



REGAL ASH Reg: 333

"REGAL was an exceptional station horse, the first horse you'd catch," recalls Ray Thomas, son of REGAL's owner, the Late Alf Thomas of Glendonbrook.

"If you were riding in the bush he would never put you in a rabbit hole and he could really walk. When I see his great grandson, BOOERIE CREEK FLYING STAR at rodeos today walking along it reminds me of the way REGAL used to motor. They are such good walkers."

"Dad first noticed REGAL working as a young horse at Maitland Abattoirs with well known local stockman, Des Passfield riding him and Dad took a fancy to him. At the time I had a terrific old horse called Tony, that I campdrafted, who was by Bignells Radiant and REGAL's mother was also by Bignells Radiant so that added to the appeal. Dad purchased him in 1967 from his breeder, Len Digby, when he was three or four years old and we had him all his life. He died when he was 19 years old with cancer in the spleen, that was a bad day for Dad who thought a lot of him."

"The REGAL foals were exceptional to break in, three rides and you were out doing your work on them."

	Serene	Cecil
		The Blanche
Serenity		Harvat
	Harvat Mare	Unknown Dam
REGAL (FS) ASH Reg: 333		Radium
	Bignells Radiant	Mac Whites Dawn
LADY RADIANT		Bruce
	Bonnie	Dolly

"I think one of the most disappointing times for Dad was in 1971 when I was picked to compete at Sydney Royal in the campdraft and I was going to ride REGAL. He had just won an open campdraft and was going very well. We were doing cattle work out in some rough country prior to heading for Sydney and I galloped through a drain on him and he blew up in the hocks and couldn't go. It was a bitter blow for Dad and I ended up getting my old horse, Tony, out of the

paddock to compete. He was 23 years old but he didn't let me down getting a score every round."

"REGAL probably only competed for two or three seasons at campdrafting. He certainly wasn't over campaigned."

I remembered when we were classifying in the Eastern Branch back in the seventies and we called at Emerald Hill, Glendonbrook, Alf Thomas' property, and he



Above: REGAL at home at Glendonbrook

Right: Ray Thomas with RADIOS a son of REGAL, who is the sire of HOMEVIEW FLIGHT, the dam of BOGGERIE CREEK FLYING STAR

Below: Andrew Thomas on ROBS TIFFANY by REGAL at Coolah Rodeo in January 1992



mare we ever had. She was exceptional cutting out in the yard. Unfortunately, we lost her with colic in 1992. My daughter, Kate, who was 15 or 16 at the time, had won her last three junior campdrafts on her at Gresford, Cessnock and Stroud. It was a tremendous loss!"

To promote The Stock Horse Society in the early days, the Eastern Branch took a team of demonstration horses to Wyong Show. REGAL was used in this performance to demonstrate the Australian Stock Horse type.

In the Hunter Valley, if you drew a triangle from Maitland to Gresford and Gresford to

Singleton and then back to Maitland, only quite a small area, you would pick up the birthplace of some very influential Australian Stock Horses including Bobbie Bruce, REALITY, Bignells Radiant, Dinkum and REGAL, who was born at Rosebrook, would also come into this band. It is interesting to note that Alf Thomas and Ernie Cowley were very close neighbours and Ernie had allowed Alf Thomas, as a young man, to ride the legendary Bobbie Bruce in a flag race.

When you look at REGAL's pedigree it is hard to fault. His dam line is outstanding, not only because of the foals his dam and granddam were able to produce but the mares were outstanding performers themselves. LADY RADIANT, the dam of REGAL, is a Foundation Mare of the ASH Society producing eight foals, seven of which were registered with the ASH Society. At 4th April 2005 she has 1,698 descendants, placing her in the top ten Foundation Mares. Her registered foals were BLUE by Bobbie Bruce, a grey gelding, registered to Harold Willard that was an outstanding Stock Horse type and great campdrafter. He was shown with great success by the Willard Family and Harold's daughter, Heather Mitchell and her family. BLUE, before he was gelded, produced one foal that was registered as LISTERS DELL. This mare appears in the breeding of some of Ken Rumbel's Wiljohn horses. Her second foal was the well known

