

The Working Cattle Country

Major Parke: The Explorer–Settler “Guy Fawkes Station”

The first White man to thoroughly explore and settle the region known as the Dorrigo and Guy Fawkes Plateau was Major Parke, and Englishman who fought under Don Dorrigo in the Carlist War of 1835. After emigrating to Australia, Parke found his way to the Plateau country travelling on horseback along the open forest country with a small band of people. He particularly noted the similarity of the country to that of a battlefield in Spain called Hernani, from which the Australian village gained its name. He obtained a grant of land on Major’s Creek and built a homestead on the country and bred large numbers of cattle and horses that roamed the large fenceless runs covering thousands of acres of pastoral land.

Landmarks named by the early settlers throughout the area not only reflected their own names but the introduction and importance of horses to the landholders of the Plateau: Horse Creek, Wild Horse Creek, The Horseshoe Bend, Horse Swamp Creek, Dead Horse Gully, and Brumby Creek. In all cases of the establishment of the early stations, references are repeated attesting to the fact that *“stock grazed over the huge unfenced areas of the Plateau”* and it is undisputed and proven in the historical records that the horse and cattle had free range of the region from the earliest white settlement.

The country from the Northern Tablelands and the Sea Coast was being occupied from the 1850s according to the Historical Records held in the State Library. It is documented that these early settlers brought their horses with them. Access was only available from the north because of the high falls of the Tablelands to the south, east and west of the area.

Rigney — “Little Guy Fawkes Station”

“Little Guy Fawkes Station” on Rigney’s Creek near the turnoff to Guyra on the Grafton Road, was established by another Englishman and friend of Parke, Major Rigney. The boundary between the two properties of “Little Guy Fawkes” and “Guy Fawkes River Station” owned by Major Parke ran from Ebor Falls in an easterly direction to the old Ebor Hotel in the west. Two large gate posts, which once held a large white gate, marked the boundary line many years and were well known landmarks of the district. Mr John Henry (“Tot”) Mowle, Jr. purchased “Little Guy Fawkes Station” following its takeover by The Peel River Pastoral Company.

Brown Brothers: Breeders of the Bay Horses “Marengo Station” and “Broadmeadows Station”

The exact date that Joseph Brown arrived at “Marengo” has not been clearly defined, however it was apparently around 1850-1851 as that date is the date it first appears in the Brown’s history. Birth dates, at “Marengo” and Broadmeadows” support this period. An entry in Runs and their Various Occupiers 1846-1876 states: “Marengo Plains , James Douglas to Joseph Brown 1851.”

Henry Brown moved to Broadmeadows in 1861. “Combolo Station” was opened between 1880 and 1884 on the Little River, located on the lower reaches of the Guy Fawkes River by David (known as ‘Pardy’ or ‘Paddy’) Brown, son of Henry. Earnest Brown was born at “Combolo Station” in 1877. “Marengo” was run by Isaac Brown, son of Joseph, until it was sold to Edwin Blaxland, who later sold in 1895 to James MacDougall.

David ‘Pardy’ (or ‘Paddy’) Brown, like his father Henry and his Uncle Joseph, contributed greatly to the history of the area. At South Grafton on 31st October 1867 he married Mary Ann Monahan. She had been a Governess at Government House in Parramatta and had moved to take up the position of Governess at “Broadmeadows” for health reasons. The couple first moved to “Wollomombi” and later opened up “Combolo Station” between 1880 and 1884 on the lower reaches of the Guy Fawkes River where it was known as Little River. Access to the valley remains difficult being enclosed by precipitous mountains with the road out via a steep spur which has an altitude rise of over 2,000 feet in the very short distance of four miles.

They also had a selection at “Jock’s Water”. Some time later they moved to “Sandy Creek” at Coutts Crossing on the Orara River. From the time of arriving at “Marengo” in 1850, six of Joseph and Henry’s children were recorded as having been born on the property. Pardy’s family of nine was recorded as having been born on “Broadmeadows”, “Combolo Station” and at the “Jock’s Water” properties over the period 1868 to c1889. Their descendants recorded the births of ten children from 1902 to 1915 on “Broadmeadows”.

