

FOUNDATION SIRE

BALD HILLS

ECHO

ASH REG 7881

BY JOY POOLE (OAM)

Handwritten notes scribbled on sheets of paper, stored away for more than half a century, stories whispered over campfires, tales of horses and their breeding and performances drifting down from days gone by, told, embellished and left to drift on for a new generation of story tellers to repeat; at times it becomes hard to divide the fact from the fiction and so it is with the story of BALD HILLS ECHO, but there is one constant in all the stories of this horse, whether written or spoken, "He carried three crosses of Cecil!"

BALD HILLS ECHO was foaled in 1957 and was bred by legendary breeder and rider, Alex Wiseman. Manager, for many years, of the famous 'Belltrees Station', Alex was to play a significant role in The Australian Stock Horse Society, as many of the horses he bred were to be part of the foundations of the fledgling Society. He is responsible for breeding two Foundation Stallions, BALD HILLS ECHO and MUSTER and other prominent stallions such as THE RINGER and MOOREBANK BOBBY. His mares also played an important role. It was then, no wonder, that when master breeder, Ventry McLennan was looking for a colt he should seek one from Alex and the resultant horse was BALD HILLS ECHO.

Maxine Brooks (Nee McLennan) remembers the following about BALD HILLS ECHO, "He was a very athletic horse, with a magnificent head, sculptured like an Arab, and beautiful big soft eyes which he passed on to his progeny."

The McLennans used him with some of their mares including the Foundation Mare, YARRANOO BANGLES. From the first mating she produced, in 1960 an outstanding horse known as Sheedys Radar. Radar was used

BALD HILLS HOSTESS



BALD HILLS ECHO

by BALD HILLS ECHO were Mexico and Kentucky who proved great jumping horses for the Phelans.

Maxine reports an incredible story that happened when her father was riding BALD HILLS ECHO.

"Dad was riding BALD HILLS ECHO through the property when a Thoroughbred stallion that was being agisted at the time, came out of a creek from behind bushes and charged Dad on Echo. He caught Dad by the shoulder pad of his coat, yanked

1st	2nd	3rd
		The King
	Echo	Motte
Playboy		Bean Boy
	Brown Bess	Unknown Dam
BALD HILLS ECHO		
(NS) ASLT Reg. 7881		
		Wildfire
	Shumber	Harzat Mare
Bubblet		
		Bubbles



Owner, Peter McNaughton riding Amac Moonshine.

as a sire with a couple of mares but Ventry decided to geld him as he thought he paddled a little bit. Unfortunately, Radar was gelded before any of his foals were broken in. Ventry was later to admit this was one of the greatest mistakes he ever made as two of the mares he produced were both outstanding - YARRANOO BELLE and YARRANOO STAR; the latter mare being the dam of STAR BLACK MINSTRIL. Sheedys Radar was to give Maxine Brooks her first Royal Show win and he was to prove an outstanding horse, winning ribbons from Queensland through New South Wales and Victoria to South Australia.

YARRANOO BANGLES' 1961 foal by BALD HILLS ECHO was a mare called Gem who is the dam of TENERIFFE VENTRY who produced good horses on the Tableland. Her 1962 and 1963 foals



MELROSE CUMQUAT

him off the horse and he was fighting Echo over the top of Dad on the ground. Echo hit out for home with the other stallion in hot pursuit. Dad's sons were fencing at the time and Echo was able to race through the gateway where they were working and escape the other stallion! Echo was always wary of anyone cantering up behind after that."

There's an old saying, "It's an ill wind that doesn't blow some good," and this could apply to the Turnbull Family of Ebor. The McLennans were having problems, on the NSW North Coast at Grafton, with BALD HILLS ECHO as he was inclined to itch in the semi tropical climate. Ventry had lent him to the Turnbulls at 'Bald Hills', Ebor on the New England Tablelands where the cooler climate left the horse with no effects from the itch. When Ventry decided to sell Echo, Dick Turnbull was more than happy to purchase him to breed station horses for his considerable cattle holdings.

