



MUSTER

BY JOY POOLE (OAM)

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
			Cheviot	Adventurer
				Grey Stocking
		Moorefield		Beauclerc
			Bengal Light	Bluelight
	Bruce			
		Little Nell		
Bobbie Bruce				
			Sylvander	Silvern
				Addenda
			Unknown Dam	
	Cadger			
			Docken	Unknown Sire
	Bonnie			Unknown Dam
			Unknown Dam	

MUSTER (FS) ASH Reg: 2476

				Cheviot
			Moorefield	Bengal Light
	Bruce			
			Little Nell	
	Cool Bruce			
			Ginger	Black Pepper
				Betsy
	Ginger Mare			
			Thoroughbred Mare	
Mopsy				
			Cecil	Red Gauntlet
				Meretha II
	Serene			Goldsborough Colt
			The Blanche	Unknown Dam
Babette				
	E Cohen Mare			



Alex Wiseman the much respected Manager of Belltrees Station and breeder of MUSTER

Alex, in the 1950s and 60s, was in the habit of sending four or five mares each year down from Belltrees Station to the outstanding sire Bobbie Bruce, owned by his good friend Ernie Cowley at Glendonbrook, about an hour and a half away from Belltrees by car. On a couple of occasions Alex sent his good campdraft mare, Mopsy, down to get in foal.

"I rode Mopsy quite a lot when she was down home," said John Cowley, Ernie's son. "She would walk like hell, she had a heart as big as a tiger but if she made up her mind as to where she was going to cross a creek, that's where she went. She was a very strong-willed mare."

"Gwen Winter won 26 campdrafts on her," said Dick Skinner, who owned MUSTER during the latter part of the horse's life.

When Mopsy was broken in, rumour has it that Alex Wiseman almost wore out a saddle riding her - she was such a 'goey' mare. Unlike his effervescent mother, Mopsy, MUSTER had an unflappable temperament.

"All our kids learned to ride on him," said John Cowley. "He wasn't a led class type by any stretch of the imagination, but he had the most outstanding temperament; if anything, he was a bit lazy."



MUSTER about nine years of age with five year old Bill Cowley

MUSTER has to rank as one of the most unusual Foundation Stallions of all, as his strength in acquiring descendants in The Australian Stock Horse Society Stud Book lay with a small group of outstanding mares who were prolific breeders, producing outstanding foals. He only had two sire sons, GUNDY BRUCE and ELMORE WOOKATOOK who both only produced a limited number of foals.

"That's the thing," said John Cowley, "The Bruce blood seems to continue on down through the mares. We had two mares by MUSTER, TARONGA DAWN and TARONGA JEWEL, and even though they were born back in 1972 and 1971 respectively, they are still in most of the pedigrees of all the horses we still have."

MUSTER was bred by Belltrees Station Manager, Alex Wiseman. A highly respected person, Alex managed Belltrees for the White family for many years. A horseman himself, Alex was one of the riders who rode in the early campdrafts at Sydney Royal.

MUSTER was not the only significant horse that Alex bred; indeed, his horses play a major role in the cornerstones of Australian Stock Horse breeding. For example, THE RINGER - another well-known ASH sire is a full brother to MUSTER.

Everyone who had anything to do with MUSTER's foals all echoed the same sentiment. "They were so quiet and easy to handle."

"THE RINGER was a much more athletic horse than MUSTER," said John, "But MUSTER had that incredible temperament. Thinking back, Alex won a Maiden campdraft on him at Rouchel Rodeo and I'm pretty sure I got a second on him at Dungog and won an Open at Stroud. I know he definitely finished up as an Open campdrafter. The Open he won was in the mud and, to look at him, you wouldn't pick him for a 'mud' horse. He was a bay horse with black points and quite heavily built. But he was the quietest stallion I have ever seen!"

In those days (the 1930s through to the 1960s) breeding horses and dogs was all about helping mates, swapping service fees, any sort of deal that didn't involve money. The mares that came down from Belltrees and Alex's own mares were on a five-service-fees-for-one-foal deal.

"Somehow, over the years," said John, "Dad had got way behind in getting his foals. Dad was, by then, in poor health and, when I returned from Queensland, we didn't have many Bobbie Bruce mares left. My dad, Ernie Cowley and his great horse, Bobbie Bruce both died about the same time in 1967."



