



VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE

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The North Coast [NSW] has produced an endless string of Champion horses, horsemen and horsewomen. Not least amongst these is the Fahey family of Upper Lansdowne. The late Tom Fahey was renowned throughout his life for his top horses and his son, John, went on to represent Australia on numerous occasions for Showjumping, including the Olympic Games where he jumped off for the bronze medal. They, however, were horsemen who could turn their hands to any type of riding and, when they would do

	Kenray	Radium II
	Wisemantles Ken Radium	Miss Kenlock
	X Ray	Radium
	VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE (FS) ASH Reg: 761	Black Bess
	Tony	Bridgeburn
	Miss Luke	Joker Mare
	Belltrees Station Mare	



John Fahey with one of Master Luke's greatest performers VALENTINE STUD SORRENTO

the show circuit that stretched from the Far North in Queensland to Victoria, on their truck were not just jumping horses but horses that could win a campdraft, a hack, the sporting events and riding classes.

In 1966 Tom Fahey bred two colts, VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE and VALENTINE STUD TRIGGER HILL. He kept both of these as sires.

"Dad broke Master Luke in," recalls John Fahey, "and as a three year old he won the Open Campdraft at Wauchope. When you rode him you felt like you were sitting in a lounge chair and he was brilliantly clever. He had only had two or three runs when Dad and I went to Tamworth to get some winter hay and we left Master Luke with a hessian rug under his water proof rug at home in the yard. The hessian rug must have come adrift, frightened him and we think he ran into the fence but the upshot was he had a big knee. The knee wasn't healing right so we took him to renowned vet, Percy Sykes, in Sydney, who X-rayed the knee and found it had a slab fracture. This left him with a stiff

knee. You could ride him but he was never sound enough to perform."

VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE must have really impressed at his few outings as he was to later sire 239 registered progeny which puts him in the top line of producing stallions.

"There were always 30 or more mares running around the dairy during the breeding season," said John.

If there is such a thing, the breeding of VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE is almost pure North Coast [NSW] Australian Stock Horse breeding. As we look back through our records we realise that some of our most powerful genetics came from this region. VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE was a very popular sire during his lifetime with his 239 registered progeny which makes him one of the most sought after sires of his era.

His sire, Wisemantles Ken Radium, was born many years prior to the formation of The Australian Stock Horse Society,

probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s but still managed to sire three excellent stallions that were later classified, the Foundation Stallion VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE [239 progeny], Jack Hope's great stallion, INTERVIEW [61 progeny] one of the greatest campdrafters ever seen on the North Coast; and Les Forbes' SHANNON [47 progeny]. He was also the sire of MENZIES JACKO [29 progeny], GLENVILLE ANDI [21 progeny] and the great mare, LIMBRI who was the dam of successful sire WINLALEY JACKY BRUCE [41 progeny] and his full brothers KEMPTON PARK [18 progeny] and KEMPTON PARK CECIL JNR [18]. Another notable mare by Wisemantles Ken Radium was VALENTINE STUD BREEZE who was the dam of TAREE TOM [49 progeny] and BATES LITTLE MASTER [5 progeny]. Both these foals were line bred being by VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE who was also by Wisemantles Ken Radium. This mare was later purchased by Wilbur Bennett from Silkstone in Queensland who, in an interesting letter to me, said, "While the Ken Radium horses were brilliant some of them were very highly strung."

John Fahey can remember Ken Wisemantle running second in the Australian Campdrafting Championships at Wingham on Wisemantles Ken Radium.

"Ken was a very neat rider who never wore spurs but one day when legendary rider Jacky Martin jumped on the horse and thought he would give him a run with spurs, Ken Radium showed his displeasure by taking the bit and running off with him."

Wisemantles Ken Radium was by Kenray out of the outstanding Radium mare, X Ray. In a document compiled by Mr WG (Glen) Wisemantle in March 1964, Glen, who rode both X Ray and Radium II, reported, "X Ray won many campdrafts and two cups including one at the Sydney Royal in the Interstate Campdraft in 1936. She also won campdrafts at the following places - Nabitac, Gloucester, Bulahdelah, Taree, Wingham and Tamworth [1935]. X Ray was by Radium out of Black Bess by Australia."

Kenray was by Radium II, a horse which figures very prominently in our most influential sire, ABBEY, and out of the mare, Miss Kenlock.

In the same document compiled by Glen Wisemantle the following information is supplied, "Radium II was foaled in November 1926. He won his first Open Campdraft at Bulahdelah in 1931. His sire was Radium and Radium II was out of Molly by Zaraff who was by Zulu, who won the Melbourne Cup. Molly was out of an Eclipse mare. Radium II was a winner of five cups including one at the Sydney Royal. He won the Open Campdraft at

Quirindi with a score of 199 points in two runs in 1934. He won drafts at Nablac in 1932/33/35/36/37, Bulahdelah in 1931/33/34/35, Dungog 1933/34/35, Gloucester 1934/35/36, Taree 1937, Wingham 1933/35/36, Kempsey 1935/36, Maitland 1934 and Quirindi 1934/35. In March 1938 whilst competing in an Open Campdraft at Taree Show, he broke his leg and in spite of all efforts to repair the break, he had to be destroyed on 29th June 1938".

In an interview with Jack Hope owner/rider of INTERVIEW, in 2002,

The dam's side is a story in itself as well. Miss Luke was a brilliant mare herself who, after only being broken in six months, at one Taree Show won, in the space of a couple of hours, the Maiden Campdraft, the Flag and Bending Races and the Pony High Jump clearing 6 feet. She was by a well known North Coast sire called Tony.