Jennifer Maxwell (Nee Turnbull) told me, "Dad never advertised him as a sire as he reckoned the visiting mares ate too much grass. We had about half a dozen mares that went to him each year and there probably was another 14 or so that used to arrive to go to him so I estimate he served about 20 mares a year. The funny thing was, when my brother and I really started to do well campdrafting, at pony club and in the showing with his progeny everyone wanted to send mares. The only trouble was, by that time he was in his early twenties."

"We sold a couple of very good mares by him that ended up with other people's prefixes. One of these was Don MacMillan's great mare MACMILLANS RINGLET. Another great mare that went south to Brian Brunton was MELROSE CUMQUAT. My brother John, and I had a terrific mare called BALD HILLS CINDERS who was a full sister to Cumquat. John

"BALD HILLS ECHO was a very good type, plain brown, who always threw very nice types of horses. You could campdraft them and then I would hack them at the shows."

would win open campdrafts on her and then I would win the Ladies. We actually went through pony club, shows and rodeos, always with a team of horses by BALD HILLS ECHO."

"BALD HILLS ECHO was a very good type, plain brown who always threw very nice types of horses. You could campdraft them and then I would hack them at the shows. They were good all round performers that anyone could ride. They must have been easy horses as we were only kids and we rode them!"

"Another terrific one we had by Echo was BALD HILLS PILOT. He could win you a campdraft but then he also was an outstanding pony club horse. His full sister, BALD HILLS HOSTESS won the Halter Futurity at Dorrigo and a lot of hack classes. Bald Hills Checkout won drafts and was our last Echo mare to die. She passed away last year."

"Echo only had one hang-up, if he got a set on a mare he wouldn't let her in the mob. He was very choosy! Tom James, who used to work for Dad, would catch him out of the mob and go campdrafting on him. I think he won a couple of campdrafts."

"BALD HILLS ECHO was in great condition right up to his death. Ventry McLennan had made a trip up from the coast to see him. Ventry found him dead in the creek. We have no idea what killed him; he was 23 years old."

Tom James only has praise for BALD HILLS ECHO and his stock.

"I campdrafted BALD HILLS ECHO for eight or ten years," says Tom, "He was a smart horse on the camp, he really

watched a bullock and would go with it, to work it. I ran places on him, it would have been back in the late 60s and I won a campdraft at Grafton on him, I think it was probably a maiden. You could actually ride him without a bridle. Ventry McLennan broke him in and did a lovely job on him. He was also a terrific station horse. We had some very rough country to muster at

Buccarumbi which is over on the old Glen Innes Road. It was very steep country, tough on horses and dogs. There were a couple of rivers that you had to keep going in and out of, I often used Echo over there as he was extra good to ride."

When I ask Tom if he ever rode any of his progeny, Tom laughs back, "I had a team of them. Drafting was my sport. They were all good horses. I gave the mare that Don MacMillan later bought, Ringlet, three runs in maidens before he bought her. He later won a lot of open campdrafts on her.



Jennifer campdrafting on BALD HILLS HOSTESS, full sister to BALD HILLS PILOT

Unfortunately, when I retired I had to let the horses go."

When we research the breeding of BALD HILLS ECHO, we find that at times the scraps of paper disagree and the words also don't quite match what is written on the breeding of BALD HILLS ECHO's registration papers, but only on the sire's side are there discrepancies. So I will give you information that has come from Ventry McLennan's written notes at the time the horse was bought, regarding the breeding of the sireline of BALD HILLS ECHO. I find it amazing that these sheets of paper have been kept for almost 50 years, priceless treasures, in Ventry McLennan's neat copperplate hand.

Ventry has written three sheets giving the breeding of BALD HILLS ECHO, on one is the horse's pedigree, plus two sheets with notes about the breeding of horses in the pedigree which, when you look at the three sheets in conjunction, is easy to follow but when you only had the two sheets of notes, then, it is easy to see how the person writing the breeding down to register BALD HILLS ECHO, may have become confused. Did Ventry, when he sold the horse to Dick Turnbull, only pass on two sheets, which led to the incorrect breeding? We will never know. The sheet that has the pedigree written out so that it is easy to follow I obtained from Maxine Brooks, Ventry's daughter, whereas the two sheets that were notes, I obtained from Jennifer Maxwell, Dick Turnbull's daughter. Just to confuse the situation further, there is a difference in the breeding of Echo 1 supplied by Alex Wiseman to that given me in an interview by Roy Garland, who owned Echo 1 for a number of years.

