence and began the first passenger air service between Sydney and Newcastle. By 1945 he had sold both his bus and air businesses and had invested in hotels.

A talented sportsman, Ryder had also become interested in racing, first buying a horse in 1937 which he named Jan, in honour of his daughter. After it won at Newcastle, Ryder was smitten by the sport, investing in several thoroughbreds which were trained at Randwick by Bayly Payten. He raced with considerable success over the years, especially through another mare – also called Jan – which won several stakes races in the early 1950s.

Before that, in 1943, the NSW government had passed laws banning proprietary (privately-owned) racing clubs, of which there were several in Sydney. After paying compensation to the owners, the government established the Sydney Turf Club, giving that body control of Rosehill and Canterbury.

Ryder was appointed to the STC's inaugural board, on which he stayed for a record 37 years, serving stints as Treasurer, Deputy Chairman and Chairman and being acknowledged as one of the driving forces behind the many innovations that the STC brought to racing.

In the early 1950s he strongly advocated a rich race for two-year-olds to be run over 1200m at Rosehill. With its name coming from the answer which Ryder's wife Dorothy gave when asked the perfect present for a baby, the Golden Slipper



Stakes was first run in 1957. It proved an enormous success, changing the face of Australian racing and breeding, in time bringing a focus on speed and proving a stallion-making race for winning colts. That emphasis on speed has seen Australian horses reach the very top echelon of sprint racing throughout the world.

During Ryder's time the STC introduced numerous innovations to Australian racing, including transportable barrier stalls, the photo-finish camera and saddlecloth numbers on jockey's armlets and the recommencement – after a 12-year hiatus – of metropolitan midweek racing in 1954.

In 1946 Ryder and some partners acquired Woodlands Stud at Denman. He sold it in 1970 but almost immediately purchased Kia Ora Stud at Scone, from which he championed the use of then unfashionable Australian-bred sires, standing the likes of Gunsynd and Baguette.

Always mindful of his humble beginnings and that the average person could never aspire to owning a racehorse, in the 1970 Ryder had the rules of racing changed to allowed for large scale syndications.

He established the Australian Racing and Breeding Syndicate (ARABS) which allowed thousands of people normally excluded by cost to become more actively engaged with the sport.

For \$500 per share, anyone could share in both the racehorses and broodmares that were owned under the ARABS banner.

With Muswellbrook trainer Pat Farrell preparing most of the ARABS runners, Ryder ensured that the Upper Hunter became the focal point for syndicate members, holding an annual ARABS weekend, with Kia Ora and its stallions, mares, and yearlings on display at an Open Day and Scone Race Club holding an ARABS Cup meeting on the same weekend. Hundreds of members flocked to the two events, hoping to see the distinctive yellow and black checked ARABS colours enter the winners' circle.

After several years of success, John Messara – whose horses still race under the ARABS colours – took control and ended the ground-breaking project, but the legacy of Ryder's foresight lives on in the scores of syndicates that continue to put horse racing within reach of the wider public.

Few disagreed when Tommy Smith called Ryder the best man for racing in Smith's long career, while others have said he competes with Stanley Wooton as the most influential thoroughbred racing entrepreneur in the second half of the 20th century.

What is clear is that when George Ryder died in 1985 racing and breeding lost a great administrator and visionary.





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CATEGORY:  
**RACEHORSE**

## RAZOR SHARP - *when you have got a good thing, share it*

This is a story about a great horse, but it is also a story about a group of owners who just loved to share the excitement of horse racing with whoever happened along.

Razor Sharp, the brilliant gelding prepared at Broadmeadow by Jim Johnstone, was owned by the Elcekay Syndicate, otherwise known as brothers Les and Col Cook and their mate Ken Hubbuck.

The Cook brothers, who made their money in the motor trade, were the definition of keen racing men. They owned trotters, and greyhounds and gallopers, with the pick of them being the great Romantic Dream, already an inductee into the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Racing Hall of Fame.

They hit the jackpot again with Razor Sharp, who proved himself in the early 1980s to be one of the best sprinters Australia had seen.

The gelding, by Steel Pulse out of the Fairs Fair mare Sea Holly, first made racegoers sit up and take notice in winning the 1981 Listed Pacesetter Stakes (1200m) at Gosford, followed by Grafton's Listed Ramornie Handicap when, with Hall of Famer John Wade in the saddle, he carried 53.5kg to defeat the Canberra trained Bemboka Yacht by a half head. That showed the three-year-old was a serious galloper because Bemboka Yacht was himself outstanding, having won the Group 2 Hobartville Stakes in 1979 and the Group 1 Stradbroke Handicap in 1980.