Joseph’s fourth child, Isaac David Brown, ran “Marengo” with his brother Wellington until they moved to Clouds Creek due east from “Marengo”, having sold the property in the late 1880s to Edwin Blaxland. Blaxland, the grandson of explorer Gregory Blaxland who gained fame as leader of the expedition which crossed the Blue Mountains on horseback in 1813. Edwin Blaxland married Hargrave’s daughter Lucy which gave them combined control of an immense areas of land.

“Broadmeadows” was sold to the Tennant family and later to the McDonalds. The historic horse shoulder brand ^{TN}_T was registered to the Tennant family and is now used by Mr Norman Whittaker, a relation of the McDonald Family.

The history of settlement in the Chaelundi State Forest area has been well documented and established the fact that The Gulf Country, up and down the Guy Fawkes River, was well settled and grazed by cattle and horses since 1847. The Gulf Country was productive grazing country prior to the National Park takeover of the thousands of hectares of this leasehold land. It was settled from the early 1800s and “the squatters who followed Major Parke’s example produced fine herds of cattle and horses on their large areas, which were held mainly as an Occupational Licence or similar tenure from the Crown. Horses at that time were valuable and were bred in large numbers. When a horse was needed, the mob would be run in so that one could be selected, caught and broken. They were nearly as bad as brumbies after running free in thousands of acres of bushland and were probably only yarded once or twice before being finally broken-in and used as stock horses.”

The Brown Brothers owned a huge sweep of The Gulf Country. Mr Noel MacDougall stated that he believed that the Brown family bred the majority of the horses which ultimately became the Brumbies on the eastern side area in the early 1900s. These horses were of a particularly good type, were predominantly creamies and bays, and bred with mainly Thoroughbred blood with some Pony and Clydesdale. According to Mr Meyers, the Brown’s breeding emphasis was for type and endurance but the horses looked to have been sired by blood horses. According to the recorded interview with Mr Ernie Maskey, the Brown Family imported two creamy stallions from England named ‘Golden King’ and ‘Silver Duke’. “Mrs Brown used to ride from “Broadmeadows” to South Grafton to shop and ride all the way home the same day — a round trip of approximately 120 miles” as Mr Doug Meyers who was a stockman on “Broadmeadows Station” in 1945 recounted in his interview.

The MacDougall Family “Buccarumbi” and “Marengo”

South of “Marengo” was the largely undeveloped area of Chaelundi, which joined the Guy Fawkes area on the west. It was only accessible on horseback with steep hills and slopes hurtling down to creeks and gullies and presented the misconception that the area was untouched by human hands. On the contrary, like Dalmorton to the north, it has a long history of being grazed, mined and logged since the 1870s or earlier and before that had been an Aborigine transit route for the local peoples. Access from the north was via the Old Glen Innes Road and until recently, from the southern end near Ebor via stock routes and bridle tracks, referred to by the old timers as “coming in from

the Marengo end". The Archive Office of New South Wales records that squatters arrived in the 1840s at the same time as the settlement of the Clarence. Unfenced property boundaries were defined by landmarks.

"Chandlers Creek Run", initially part of the "Little River Run", was listed as being taken up in 1862. In 1871, its boundary was recognised by Brown and MacDougall, the watershed above Brown's Creek at Stop-a-Bit Stockyards belonging to "Marengo". The Stop-a-Bit yards was in an open area where stockmen once used holding yards overnight.

The Free Selection Acts of the 1860s, designed to put working people without assets on the land, was instrumental in breaking up many of the bigger stations on the Richmond and Clarence. It put paid to many absentee landlords and part of the terms required runs to be occupied, stocked and improved within a given time. Pastoralists who had already been resident in the area were largely unaffected, as the country was so rugged as to be not sought after by many selectors.

"Chandlers Creek Run" and "Buccarumbi" were bought by Mr James Taylor MacDougall in 1884 and these properties, together with "Cunglebung" which he had acquired in 1896, were all sold in the late 1990s.

