



Progeny - MYRA TEMPLE and CURRACABARK SOLITARE (who looked a lot like MYRA BRONZE)

MYRA BRONZE

BY JOY POOLE (OAM)

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>
		Pantheon	Tracery
			Scotch Rose
	Panthom	Lady Chrysippus	Chrysippus
			Grace Melton
Panzer		Kangon	Cesarion
			Diffidence
	Nellie	Gooroolai	Montecello
			Deference
MYRA BRONZE		Simon Square	St Simon
(FS) ASH Reg: 2120			Sweet Majorie
	Scarlet Square	Scarlet Martagon	Torpoint
			Lily of the Valley
Scarlet			

Goonoo Goonoo Mare

I can't believe it!" exclaimed an amazed Ted Hooke when I told him that MYRA BRONZE was a Foundation Sire of The Australian Stock Horse Society. JE (Ted) Hooke was the first Treasurer of the ASH Society and his Myra horses have had an impact on the ASH Breed.

"He went to so few mares," explains Ted, "when I came home from school I went to manage Myra Station, one of the Hooke properties. My grandfather, TM (Theo) Hooke, sent MYRA BRONZE with me. Bronze was only three or four years old at that time. Myra was a lovely property of 4,000 acres but very isolated. It was 30 miles out of Gloucester, in the mountains and getting in or out was mostly done on horseback.

I have never had the pleasure of visiting Myra but people who have been there talk about following a road with the gully narrowing and heavily timbered hills crowding in on each side and just when you think, 'I'm almost at the end of the earth!', the track passes through a cutting and you're suddenly looking down into an enormous cleared valley of some of the best grazing country you can imagine.

"Because we were in such an inaccessible location, we never pushed MYRA BRONZE's barrow in any way as it was too hard for anyone to get a mare there. MYRA BRONZE was born on 1st of August 1951. He came with me to Myra in the 50s. I lent him to Trevor Laurie to get some foals at one time and on another occasion he was lent to Tom Geale. I don't know that either of them used him that much and for the last seven years of his life I sent him back to Dungog, to my cousin, Mick Hooke at 'Wirragulla'."

"One story worth telling in connection with MYRA BRONZE is about a fellow at Gloucester who had a good horse that he said was by MYRA BRONZE. I kept saying that he couldn't be as his mare had never come to the horse. When we eventually gleaned the right story we discovered that when I had left MYRA BRONZE in the Gloucester saleyards for Tom Geale to pick up, this fellow had moonlighted a foal!"

Ken (Snow) Oakley had a lot to do with MYRA BRONZE in the last seven years of the horse's life as Snow worked for Mick Hooke for 28 years, starting when he was only 17 years old.

"For the first 11 years I was the general all round run-about," recalls Snow, "and for the last 17 years I ran the dairy. 'Wirragulla' was a beautiful property of just over 2,000 acres and situated next door to 'Crookes Park' where TM (Theo) Hooke lived."

Not far down the road at Dungog was Bob Mackay's property, 'Tabbil Creek', and this was where Panzer, the sire of MYRA BRONZE was born.

"Bob Mackay was a dinky-di breeder," said Snow Oakley, "he wouldn't sell his mares, he was a great horse trainer and was very good with dogs."

Bob Mackay later shifted to Tinagroo, out of Scone, but the MYRA BRONZE story was acted out at 'Tabbil Creek', Dungog.

Theo Hooke of Crookes Park had a lovely mare called Scarlet that he'd bought from the Enright's of Maitland. The Enright's were stock and station agents and renowned for their horses. Back in the 40s, 50s and 60s a lot of the big stations were clearing their horses



Ted Hooke at home at Green Point

and becoming mechanised. A lot of these horses were trucked by train to Farley Trucking Yards, just out of Maitland, NSW, and then driven by stockmen along the roads to Maitland Saleyards where Enright's conducted a regular horse sale. It was nothing for them to have several hundred horses each sale so they certainly had access to an incredible supply of horses. Scarlet was about 16hh, a bay with white on her face, a real ASH type, a mare with terrific strength across her loins who had won a lot of blood mare classes.

Theo Hooke was riding along the road near Tabbil Creek when he met Bob Mackay on Panzer who had just been broken in. Panzer was two or two and a half years old.

"What do you think of him Uncle Theo?" said Bob.