TARONGA DAWN (1977) one of the MUSTER mares owned by the Cowleys

"Alex Wiseman was a very fair man and he realised we had almost run out of Bruce bloodlines so he offered to lend us MUSTER and that is why we had him for a few seasons. I think, when Alex said he had a buyer who wanted to look at him, if we were finished with him; if we would have said we still needed him, Alex would have left MUSTER with us. However, Alex had been very fair to us so we said, no, if he wanted to sell him that was alright with us. Alex brought a man named Frank Fox to have a look at him. Frank bought MUSTER for very big money, for those days, and took him to Old Sydney Town, the recently closed theme park near Gosford (NSW) that, at the time, was just opening."

Dick Skinner, who owned MUSTER for the last part of his life, takes up the story.

"I went down to work at Old Sydney Town, breaking in bullocks for the bullock teams. I'd driven bullocks since I was 11 years old. When I was a kid, I used to hold the horses and bullocks while they were harnessed and yoked by the three teamsters. I was the horse tailer. One day one of the bullock drivers, who'd had a



MUSTER's greatest daughter - NABINABAH COMMA

big night, didn't turn up for work. One of the other drivers said, 'Give Dick the whip and we'll put his team in the middle.' I was eleven, but I must have made a good fist of it as they never bothered taking the other driver back."

Down at Old Sydney Town I had a big Percheron stallion. You couldn't get them in those days and Frank Fox wanted him badly, but I wouldn't sell him. One day Frank said, 'Would you swap him for MUSTER?' I couldn't believe my ears and said, 'I think I just might do that!'"

"I had MUSTER until he died in 1983, at 24 years old. I still have four mares up here at Nyngan by him, breeding foals. After Old Sydney Town I got into the movie and TV business and trained a lot of animals for movies and TV shows such as Five Mile Creek, Evil Angels, The Wreck of the Stinson and Dirtwater Dynasty. I used a lot of the MUSTER horses in these - all his stock were just so quiet and so trainable."

"From the day I was born, I've always had a horse. On the day I was born a mare had her first foal and I was given that foal at birth. I always liked to have a good horse and MUSTER was a very good horse!"

David Archibald's Nabinabah ASH Stud was not far from Belltrees Station and David, who had a knack for astute breeding, sent over some mares in the 1960s and bred four very influential MUSTER mares, NABINABAH GALE who had nine foals, NABINABAH RUSH who had 14 foals (one of her daughters, NABINABAH THRUSH had 15 foals), NABINABAH SENORITA who had 13 foals and the greatest MUSTER mare of all - NABINABAH COMMA who had 16 foals. These mares, who were such prolific breeders, were to skyrocket MUSTER to immortality.

Other prefixes that are included among Muster's 39 registered foals were Kyabra Stud with KYABRA MUSTER COUNTESS, KYABRA MUSTER PRINCESS and KYABRA MUSTER QUEEN, Patys had four mares by him and John Cowley's Taronga Stud had the previously mentioned two mares by MUSTER.



NABINABAH COMMA caught in relaxed mode with one of her 16 foals

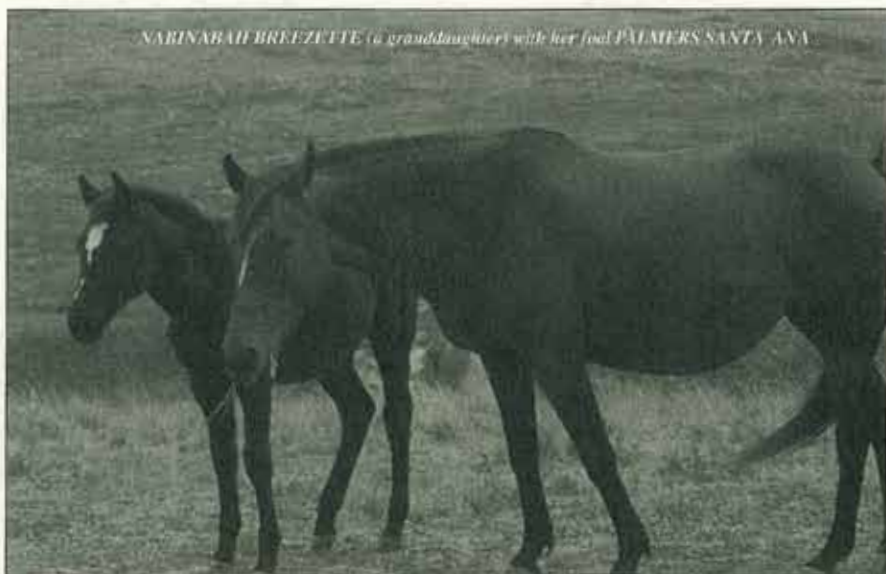
An interesting gelding by MUSTER was Jacky Palmer's PALMERS BERGER BREEZE. This horse won the Open Campdraft at the first Australian Stock Horse Society Nationals at Surfers Paradise plus numerous others. Before PALMERS BERGER BREEZE was gelded he sired one filly, GLENUGIE JUDY. PALMERS BERGER BREEZE was by MUSTER from NABINABAH SPARROW and was also bred by David Archibald.