Mr Noel MacDougall states that his grandfather, James MacDougall bought "Marengo" from Edwin Blaxland in 1895. Mr Eric Fahey stated that "Marengo, with its secured land plus leases, reached right up to the Glen Innes Road." The station covered practically all of the Marengo and Chaelundi State Forest areas. The property was divided up by James MacDougall's two sons, R.A. and Alistair.

Following the disastrous stock losses of the 1915 drought and subsequent bushfires, "Buccarumbi" was sold to the Turnbull family., however, the property "Marengo" remained in MacDougall hands.

Brumbies were common until the drought of 1915. Mr Reeve Waugh stated that: "The Grey's Creek, a tributary of Chandlers Creek, gets its name from the mob of wild grey horses that were a familiar sight there." He had heard that the last of these horses turned up at Nymboida Bridge in a poor condition after the rest of that particular mob had presumably succumbed to the drought. In Peter Ellis's opinion, feral cats and foxes are "more of a menace to wildlife than anything I know." The leaseholders pointed out that regular light burning of mosaic fires every two to three years, keeps the undergrowth down, as well as allowing grazing access to areas that would otherwise be choked with undergrowth. It is seen as a sensible approach to preventing sporadic and destructive conflagrations, which past Dorrig Management Plans stated "has

been the most destructive agency in the area. It has killed regeneration and damaged individual trees causing defects and loss of increment.”

The 1937 Closer Settlement Bill to assist share farmers with limited capital in the acquisition of their own land saw, as Mr Keith Watters recalls, in 1938 the “Cunglebung” and “Buccarumbi” properties thrown open. Every case was tested in court but the Turnbulls and the MacDougalls lost a lot of country. Dorrigo grazier, Mr Reeve Waugh, described the whole concept of land ballots as “nothing but a bureaucratic idea [and they] had no sensibility to an area. They’d see something on a map [but] this was not a place to reside.” Nothing much seems to have changed in Government attitudes.

According to commissioned studies, the area between Pine Creek and the Guy Fawkes River National Park has an uninterrupted grazing history since at least the 1870s. “Most of the leaseholders are the third generation of their family to follow grazing pursuits in the district. Their intimate knowledge of the country has been utilised at crucial stages in the history of the area”. In 1938, Mr Noel MacDougall escorted Forestry Commission inspectors around parts of the new Marengo and Chaelundi State Forests, country he knew so well for its potential timber value; Mr Bob Rhodes showed the Department of Lands surveyors the best places for camping reserves; and in the early 1960s, Mr Peter Ellis assisted the Forestry Commission by indicating where the old roads and tracks existed to be used for their roading program. They assisted an appointed consultant again in 1993 when research was completed on the history of settlement, grazing, mining and logging of the area. The consultant noted that: “Documentary evidence has been essential in writing the European disturbance history of the study area, but so too has oral history. It has added an element of personal detail which helps to a better understanding of the area.” Some of these people have also been contributors in the gathering of the history and heritage of the Australian Brumbies in this area.

When Mr Noel MacDougall of “Marengo Station”, as a young man of 23 years, was allocated a 373 acre block of land, which straddled Pine Creek bordered by Garden Hill Creek on the western side, the District Surveyor Gordon Lindsay was prepared to make a concession for the young man as follows: “In view of the undeveloped nature of the country already held and that applied for, as regards access and Public Facilities ... applicant has had considerable experience in this locality and is a very good type of settler.” When the young MacDougall had enlisted for active service in World War II, he remembers receiving a letter whilst on duty from the Department of Lands asking why he was not living on his allocated block. He recalls being understandably unimpressed at the time as he was “in a hole in the ground, in the desert near El Alamein”! When he returned to Australia, he had the same difficulty as other block holders in obtaining labour and materials and although he had erected fence posts, was

unable to get the wire. Subsequently, he sold the block to Mr A.C. Smith in 1954 and bought land at Cangi.

In 1952 and for a number of years following, horses were still essential. It is recorded irony that the Forestry Commission Surveys conducted in the early 50s "authorised the use of pack horses but only grudgingly allowed saddle horses to be hired from Ted Cobley. The foresters were supposed to travel on foot! It seems that the payment for the hire of horses was a slow bureaucratic manoeuvre. So much so, that it was very difficult to get horses for hire for the next survey in 1954." Such was the contradictions of a Government organisation that was moving into the mechanised transport technology with its inherent impacts of the post-War years.