Theo looked at Panzer and said, "I'll send a mare to him!"

So Theo sent Scarlet and the resultant foal, MYRA BRONZE, was the first foal by Panzer.

"Panzer was a magic horse," recalls Snow Oakley. "I used to strap for Mick Hooke, who played polo with Bob Mackay in the Wirragulla Polo Team and on a few occasions I got to work Panzer. He was as easy as winking to work. They played him initially in a snaffle bit and later on in a Spanish snaffle off one rein but he was a beautiful horse to ride. One of the traits of the MYRA BRONZES was the way they could use their hind legs. This trait came from Panzer who was exceptional in this area."

Snow should know all about the MYRA BRONZES as his son, Ken Jnr had terrific success on WIRRAGULLA MATADOR and WIRRAGULLA MELODY who were by him and now his grandsons, Tim and Mathew Oakley are taking all before them on WILJOHN GOLDUST and WILJOHN BOOMERANG who are by MYRA TEMPLE who is by MYRA BRONZE.

When I spoke to Ted Hooke he echoed Snow's words when he also said, "The two things that stood out about the MYRA BRONZES was their ability to work in wet conditions and the terrific use of their hind legs. For years people watching campdrafts in the Gloucester/Dungog area reckoned they could pick the horses with MYRA BRONZE in them by the way they used their hind legs."

Snow continues, "Bob Mackay had been to WWII and when he came home a lot of his horses' names related to things from the war. Panzer was of course named after Hitler's Tank Divisions. Bob carried a lot of shrapnel in his body after the war and there were times at polo that we'd have to lift him on the horse, he'd be so crook."

Bob Mackay, who retired from polo in the mid 50s because of ill health, always maintained that Panzer still hadn't reached his peak.

"Every chukka I played him, he got better," the late Bob Mackay said in an interview in the 70s.

"The horse that I think put MYRA BRONZE on the map," recalls Snow, "was Harold Germon's ANZAC."

"He was so versatile," remembers Ted. "At one Wingham Show, Carol Samble won the lady rider, the 10 stone hack and came second in the pair of hacks: then I jumped on him and won the



The remote but beautiful Myra Station



Harold Germon working Coogan in a Stock Horse class at Gloucester

Polo and Polocrosse classes and the Open Campdraft."

"Harold Germon bred a stallion called CALLY that was a full brother to ANZAC. CALLY was the sire of the first Buckley Trophy winner 30 years ago for the Champion Yearling at the Eastern Branch."

CALLY was named after Ted's Father, Calvert (Cally) Hooke.

MYRA BRONZE may not have been advertised far and wide but the locals at Gloucester were starting to realise his ability.

"I remember at one Gloucester Rodeo or Show," says Ted, "counting up 32 horses by him that were competing and in one Open Campdraft Final at Gloucester nearly every horse running off in that final was by him."

"I think the percentage of very good horses got by MYRA BRONZE, to foals produced, was exceptional," explains Ted.

Not only did MYRA BRONZE have the capacity to sire good horses but his progeny also continued to produce good horses. From 86 registered progeny by MYRA BRONZE in the first generation, by the second generation they had produced 554 descendants, the third generation sees another 562 descendants, the fourth generation 411 and the fifth generation which is still evolving 266 (statistics at the 9th April 2002).

To give some examples of the ability of the MYRA BRONZES to breed on, Ted Hooke had a very good mare by MYRA BRONZE called MYRA SUSIE; this mare was a brilliant campdrafter herself who, when put to Harold Willard's TARGET, produced MYRA ALLWONG who in turn sired CLARKES STUD PERFECT. The late Mrs Win Dorse's LADY SWIFT by MYRA BRONZE out of the Bobbie Bruce mare, Nancy, produced the outstanding led and performance horses - MARSHDALE DOREEN, MARSHDALE BOSS, MARSHDALE DAWN, MARSHDALE BRONZE, MARSHDALE ANZAC and MARSHDALE SWIFT. SMITHS STAR by MYRA BRONZE produced the very popular sire, SMITHS STOCKMAN. KALADBRO NIKKI by MYRA BRONZE was the sire of many of the Bullenbong horses. SHANNON VALE FLASH by MYRA BRONZE is the sire of Brett Pryor's outstanding Polocrosse pony, ARKARRA JOKER.