BALD HILLS ECHO is definitely by Playboy and though this horse is very well bred I can't find him in any other pedigrees I have researched. Playboy was definitely by Echo bred by the Hookes of Crooks Park at Dungog. This family were great breeders of quality horses and were responsible for another foundation stallion, MYRA BRONZE. Talking to 91 year old Roy Garland in 2003 he furnished this information about Echo 1.

"In the 1920s, Arch Simpson (of Cecil fame) leased a horse called Echo from over on the coast (North Coast NSW). We sent three mares to Echo and were very impressed with the foals. We got in touch with Theo Hooke from 'Crooks Park' at Dungog who owned Echo and bought him in 1928. Later, Theo realised what a good sire Echo was and tried to buy him back but we weren't letting him go. Echo was by a horse called Almont who was by a pony stallion called The King who was champion pony stallion at Sydney Royal five years running, I believe. Almont was out of an Eclipse mare. Echo's dam, Secret, was also by Eclipse so he carried a double cross of that sought after breeding."



Brian Brunton's MELROSE CUMQUAT, sister to BALD HILLS CINDERS and Bald Hills Checkout.



John Turnbull riding BALD HILLS CINDERS, full sister to Bald Hills Checkout.

Eclipse was by Cecil.

In the hand written notes of Ventry, the Almont line is missing.

Ventry, in his notes, has the dam of Playboy as Marie who is out of a mare called Circus and by Rocket. The next line of the pedigree is not in place on the breeding sheet but on the note page it appears that Rocket may be by Beau Boy, Dam Brown Bess but even this we can't be sure of as also written there is, "Black mare, never named, extra good camp mare." Underneath in his remarks he writes, "Echo came from Hookes at Gloucester, ancestors were extra good stock and show ponies. The King and Circus mare not beaten many times in the showing for hacks and type."

As the Hookes also had property at Gloucester as well as Dungog, I think we can assume Echo 1 in the breeding is definitely the horse bought by Roy Garland. Therefore BALD HILLS ECHO had a double cross of Cecil on the sire's side.

On the dam's side there are no problems. All the information about these horses is gained from Ventry's notes. BALD HILLS ECHO's dam is Bublett. This mare was out of Bubbles, "Bubbles won many campdrafts and best type of stock horse, hacks etc. She was a half sister to Cool Dust who won the Warwick Gold Cup and campdrafts all over the state (NSW) and Queensland."

Later in his notes Ventry refers to Bubbles as being a half sister to Cool Dust's mother.

Bubbles is by Cecil out of a mare called Giro who was by a very well known horse called Goldsborough. This part of the breeding is missing from the registration papers.

"Cecil was by Red Gauntlet by Marmion, an Arab horse, bred at Thornthwaite by the Findlays" writes Ventry. This could possibly explain Maxine Brooks' comment that BALD HILLS ECHO had a head chiselled like an Arab.

Slumber, the sire of Bublett was by Wildfire. Ventry has this in his notes, "Wildfire's mother came from Queensland. She was one of the best polo mares about."

The Harvat Mare mentioned as the mother of Slumber, "was bred by the Thompsons of Widden." This is the same family of Thompsons that still conduct the famous Widden Stud today.

In his notes, Ventry also makes reference to a mare called "Peewee by a Saladin horse, bred by JJ McKay was one of the best mares he bred," but it is not clear where she comes into the equation.

As I said earlier there is one thing we are sure of and that is that BALD HILLS ECHO had three crosses of Cecil. One through Bubbles and two through Echo. My friend Nola Nicholson asked me a couple of years ago where the three crosses of Cecil came in, well Nola, it took me a while but there it is! A.