At the end of 1954, the survey party accompanied by Mr Baldur Byles, a resources officer from Sydney, used horses for the job. He wrote in preparation for the trip to these remote areas: "I shall bring my own saddle and bridle and a pack cover which is big enough to take eiderdowns and blankets for three men and makes a snug parcel which fits neatly on the pack saddle." From 1881 until the 1960s, clearing land by ringbarking timber had official Government policy and had its sanction as "an improvement for the purposes of valuing an occupier's equity in his land." Mr Peter Ellis commented that: "You could ringbark but you couldn't ringbark anything that would be worth anything. Nobody did much ringbarking. We did some but it was inaccessible and you couldn't get the labour to go out there, and now that you could get someone to go there, you can't do those things anymore."

According to Mr Noel MacDougall, he probably captured what he thought to be the last of the Brown Family's wild horses in 1933 when he trapped seven horses in a yard in Peak Creek and these were the only horses he saw at Kitty's Creek at that time. They were then driven with other stock horses back to "Marengo". He particularly remembered some of the horses: a good bay mare, a piebald, a grey and a creamy with a white mane and tail. He had photos of some of the horses. He also recalled that two or three of the horses he had brought home died after being removed from the bush and he said they had "fretted to death, a common occurrence with brumbies." The younger mares were retained for breeding. The "Old Marengo" Australian Stock Horse Stud stock still has registered horses carrying their bloodlines to this day.

Mr MacDougall did recall that the Turnbull Family bred horses on their property "Kotupna" for remounts that were sold to the Indian Army back in the 1930s and that Mr Dick Guilders' father was a buying agent for them. Prior to the War from 1931-32, he knew that old Mr Robert Turnbull, Robert Adams and Louis Austin, and probably Errol Turnbull, went after horses up the Guy Fawkes River. Mr Errol Turnbull rode a piebald mare that he had run out from the River, somewhere between

Peak Creek and the Plains when they were chasing horses there. He also recalled that old Louis Austin had been badly injured in a fall at that time. He was of the opinion that the horses along the Housewater Creek had originated from around Kitty's Creek.

In 1945–1946 after the Second World War ended, Mr MacDougall occasionally drove steers down to “Broadmeadows Station” along Pine Creek to Calico which ran down the back of the property. It is his recollection that on one of those trips, he saw about seventeen horses at Long Gap. He also stated that around that time, he saw a few horse running along the Guy Fawkes, but said they were not Brown's horses.

Mr MacDougall also related the story of Mrs Mick Carney, the wife of the Combolo Hutkeeper, who regularly rode to “Marengo” to collect supplies, with her three children sitting in front and behind the saddle. The ride took them up the MacDonald's Spur and it was a long, two hour trek over very rugged and steep country.

The management of “Broadmeadows Station” was taken over from Mr Norm McDonald by the Whittaker Family. The Station, which covered 40,000 acre, originally joined “Broadmeadows” at “Combolo”. “Combolo”, located on the lower reaches of the Guy Fawkes River, is within canyon-type terrain with precipitous mountains enclosing the rich valley. The Whittakers were renown for the quality of their horses and had a great interest in racing. They bred many horses by sires such as ‘Gay Mimer’, ‘Turfite’, ‘Calamon’, ‘Rusty Robin’ and a ‘Mount Frisco’ colt. They also imported a horse from Scotland in the 1800s named ‘Glengarry’. Horses sired by these stallions escaped over many years and joined the wild brumbies. The wild horses were mustered from time to time and their population was generally kept under control. Any stallions which caused problems were humanely put down. Mr Tiny Hume recalled that he was required to shoot horses occasionally when Mr Ernie Maskey was working on “Broadmeadows”. He was paid by Mr John Newberry to control the horse numbers so competition for grazing cattle was not threatened. Stockmen, including Messrs Doug Meyers, Kevin Mulligan and Rex Thompson, were all involved in running these horses on occasion, near Ballards on the Mitchell River, around 1946.