Mick Hooke, who had MYRA BRONZE for the last seven years of his life, bred some outstanding horses by him, most carrying the Wirragulla prefix. One excellent sire that Mick bred that didn't carry his prefix was TONGY MYSTERY. He was by MYRA BRONZE out of WIRRAGULLA SECRET who was also by Panzer, giving TONGY

MYSTERY a double cross of Panzer. Snow Oakley didn't see this colt from when he was sold as a yearling till many years later when he couldn't get over how much he resembled Panzer.

Chris Skerrett, Mick's son-in-law, bred a lot of very good MYRA BRONZE horses that carried the Loloma prefix but the mating to end all matings was the MYRA BRONZE/ MYRA JANE by Steel dust combination.

"For my 21st birthday, my grandfather, Theo Hooke, gave me MYRA JANE," recalls Ted. It was 1954 and when I looked at her I thought, she's so ugly and to make it worse she had the Itch. I must have said something to this effect and grandfather replied, 'She'll breed you good foals, I can trace her breeding back 100 years.'

"Grandfather had a terrific knack of breeding horses. He bred ponies, he bred Echo, (See the Roy Garland story this issue) he bred MYRA BRONZE as well as world class cattle. I think with the horses I bred later I must have inherited this trait from him."

Well, Theo Hooke's prediction that MYRA JANE would breed good foals proved the under-statement of the century. To MYRA BRONZE, MYRA JANE produced seven full brothers and sisters; MYRA TEMPLE (an outstanding sire), MYRA PALEFACE (an outstanding sire), MYRA SUSIE (a champion campdrafter and producer), CURRACABARK SOLITAIRE (a champion campdrafter and sire), KALADBRO NIKKI (Sire), MYRA QUICKSTEP and MYRA ABAGAIL. Through this family, MYRA PALEFACE took the MYRA BRONZE breeding to Western Australia and KALADBRO NIKKI to Victoria. So from isolation on a mountain property to Australia wide, the MYRA BRONZES had spread in a 50 year period.

Looking at the breeding of MYRA BRONZE he is by an outstanding performer and sire, Panzer. Panzer has the distinction of being the sire of two Foundation Stallions, MYRA BRONZE and NABINABAH THE GUN. Both these sires are renowned for their ability to sire progeny that are not only good horses themselves but who in turn can continue to produce quality stock.

Panzer, although an outstanding cattle horse at home, was only ever campaigned as a polo pony where he carried Bob Mackay to some outstanding wins including the Dudley Cup in 1950, 1951 and 1952 with the Wirragulla team.

"Bob always used to say Panzer was 15 hands," said Snow, "but gee, I think he would have been pushing to be that big. Some people don't like Thoroughbreds and no one wants those big narrow gutted horses but these Thoroughbreds were terrific."

A Thoroughbred carrying excellent bloodlines, Panzer was never recorded in the Australian Stud Book (ASB), his dam, Nellie, although mentioned as a foal in the ASB, due to WWII, was never returned to the Keeper of the Stud Book. On returning home from war, Mr Mackay found that several of his Thoroughbred mares



Harold Germon (ANZAC), Judge Roy Langham and Ted Hooke at the Wingham Open Campdraft - 1st and 2nd both by MYRA BRONZE



Kenneth Oakley Jnr (17yrs old) on WIRAGULLA MELODY at Maitland Show in 1977

were in the same position but made the decision to continue to breed from them to produce polo ponies.

Panzer's grandsire, Pantheon, was by Tracery (USA 1909) out of Scotch Rose (IRE 1912). Tracery not only produced the good Australian winner, Pantheon but also Gothic who won 12 Principal Races including the 1927 and 1928 Newmarket Handicaps, the 1929 William Reid Stakes, the CM Lloyd Stakes in 1928 and 1929 and the Linlithgow Stakes in 1928. Tracery also got good horses in Ireland and Great Britain. Tracery himself, won the Eclipse Stakes in Great Britain in 1913.

Pantheon's dam, Scotch Rose, was by Your Majesty (GB1905) out of Rose of Ayrshire (GB 1905). Both Tracery and Scotch Rose go back to St Simon (GB 1881).