"Dad bought Tony for 200 pounds, (\$400) I think from the Wisemantles when I was quite young," said John Fahey, "I remember seeing a photo of me on him when I was about two years old. They had been using him to catch mickey cattle

leading score at that time was 96 points, Dad took a Devon steer and went on to win the campdraft with 98 points. There were a heap of very good horses by him around the Hastings [River], John Henry had Dude and Didgeridoo, Collie Coombs had a couple and we had a few including Valentine."

When John mentions Valentine I say to him, "I think Valentine was the greatest pony I ever saw," and John replies, "It is funny that you should say that because I don't know how many people have said that to me over the years; as a matter of fact a lot of people say he is the greatest

A story regarding Zulu, the winner of the 1881 Melbourne Cup carrying 9 stone, who is a grandsire of Radium II on the dam's side is worth noting; Zulu, to compete in the Melbourne Cup, was led from Taree to Melbourne behind a sulky to take part in the race. They certainly bred them tough in those days!

he said, "As a matter of fact I don't think there was much between Radium and Radium II," and when you look at Radium II's performances it is hard to disagree.

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So the sire's side of VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE is filled with Champion cattle horses and a very heavy dose of Radium breeding.

John Fahey with some of his horses including VALENTINE STUD GOLDEN LUKE, VALENTINE STUD SORRENTO and VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE (far right).

and, being a stallion, he wasn't averse to grabbing hold of them as they'd be hunting the cattle down. This resulted in them having to put a muzzle on him when they campdrafted him in the showing so that he couldn't do the same. Dad was riding him at home after he bought him and was getting cattle in and Tony went to latch on to one. Dad had the butt of his whip and meant to hit him on the nose to get him off but in the melee he mis-cued and accidentally hit him in the eye. This frightened Tony and he started to spin. Dad yelled at him till he stopped spinning and after that, if he ever went to grab a beast, if you yelled at him he would stop."

"Tony was like a cat," continues John, "he was only a pony - 14 hands, a bay with black points but at one Taree Show when Dad rode on to the camp on him the

horse they have ever seen!"

My memories go back to when I was a teenager and John Fahey would have been a teenager competing at Maitland Show. John would win the Open and Champion Pony Hack, then John would win the Champion Boy Rider but that was only the warm up as he would then win the Peg events, the Open Campdraft and some of the Open Jumps!

"Valentine won the Station Pony at Sydney Royal on 11 occasions," said John, "I rode him the first year and then for the next 10 times he had different riders, he won the World Championship Campdraft at Sydney on four occasions, the Reserve Champion Pony Hack twice and the Open Show Pony Hunter. He was Champion Pony Hack at Brisbane Royal twice. Everything he did he thrived on but he became a little wary of





VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE. John competing on VALENTINE STUD MASTER MIND by Master Luke, Valentine competing at Sydney Royal in 1957

jumping after his legs slipped out from under him while competing at Comboyne Show one year. Fiona Hyem had a great jumping pony called Stormy and one year at Maitland Show there were four Open Showjumping competitions, she won two on Stormy and I won the other two on Valentine."

This was no mean feat as also competing at that show was Kevin Bacon of International fame and the Gooch Brothers from Bulahdelah.

I once asked the late Tom Fahey what he attributed Valentine's great all round versatility to and he replied, "When Valentine was broken in, John rode him to school and, like a lot of young fellows, there was nothing he didn't try to do with him and I think it was this that developed him into such a brilliant all round horse."

Obviously the Faheys thought Valentine was something very special as they named their stud after him.

Tony, although only being a pony, was

by an imported Thoroughbred called Bridgeburn and was out of a Joker mare.

Miss Luke was out of a Belltrees Station mare whose exact breeding is unknown.

VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE was able to influence the stud book not only through his sire line but also through the mare line. Successful sires by him were TANNERS ATLAS (55 progeny), TALISMAN MASTER JACK (49), TAREE TOM (49), VALENTINE STUD MASTER PIECE (33), MITCHELL ROSE LITTLE LUKE (31 PROGENY), ELITE JUBILEE (18), ROCKDALE FLUKE (17), KINCHELA LUKE (14), LUKES ECHO (13) and VALENTINE STUD MASTER MIND (13). Mares by him also produced sires including STANTON STUD PERSONALITY, who produced STANTON STUD PROSPERITY (51 progeny) plus the great broodmare BROWN SUSIE LUKE, dam of BROWN MY LUKE (54 progeny) and BROWN MYGIFT, winner of the National Maturity.

One of Master Luke's greatest performers was the great jumping horse, VALENTINE STUD SORRENTO who won almost \$200,000 and three Volvo cars in a great Showjumping career.

DRAGON HEART, who is mentioned in a feature article in this journal, is a grandson of this great, versatile sire.

VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE has earned his place in Australian Stock Horse history as a Foundation Sire and, like so many other Foundation Sires, is no fluke. His background consists of numerous champion horses who were performed by many champion horsemen to bring out their incredible ability in a wide range of events. VALENTINE STUD MASTER LUKE is a tribute to his breeder, the late Tom Fahey, who was one of the main men on the Lower North Coast who helped organise classification days in the early years of the Society to make sure that Australia's great breed of horse would be remembered in years to come by being recorded as a breed. 🐾



A family affair - (l-r) Tom Fahey on VALENTINE STUD LUKIE, John Fahey on VALENTINE STUD SORRENTO, Tim Fahey on Valentine Stud Lukearno and Nic Fahey on Valentine Stud Lucky Luke, Judge Tom Rose on Valentine who took out Reserve Champion Pony Hack