The following year Razor Sharp turned that potential into reality when another Hall of Famer, Alan Scorse, piloted him to victory with 57kg in the Group 2 Challenge Stakes (1000m) at Randwick and followed that with an outstanding win in the Group 1 Newmarket Handicap, a race down the 1200m straight at Flemington which has long been touted as Australia's premier sprint. Victorian jockey Dale Short rode the horse that day.

Later that year, the gelding, with Scorse aboard, took out the Group 2 WFA Missile Stakes over 1200m at Rosehill.

Next year started off in much the same manner. With Wade back in the saddle, Razor Sharp made it a double by taking out the Challenge Stakes again, this time with 57.5kg to carry.

Again, Johnstone decided to send him to Melbourne to take on the very best, and again the Newcastle gelding came out on top. With Short once again the pilot, Razor Sharp placed himself in rarefied company when he became one of just five horses in the 150-year history of the race to take out two Newmarket Handicaps.



In December 1983 he resumed from a spell and humped 62.5kg to win a 900m Welter at Broadmeadow then two starts later put the stamp on his greatness by taking out his third consecutive Challenge Stakes, a feat only equalled by At Sea.

Now a six-year-old, time and weight was catching up to Razor Sharp. He finished fourth in the VRC Lightning Stakes (1000m), 10th in the Oakleigh Place and 12th in his bid to win his third consecutive Newmarket.

Placings in the STC Canterbury Stakes and the AJC Galaxy showed he remained as tough and uncompromising as ever, but time was drawing close for the great horse.

When Johnstone retired the stable favourite, he had the record of 57 starts for 14 wins, 19 placings and \$404,080 in prizemoney.

It was a sad day for the owners but also a sad day for anyone who had met the gregarious Cooks.

Few enjoyed racing more than the Cook brothers and even fewer spent so much time, money, and effort in ensuring the public felt they had a piece of the excitement.

When Razor Sharp was racing signs would go up in the windows of their premises, advising passers-by of the time and place of the event. They handed out branded cards and key rings, gave away posters and printed t-shirts and hired an oompah band to play in a tent at Broadmeadow races (along with security guards to keep things in order). They were having fun and they wanted others to share in it.

In a fitting tribute to a great horse, the Australia Turf Club runs the Listed Razor Sharp Handicap (1200m) each year at Randwick.



## ANGST: - *the making of a tragic Princess*

It has been more than 30 years, but trainer Noel Mayfield Smith has no difficulty recalling the first time he laid eyes on his outstanding filly Angst.

He had previously trained the filly's dam, the Plush mare Shark, who won at Hawkesbury.

Described as "an aggressive filly with nice breeding", Shark was covered by Kala Dancer and the trainer was being taken on a tour of Wakefield Stud at Scone with the specific intention of inspecting the resulting filly foal, which was now a yearling.

"I still remember the first time I saw her," he says. "There was this group of yearlings and there was a grey filly with a big backside. I thought 'I hope this is her'."

It turned out it was.

When the filly turned up at his Broadmeadow stables, Mayfield Smith, who now trains at Coffs Harbour, continued to be impressed. He liked everything about her; the way she moved, the way she looked, the way she reacted. He liked her ever more when jockey Mark Peters returned after putting her through her paces on the woodchip track.

"Send for the fire brigade to put the fire out", the ebullient jockey called.

Mayfield Smith gave her a start over 900m at Newcastle, but she pulled up badly shin-sore so headed for a spell.

Back in the stable in time for an autumn campaign, the filly made her first entry in the scorecard when she beat 12 rivals in a 900m two-year-old race at Broadmeadow when ridden by Peters. Thirteen days later she won again in two-year-old company, scoring by five lengths over 1200m at Wyong.

This time Sydney jockey Craig Carmody had the ride, and he was not to be shifted for the remainder of the filly's career. After Wyong, Angst finished an unlucky second behind Acapulco Queen in the Wellington Boot before being sent for another spell.