Although it was predominantly mares in MUSTER's first generation of descendants that started him off, his daughters threw some outstanding colt foals. If we take his greatest daughter, NABINABAH COMMA we see that, besides producing some great mares, including the immortal NABINABAH BREEZETTE, she also produced stallions the quality of NABINABAH GUNNER, NABINABAH COOL GUN and BELLTREES MUSKET.

So, looking at MUSTER's generational readings, we find that in the first generation he had 39 progeny recorded; by the second generation another 177 descendants were added; a massive jump in the third generation with another 795 registered; the fourth generation gives another 1,067 descendants and, with the fifth generation just getting underway there are already 401 descendants registered. As at our last count in April, 2002 MUSTER had 2,479 descendants in the ASHS Stud Book.

You would call MUSTER's pedigree a Blue Ribbon Hunter Valley line being by Bobbie Bruce whose influence throughout the ASHS Stud Book has been massive. Bobbie Bruce was bred by the Late Ernie Cowley. Ernie had a great pony called Cadger that he had done extremely well on winning numerous stock campdrafting championships. She was generally regarded as one of the greatest mares of her era. Ernie therefore, when he went to breed from her, looked for the best possible sire to put her to and, in his wisdom, chose a horse called Bruce. This horse had been a champion performer himself and was standing at Dalwood which wasn't far from Glendonbrook. The resultant foal, Bobbie Bruce, like his parents was also a champion, unbeaten in flag races and winning six of his ten starts in campdrafts with two placings. Although only very lightly shown such was his reputation that during his long life he served 1,000 mares.

Although he died in 1967 just prior to the ASHS getting underway, in the early years of the society his progeny were



winning at everything and his bloodlines were in great demand by breeders. His influence has now spread over the length and breadth of Australia.

For instance, at the recent WA State Championships, Peter Daley and his family had three beautiful mares who took out first, second and third in the Led Mare Over 15hh. They were all by DANDILLA COMPASS who is by ELLIOTT'S CREEK CADET, who is out of a Bobbie Bruce mare, Respect. This is only one example of how the Bobbie Bruce bloodlines crop up in ASHs all over Australia. One interesting horse that carried his bloodlines was Kevin Bacon's great Showjumper, Chichester, who was out of a Bobbie Bruce mare. Chichester thrilled audiences throughout the world with his incredible jumping feats and was christened The Black Kangaroo, and is one of the Society's most famous horses. He also represented Australia at the Olympic Games.

Bobbie Bruce was by Bruce, a racing pony/Thoroughbred and out of Cadger, who was by Sylvander out of Bonnie. MUSTER's dam Mopsy, being by Cool Bruce by Bruce gives MUSTER a double cross of Bruce. Babette, the dam of Mopsy was by Serene who was by Cecil and out of an E Cohen Mare.

Bruce was by Moorefield, an Australian Thoroughbred born in 1889. Moorefield was a successful racehorse winning the AJC The Shorts in 1893 and The AJC Villiers Stakes in 1894. Cadger was by Sylvander who was by Silvius who won the MVRC Moonee Valley Cup, The VRC CB Fisher Plate and The VRC Melbourne Stakes. These races were from 10 to 12 furlongs, which are middle distance races. Silvius's mother not only produced him but another good galloper called Ben Lomond.

Cadger's dam, Bonnie was just as interesting as she carried Docken blood, which was pony bloodlines. It is unlikely that Bonnie was by the imported pony Docken himself but more likely by one of his sons. So like all stallions that have had the capacity to pass on greatness, MUSTER has the help of some very successful horses behind him.

Many people have always thought that for a stallion to get the number of descendants to have a major influence in The Australian Stock Horse Society Stud Book, he needed good sire sons to do it. But MUSTER has thrown the cat amongst the pigeons as it is his powerful daughters who have kept his influence to the fore. A.



Left: A grandson of MUSTER, NABINABAH GUNNER from the famous NABINABAH COMMA family