sire, MY BOBBY (78 registered progeny) also by Bobbie Bruce. This horse was registered very early in the Society's history carrying the Registration Number 1230. Her third foal was another grey gelding by Bobbie Bruce called PRIESTLEYS SNOW. John Priestley, who campdrafted Snow with outstanding success, was quite tall and Snow was only about 14 hands but this didn't stop them from being one of the most formidable combinations of their era. REGAL was the next foal and unlike the first three, who were by Bobbie Bruce, he was by Serenity, a horse bred by George McMullin of Rouchel. Her next foal MY RADIANT was by Van Harr a Thoroughbred stallion by Prince Nearway who stood at Maitland. He was also a successful sire with 26 registered ASH progeny. Her last two registered foals were two fillies, DIGBYS BONNIE by EMERALD HILL BRIGHT BOBBY a son of Bobbie Bruce and IMA LADY who was by a horse called Bango who was by Barney. So REGAL was very well related. As I said earlier, LADY RADIANT was not only a great broodmare but a great performer herself. Harold Willard described her as the greatest pick-up mare he ever rode. In an interview in 1999 Harold said, "She was very fast and easy to control, she would race straight into position to pick up and when the rider was taken off, would drop back into a walk to let her rider down."

As Ray Thomas reminded me, in those days they weren't picking up in small arenas, like today, but in the space of the whole showground and on a grass (usually hard) surface.

Len Digby, who bred LADY RADIANT and also owned her dam Bonnie, lived at Rosebrook where the well known Willard family lived. Len gave LADY RADIANT to the Willard family to show but not before she had had seven years' good steady work. This paid dividends as at her first outing at a show she won the led class and at her first outing at a campdraft at Branxton Show she was also the winner. During her career, LADY RADIANT was to win two campdrafts on the one day, twice, once at Kempsey and the other time at Muswellbrook.

LADY RADIANT's dam Bonnie was a top showjumper ridden by Len Digby, the breeder of all these great horses. It is noted that at two consecutive Dungog Shows, Bonnie won every jumping event on the programme. Bonnie's specialist jumping event was the water jump and at one show, to win, she leapt a massive 29 feet one inch but her success was not confined to jumping as she also placed second in her first run in a campdraft with the legendary Jacky Martin [the Black Prince] on board. Bonnie was by Bruce, the sire of Bobbie

Bruce and out of Dolly who was by All Gold. When Bonnie was bred to Bignells Radiant, the winner of 45 open campdrafts, the resultant foal couldn't help but be good and of course that was the case with LADY RADIANT. Bignells Radiant was by Radium out of Mac Whites Dawn who was by a Taylors Saladin sire that also introduced the Saladin line into REGAL's breeding. Mac Whites Dawn was out of a very influential mare, Silver Girl who was the dam of the well known sire, Dinkum. Silver Girl was by the Thoroughbred horse Grand Guard.

On the sire's side, REGAL was by Serenity, a horse bred by the Late George McMullin of Rouchel. I spoke to Brian Brooker, George McMullin's nephew, who was able to give me the following information.

"Serenity was a chestnut baldy", said Brian, "with a white roan patch under the girth. The only other horse I saw with markings like that was your old polocrosse pony, J STAR IMPACT. I had a lot of mares by Serenity myself but most of them were too old to classify when the Society started. Uncle George, later down the track, sold Serenity to George Joliffe at Carabolla and then I heard he sold him at the Maitland Horse Sale and I never heard who bought him but it would have been when he was in Maitland that LADY RADIANT went to him and REGAL was produced."