Kangon the sire of Nellie, the dam of Panzer, was out of a mare called Diffidence and Diffidence was also the great granddam of Nellie's dam, Gooroolai. Diffidence, a winner of the Sydney Cup, was out of what Bob Mackay describes as one of Australia's greatest broodmares, Etra Weenie who was a granddaughter of the colonial taproot mare, Sappho (1847).

MYRA BRONZE's dam Scarlet was, as mentioned earlier, an outstanding type of mare by the Thoroughbred sire, Scarlet Square, who was by Simon Square who was by St Simon. This gave MYRA BRONZE three crosses back to St Simon who is proving to be a very influential taproot sire in ASHs.

Simon Square is out of Sweet Marjorie (GB 1896) who was by Kendal (GB 1883) out of St Marguerite (GB 1879). This makes Sweet Marjorie a full sister to Tredennis (GB 1879) who produced Bachelors Double (GB 1906) who appears in other ASH Foundation Sires and Tredennis also produced Principal Race winners in Ireland, Great Britain and Australia.

Kendal, also produced Principal Race winners in Ireland, Great Britain and Argentina.

It amazes me how widely the Thoroughbred breed spread in those days when all overseas transport was by ship.

Scarlet Square's dam Scarlet Martagon is out of the outstanding broodmare, Lily of the Valley, which makes Scarlet Martagon (GB 1917) a half sister to the champion sire Valais (GB 1913). Valais produced 28 Principal Race winners of 78 Principal Races including Avant Courier (AUS 1924) the 1927 VATC Caulfield Guineas, Fujisan (AUS 1921) winner of seven Principal Races including the 1925 AJC Doncaster Handicap, Manfred (AUS 1922) winner of four Principal Races including the 1925 WS Cox Plate, the 1925 AJC Derby and the 1926 Caulfield Cup, Metellus (AUS 1921) AJC Epsom Handicap, Quintus (AUS 1920) 1924 VRC Newmarket Handicap, Vaals (AUS 1922) winner of four Principal Races including the 1927 AJC Epsom Handicap, Valicare (AUS 1922) seven Principal Race wins including the 1926 Doncaster Handicap but by far his greatest offspring was the mighty Heroic (AUS 1921)

winner of 19 Principal Races including the 1924 AJC Derby.

Besides this outstanding half brother, Scarlet Martagon also had a full sister, Whitetor (GB 1911) who produced the very handy sire High Art (GB 1923) who produced eight Principal Race winners. Another half sister to Scarlet Martagon, Meadow Rue (IRE 1904) produced the champion sire, Highfield (GB 1912) who sired 13 Principal Race winners of 38 Principal Races.

Scarlet Martagon was by Torpoint (GB 1900) who was by the New Zealand sire Trenton (NZ 1881) which leads us to believe that not only were Thoroughbred horses coming to the colonies but some Colonial horses were travelling to Great Britain. Trenton is an interesting horse - born in 1881, he won group races in New Zealand in 1883 and 1884 and in Melbourne in 1885 and 1886. Distance didn't matter to Trenton as he won from five furlongs (a sprint) to 20 furlongs (longer than the Melbourne Cup by 800 metres!!)

The champion broodmare, Lily of the Valley, was by Martagon (GB 1887) who was the sire of six Principal Race winners of 14 Principal Races, including Lilyveil (GB 1909). Winner of the 1914 Sydney Cup, Ian 'Or (GB 1913) also winner of the 1919 AJC Sydney Cup and Shepherd King (GB 1911) winner of the 1916 VATC Caulfield Cup. So what is so new about overseas horses contesting our major races!

Scarlet's dam was a Goonoo Goonoo station mare whose breeding was never recorded. Maybe the Goonoo Goonoo mare was one of the horses that found her way to the Maitland Saleyards and the Enright's regular horse sale.

MYRA BRONZE, in keeping with the other horses that have earned Foundation Sire status, has a background of superior genetics obtained by astute breeders using the best stock available to breed superior stock.

In 2001, at the Dalby ASH Sale, I helped Angus Lane with his commentary on the breeding of some of the horses entered for the sale. One horse had MYRA BRONZE in his pedigree. After the demonstration some people came up to me and said, "We'd never heard of MYRA BRONZE!" I hope this article will help a lot of people to know about this great sire as he certainly has proved an ASHs luminary. *A.*



MYRA PALEFACE, who is a full brother to MYRA TEMPLE