After resuming with a fourth over 900m at Broadmeadow Angst ventured to the city for the first time, recording a narrow victory in a three-year-old 1100m event for non-metropolitan winners. The astute Mayfield Smith then decided to really test whether his high opinion of the filly was warranted, starting her in the Group 3 Silver Shadow Stakes over 1200m at Randwick. The result was a half-length victory over Centrefold Spread and Bint Marscay, in the process delivering something of a warning to better fancied rivals.



Next came the Listed Furious Stakes (1400m) at Randwick and another slashing win, this time by 1.3 lengths, before the most spine-tingling of the lot, the Group 2 Tea Rose Stakes over 1500m at Rosehill.

In an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald some years after the race, Mayfield-Smith said of the event: "Angst showed amazing acceleration. If you go through the record, have a look at the final 400m in the Tea Rose. I think she came home in 22.5 seconds, 22.8, something like that. It was phenomenal. She just left them standing."

The final margin was a widening five lengths and a dawning appreciation by both experts and the everyday racing public that here was a very special filly.

The last race in Angst's Spring campaign was to be the Group 1 Flight Stakes (1600m) at Randwick, and it was the one he was most concerned about. She was a three-year-old filly having her sixth start that preparation – the last three against the best of her age and sex – and was showing understandable signs of tiredness. She was also not bred to run 1600m.

"It was tough in that last race, that was at the upper limits of how far she would probably go," he told the Herald.

"She wasn't bred to run a mile, the family was pure speed, 900m and 1000m horses. It was tough on her, but she managed to do it."

That she did, taking out the race by three-quarters of a length.

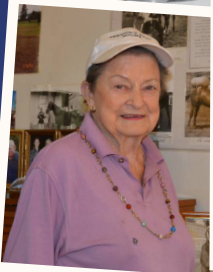
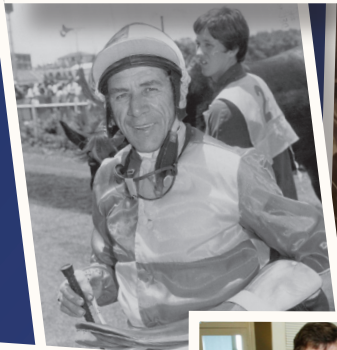
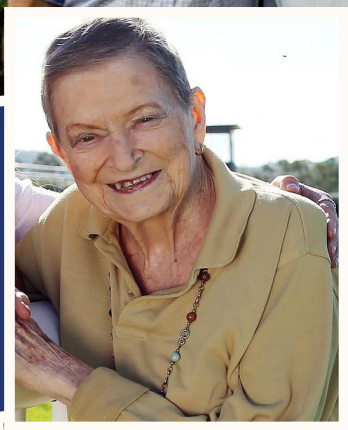
With the victory she also managed to do what no others had done to that date – take out the coveted Princess Series, covering the Silver Shadow Stakes, Furious Stakes, Tea Rose Stakes and Flight Stakes. To underline the momentous nature of the feat, since Angst the four-race sweep has only been completed by fellow Hall of Famer Samantha Miss. In 2002 Victory Vein finished second to Purler in the Flight Stakes after winning the three earlier events while the champion Sunline won the final three races but did not start in the Silver Shadow.

After that Angst went for a well-deserved spell, with the outstanding record of 10 starts for seven wins, one placing and \$626,598 in stakes and the promise of much more to come.

Tragically, it was to be her last appearance on a racetrack. During her spell, the filly was operated on for polyps on her larynx but did not make it through the operation.

Mayfield Smith was devastated, not so much for what might have been. "She was such a beautiful horse and deserved to better spend the rest of her life."











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**INDUCTEES**

**ASSOCIATES**

---

**GEORGE RYDER**  
Administrator

**ARTHUR & HARRY  
MITCHELL**  
Breeder/Administrator

**TRAINERS**

---

**JIM JOHNSTON**  
Trainer – Broadmeadow

**BETTY SHEPHERD**  
Trainer – Scone

**JOCKEY**

---

**BILLY LAPIN**  
Jockey – Newcastle/  
Randwick

**MERV MAYNARD**  
Jockey – Newcastle

**RACEHORSES**

---

**RAZOR SHARP**  
Bay Gelding, foaled 1977

**ANGST**  
Grey Mare, foaled 1990



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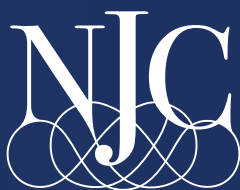
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