Mr Doug Meyers told of a bay stallion he caught, along with several other quality horses, that was “sold to Mr Athol Strong of Casino for the sum of 5 guineas which was a lordly amount for an unbroken colt at that time.” He well remembered “the 32 year-old night horse, by the name of ‘Boaster’, that would still hump under saddle especially if weather conditions were fresh” and added that the endurance and stamina of the wild horse was superior.

Between 1931–1932, Messrs Lewis Austin, Bob and Errol Turnbull, and Bob Adams also chased the brumbies in Peak Creek and the Plains area. Mr MacDougall recalled that Messrs Eddie Rhodes and Ted Cobby were more successful when they came in after the Turnbull group and set up a trapyard in the same area.

According to Mr Ernie Maskey, at this time there were limited numbers of horses in Mr John Newberry's country which adjoined "Broadmeadows".

The Gold Rush: A New Population of Men and Horses

In the 1870s, Dalmorton settlement located on one of the routes between the Clarence River and the Northern Tablelands, became a goldrush town at the time, and ultimately the main thoroughfare. It followed the Boyd (Little) River and is known today as the Old Glen Innes Road. Gold was discovered on Quart Port Creek (north of the now Chaelundi State Forest) in 1872.

The Little River populous of mostly navvies and bushmen turned miners, was "a rollicking goldfield of 500 souls. Three public houses in addition to the present one will be ready for their share of the plunder, as soon as the miners pocket their proceeds from the first crushing." Further south, the Oban Goldfield was gazetted in 1899. At about this time, Black Jack, Black Slate Creek, Excelsior, Florida, Garden Hill, Pine Creek and Mountain Maid Mines all began operations. Local people who know the area best have a fund of stories about the mining days and Mr Peter Ellis can identify the site of the Stockyard Creek Mine. His brother-in-law managed the Black Slate Creek mine and recalled: "He used to tell me about when they'd get the gold and have a crushing. He used to have his horses in the yard and there weren't many fences then you know. He'd have to go to bed in the night-time and have everything ready. He'd wake up and he'd decide on the spot to catch a horse and load his gold and get going — you'd get hit on the back of the head for a few ounces of gold." At varying levels of activity, mining continued for some years and was especially in evidence during the 1930 Depression years and the documentary evidence of mining is reasonably extensive, especially in the parts of the Chandlers Creek area.

The Timber Getters

There is substantial anecdotal and physical evidence that the area has seen logging spasmodically since about the 1870s in conjunction with grazing and mining. The use of wood for huts, yards and fenceposts and timber associated with the mining industry as well as fuel for the miners began at this time and continued through the 1890s until the early years of this century. Commercial logging dates back to the 1870s and hardwood was harvested from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Mr Peter Ellis recalled that old timber-getters on horseback would ride in and find cedar in the springtime by its distinctive red shoots on the trees. In the early times, logs were snigged out and transported by teams of bullocks. Mr James Freeman stated that there were still bullock trails throughout the area. The wagons lumbered along the Old Glen Innes Road through Dalmorton taking a month to do the round trip but sometimes the timber was taken by the same road to the mill at Newton Boyd. Mr Noel MacDougall also remembered the pine logging along Chandlers Creek and knew the men, living in a tent next to MacDougall's hut, who used six bullock teams to get the pine to Grafton around the 1930s. The pine loggers used axes, cross-cut saws and bullock teams until the 1940s when the first caterpillars came into the forest. Because of the difficult terrain and remote location, bullock teams were used much longer than in other areas, and Mr Barry Adams was still using bullocks up until the 1950s along Pine Creek.

The Saladin Bloodline: The Creamies, Palominos, Duns and Dilutes

In the 1870s, a little creamy horse from Dungog was driven in a dog-cart into the area from Port Macquarie by an Englishman named Captain Beardmore. This was the stallion 'Saladin', considered by generations of local horsemen of the Northern Tablelands, including those still living aged in their 80s and 90s today, to be the progenitor of most of the coloured and dilutes horses (Creamies, Palominos, Duns, Taffy and coloured horses) found in the Australian Brumbies of the Guy Fawkes and Tableland Ranges today.