"Serenity was by Serene who my Uncle George McMullin purchased at a Scone Horse Sale when he was 26 or 27 years old. Belltrees Station had sent him in after using him for a number of years and they had called him Wildfire. They had purchased him from the MacCallums who also used him for some time but the MacCallum family always referred to him as The Branch Creek Horse, as that was where he was running on MacCallum's property but my Uncle George

approached the breeder of the horse, Julian McKay and asked him what his name was originally and Julian replied, Serene, so Uncle George said that's it then, I'll call him Serene. Luckily for Uncle George he got four or five seasons of foals from the multi named horse after buying him as such an old horse."

"Serenity," continued Brian, "was out of a Harvat Mare that was only called the bay mare. Harvat was a stallion that my grandfather owned. Grandfather, the first William George McMullin, purchased a mare from Widden Stud in foal to their champion sire of that day, Maltster. When she foaled, the foal was named Harvat. They were all into racing in those days, as a matter of fact the start of the local racetrack was at our front gate but mother had to go away on race days as the language at the start got a bit rough! The Harvat Mare that was the dam of Serenity was out of another unnamed mare who won one of the first campdrafts ever run at Rouchel."

Serene of course was by Cecil out of a mare called The Blanche who was by a Goldsborough colt by Goldsborough. This horse was a leading Thoroughbred sire at the end of the 1800s standing at the famous property, Tocal, which is today an Agricultural College.

Ray Thomas pointed out to me that there was some line breeding in REGAL similar to REALITY. They were both out of mares that were by Bignells Radiant and on the sire's side REALITY goes back to Cecil through Dimray and Radium where REGAL goes back to Cecil through Serenity and Serene.

Brian Brooker also explains the influence that Serene with Harvat mares has had on the Society.

"My Uncle, Sir Alistair McMullen bred Slumber who was by Serene out of a Harvat

Mare and he is the sire of Bubielt who is the dam of Foundation Stallion, BALD HILLS ECHO. Another Serene X Harvat Mare stallion was Tranquil, who was the sire of Foundation Mare, SCRUMLO NITA. I also need to add that my mother spent a lot of time in the dictionary trying to find similar names to Serene hence Slumber and Tranquil."

REGAL was able to produce foals that were to carry on these very strong genetics. His most successful sire son was RADIUM BRUCE [78 progeny]. This horse was bred by Alf Thomas who sold him and he went on to be a successful campdrafter. BOBBY REGAL [25 progeny] was a full brother to RADIUM BRUCE and also proved a successful sire. Another successful REGAL sire was RADIUS [36 progeny] who is the sire of HOMEVIEW FLIGHT the dam of the outstanding present day horse, BOOERIE CREEK FLYING STAR [48] and his brother BOOERIE CREEK FLYING MINSTREL [14].

"We sold DONRAY, another REGAL colt, to Kevin Bacon and this horse proved a good sire for the K Mar Stud in Queensland being the sire of K MAR CHARLIE RAY [79]," said Ray Thomas.

REGAL BRUCE [17] was another sire and REGAL GIFT [19] out of the Impact mare, RAYS GIFT, proved a good sire for Paul Ireland. REGAL was also the sire of REGAL JOHANNA the dam of the Holz's great sire, NEVLYN JOSEPH.

REGAL was a sire that was never over campaigned as a campdrafter or over advertised as a sire, but it is interesting to note that now, thirty years down the track, his progeny have lifted him to Foundation Stallion status, whereas a lot of the more fashionable sires of that era have not met with anywhere near his success. REGAL's success today is being cemented not only through his colts but through some very good mares. 🐾

Left: Ray Thomas with his great horse Tony, who never lost a beast at Sydney Royal. By Bignells Radiant he steered Alf Thomas to REGAL who was out of a Bignells Radiant mare. Right: Allan Ward puts the blue ribbon on Ray Thomas and ROBS TRILBY by REGAL winner of the Singleton Open Campdraft. 2nd Harold Willard on MARSHDALE SWIFT, Geoff Hand (Midge), Ken Brown on BENJIE with Judge Wally McLoughlin.