He was reputedly imported, sired by an Arab out of an English Thoroughbred mare, though his English ancestry has occasionally been questioned since Palominos were not common in the old country. When Captain Beardmore moved on to Canada, he left his stallion with Mr J.K. Mackay, who may have been originally responsible for importing the horse, at his property "Cangon" near Dungog. Nonetheless, the horse was referred to in some documented history as "The Beardmore Saladin".

A Mr Alison sent to 'Saladin' a chestnut mare by 'Eclipse', the foundation sire of the famous 'Radium' strain. Mr Alison's mare produced a creamy filly which was bred back to her sire three years later. The colt, foaled in the late 1870s, became the famed latter day 'Saladin' destined to be a cornerstone foundation sire of the Australian Stock Horse. Mr Mackay part-owned the stallion in partnership with Mr Freeman Cobb, evidently of Cobb & Co. coachline fame. At stud under various owners, he went on to be the progenitor of well-known horses such as 'Tyrone', 'The One-Eyed Saladin', 'The Blair Saladin', 'Billy', and 'Sovereign'.

Neglected in history is the breeding of most of the progeny dams of 'Saladin' but it is recorded that "they would have been good, as in the country where they were bred and worked, which was vast, steep and wild, only the good ones were good enough for the men who had to survive with no other means of transport, and up to 50 or 60 miles a day to be covered."

The Ellis family, who owned the property "Combolo Station" in the Chandlers Creek area, also stood a stallion at stud known to be of 'Saladin' blood.

History records that stallions and mares by 'Saladin' eventually spread over most of the eastern watershed and into the Hunter River Valley and many of his descendants of fine creamy horses are still to be seen up and down the Hunter and the Coast.

The virtues of our horses bred and raised in the Northern Tablelands were still being extolled in 1947 when Mr Alex G. Stewart wrote: "Perhaps the close breeding of these famous horses kept their colour and stood the test of time on the rough North Coast Range Country. To start at their feet, we find no seedy toe, no sand cracks or corns, no sidebone, no sprung tendons or splints; and when you look at their back legs, no spavin or curb. A good-skinned, strong galloway with nice hair in mane and tail, mostly cream in colour; good enough in the shoulder to carry a saddle without a crupper and sprung enough in the ribs to dispense with the necessity of a breastplate. No day too long — up to 14 stone in the mountains."

An example of the 'Saladin' influence may be found in the book authored by G. Newbury (nee Newberry) of Glen Innes, containing an oral history as follows: "John Newberry had rather large holdings in the cattle country in the east. Mustering times, Daddy would load up the wagonette with foodstuff, camping gear, and dogs galore. The boys would ride and lead spare horses. It was exciting for us kids. My father bred a line of nice brown stock horses. The original, 'Primrose' the first; his last 'Lady Betty'. I named her. He purchased the first [stock horse] from Fitzgeralds. He also had a line of creamy 'Saladin' mares bred from the coast. He purchased them when "Bald Blair" was subdivided. It was exciting when the big mobs came in. The stockyards were beyond the homestead. We would love to climb the trees near the house and watch the large mobs of white-faced cattle swinging across the Falconer Plains. We had to be as quiet as mice as any noise might spook the cattle and send them stampeding in the opposite direction. I have seen that happen. They take the fences before them and anything that happens to be in their path. The cattle were mostly brought in the summer, the calves branded and returned to The Gulf Country for winter."

In another book by the same author published in 1969, Newbury recounts: "In my youth, The Gulf Country abounded with wild horses. These, too, are now uneconomical and are shot on sight. The horses were bred in their hundreds, mostly from former stock mares which had outgrown their usefulness on the station and had been turned-out to run free. A few which eluded the muster roamed the hills and were commonly called Brumbies. In my opinion, a wild stallion is nature's masterpiece. How splendid he stands in all his magnificence, his proud arrogance as he screams his defiance before he tosses his head in contempt and leads his mare to the safety of the ranges. A Brumby muster is a fascinating experience. I once took part in one. When my father sold "Aboomala", 250 unbroken horses were yarded at his sale. To round up the remainder, a host of young-fry decided to test their skill. My father despised the use of trapyards, so we were supposed to run them. I am ashamed to say that after days of fruitless running, we, the younger generation, resorted to the trapyard and so bought in some of the mob. Just how many, I have forgotten. Some were broken and others sold to horse buyers but that exhilarating experience is one that I have never forgotten. The memory often cheers me when I am alone and nostalgic."

In 1973, Mr J.K. Mackay's grandson reported that a one of his descendants, 'Dundee', produced some great camp horses who won many campdraft competitions. Another horse said to be of consistent 'Sovereign' blood was 'Laos', a registered Australian Stock Horse with an excellent competition record, was owned by Mr Doug Tyler of Dorrigo in the early 1970s. Longevity, stamina, hardiness and coloured horses seemed to be well recognised traits of the bloodline documented from 1906 through to 1937.

The article on 'Saladin' also records that: "Stallions and mares by 'Saladin' eventually spread over most of the eastern watershed and into the Hunter River Valley, where many horses of this breed made a name for themselves, and in fact many fine creamies are still to be seen up and down the Hunter and the coast. His descendants have even spread as far as South Australia." And that: "It can be accepted that 'Saladin' is one of the three most important foundation lines of today's horses — horses which must work and prove themselves before being included in the records of the Australian Stock Horse Society. Surely, nothing less would be tribute enough to such a great and worthy Australian sire." 'Saladin' appeared in 30 of the 305 foundation sire pedigrees of the Australian Stock Horse Stud Book in the early 1970s. Such sires included such famous Thoroughbred sires as 'Phalaris', 'Blandford', 'Gainsborough' and 'St Simon'; the Arab sire 'Shahzada' (imp.); and King Ranch Quarter Horse sires, 'Jackaroo' (Am.) and 'Vaquero' (am.).

In October 2000, examination the footage of the slaughter of the Guy Fawkes River Australian Brumbies by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, it must be considered that the unusually high percentage of Palominos, duns and coloured horses that were shot bears out these documented and oral histories.

Mr James Cluny wrote one of the most fitting tributes to our Australian horses: "He is a horse of which every Australian should be proud for he has evolved over 185 years on this our native land, assisted by the breeding knowledge of our ancestors. Every Australian owes the Australian horse a debt of immense gratitude for the noble and courageous work he has performed in carrying our explorers, drovers, stockmen and soldiers, and shepherding our flocks and herds during our years of development into a nation." Perhaps those living in the city, and those in the National Parks and Wildlife intent on removing our Australian horses from their historic ranges, should heed these words as they express the feelings many hold in connection to our heritage and national identity.

The McCarthys — "Donnybrook" and "Verona"

Other properties selected in the areas equally possess long histories of cattle and horse breeding in this wild and rugged country. John McCarthy selected "Verona" for framing and grazing and spent the rest of his life on the Plateau. McCarthy's sons were known as keen judges of horses and cattle. One son, Justin, worked "Donnybrook" for Frederick Meyers before taking up "The Pines" as his own in his extensive cattle dealings. Eugene McCarthy, a descendent, saw service in World War I and was reputed as a good horseman being one of the horsebreakers and roughriders "*who tamed the outlaws² in The Australian Light Horse*".

The Edwards Family — "Bostobrick"

The property of "Bostobrick", where the homestead still stands on the site of the original dwelling, was settled by the William Edwards and his family who came from Inverell.

In 1886 the property was sold to Mr Buchanan from Narrabri but as he did not occupy the property, it reverted to the Crown and the whole area was obtained by Wirrialpa Bill Freeman and Bert Sinclair. Bert was badly injured when running the wild horses on "Bostobrick" and it was recorded that:

"Horses at the time were valuable and were bred in large numbers. When one was wanted, the mob would be run in so that one could be selected, caught and broken. They were nearly as bad as Brumbies as a result of having free access to thousands of acres and were probably only yarded once or twice before finally being broken-in and used as stockhorses." He suffered a broken leg when his mount fell during one such round-up of these wild-horses on the ridge running to "Moonpah". As the nearest doctor was seventy miles away in Armidale, it was some weeks before he received medical attention.