

Foundation Mare **BARONA AMY – FM** ASH Reg: 13138



'All those horses out of BARONA AMY – FM were brilliant. It's a bit hard to explain, but riding those horses was different to riding an ordinary horse.'

LASSITER (BARONA ITEM/BARONA AMY - FM), ridden by Fred Paterson. Photo: A. and E. Howell

Like only a handful of other breeders, the late B.E. (Johnny) Coombes contributed multiple Foundation Mares to the breed. His Barona stud, located in the upper Hastings Valley, New South Wales, was home to some excellent horses in the days before and after the formation of The Australian Stock Horse Society in 1971.

This article continues our recent coverage of the three Foundation Mares of the Barona stud: COMARA AMARETTE - FM (see ASHS Journal Jan/Feb 2011), BARONA AMY - FM, and BARRIS - FM. All three were predominantly thoroughbred, and were mated on a foal share basis with the stallions of Theo and Bonnie Hill's Comara stud.

BARONA AMY - FM performed well as a broodmare, with all but one of her ten progeny being sold. The Coombes family has long been a strong advocate of the thoroughbred type, and this continues today with B.E.'s son Adrian Coombes who continues to breed these lines using the Barona prefix. All three of B.E.'s sons still own Barona descendants.

Adrian said his father believed the thoroughbred to be more intelligent than the average horse and that this intelligence could be fully utilized if they were allowed to mature. 'Dad bred for quality,' said Adrian. 'He would only breed from the top two or three of his 'first string' mares. To qualify they needed type, temperament and ability. I uphold this family preference for the thoroughbred type, and what I was taught then is still what I look for in a horse. Most of them can work cattle due to their intelligence and their keenness to play a game – which can be harnessed, for example, into campdrafting.'

BARONA AMY - FM was born in 1965 at the Hill family's Yarras station and bred by the stockman Reg Noakes, a friend of B.E.'s. Frank Cleary, another long time friend of B.E.'s, recalls that B.E. bought the mare from Reg for \$400. She was a station mare, with good thoroughbred breeding on the sire's side and good campdrafting blood on the dam's side. B.E. was fortunate to know of the performance of the dam's ancestors. This line was part of local history going back to the 1870s. B.E.'s father, his uncle Johnny Coombes and his boss, Cecil John ('CJ' or 'Skinny') Lyon passed the first-hand knowledge of these horses down to him.

Herbie Tout, who was another old mate and relative of B.E. and for many years a stockman on Yarras station, broke her in. 'She was good natured and good to ride – always keen to jog, which allowed her to cover ground well', he said. In colour she was a dirty dun, with black mane and tail. These days she would be described as a

sooty buckskin, as she had no dorsal stripe or primitive markings. Theo Hill recalls her as, 'a really nice mare, standing about 15hh – and not as thoroughbred in type as most of B.E.'s horses'. Julie Tonkin (nee Hill) added that, 'She was a typical station mare in type with a very placid nature'.

Her dam was Palis (registered as Palis 02), and BARONA AMY - FM was the only foal. Herbie remembers these old horses: 'the sire at Yarras station was Mollison (by Radium II out of Molly), originally from Cooplacurripa, and he produced a number of good horses in this district.' One of these was the mare Shirley, a creamy with a black mane and tail, out of a stock mare called Maisie, a white-tailed creamy. Shirley was owned by Dick Cutler, the Yarras station manager, but bred by Cecil Lyon.

B.E.'s eldest son, Ian Coombes, delved into the family records for more history of the mare's family. Maisie was by Eclipse II (by Cecil) and out of Molly, another creamy with a black tail. Molly was a common mare name at the time, but this one was owned by CJ Lyon. B.E. believed her to be by Sovereign, a creamy with black mane and tail who was by Saladin, and out of a Stranger mare. Ian writes that, 'B.E. said Molly was a top mare of her day, but would be too small to keep up with the pace of today's horses'.

Dick Cutler loaned Shirley to Reg Noakes to breed from, which resulted in Palis. 'She was the last of many foals this old mare had', said Herbie. 'Palis was a good type and stockier than BARONA AMY - FM. In colour she was a creamy with white flowing mane and tail. She had big dapples in her summer coat and looked almost taffy then. At one time about three-quarters of the horses on Yarras station were creamies,' Herbie recalled. Mrs Hill's pairs of creamy buggy horses influenced this, as did the strong impact made by the creamy legend of this region - Saladin.

While registered as Palis, she was known as Alice. She is by the stallion Eye Look, and is the only horse in the Australian Stock Horse Stud Book by him. 'I also broke-in Palis. She went well', explained Herbie, 'but she could be intimidating. When approached with confidence she was OK.' This all makes sense, when we hear that most of the Eye Look horses were 'pretty dirty and very few were kept'.

Eye Look was bred by Vic Rogan out of a station mare, and changed hands a number of times before ending up at Brewarrina in the early 1950s. Eye Look was a liver chestnut and thought to have inherited his temperament from his (unknown) dam. Eye Look was by Bullseye, who left a number of great campdrafters and also sired the

stallion Bareye, the sire of BARRIS - FM.

BARONA AMY - FM's sire Sea Craft was a registered Thoroughbred (Seacraft, AUS, 1950) with success on the track and at stud. Brown in colour, almost black, he was well put together and had a good temperament. He is the first winner listed in the Australian Stud Book of the Principal race the NJC Newmarket Handicap, which was run over seven furlongs. This race is still held annually in Newcastle and is a Group 3 race for three year olds and up, over 1400m. Since his win in 1955, winners in more recent years have been Ricochet Rosie in 1991, Secret Savings in 1997 and Platinum Scissors in 2004. Seacraft raced up and down the New South Wales coast, and being a big horse, well over 16hh,

the Hastings Valley where he was bred to Palis. B.E. organised the covering in the town's cattle yards which were nearby. Keith Ian recalls that, 'Dad held Sea Craft, but he was so dangerous on the day that no-one else would stay in the yards to hold Palis. A young Keith Coombes, 14 at the time, followed his father's instructions and bravely jumped in to hold the mare.'

Sea Craft also sired nine other horses in the Australian Stock Horse Stud Book. Some of his ASH progeny have bred on: HOMELEIGH GAZELLE, MISS CALLAGNAN (dam of TONY LANGER), SEA MISS (granddam of WILLDRAFT REVEAL), and SHERWOOD JEDDA (female family of a number of Wrangler stud and Wenona stud horses).



ADIOS REFLECT (ABDUL - IS/BARONA AMY - FM)

was able to carry enormous weights.

Sea Craft was by Channel Swell (GB 1939), a grandson of Phalaris (GB 1913). Sea Craft's dam was Midsea (AUS 1940), who was by Midstream out of a NZ mare named Helensbrook. Midsea had five progeny, but Sea Craft was her only stakes winner. Again we see the thoroughbred Midstream appearing in an ASH pedigree, and most notably he is the sire of SUNDOWN - FS. B.E. considered Midstream and the stallion Wayside Inn to be the best thoroughbred sires of mares. Sea Craft's progeny performed well in the 1950s, with 10 stakes-winners and 17 stakes wins.

At one time the stallion was leased to John O'Neil, who took him to Long Flat in

Another daughter, JERI ALLI BESS, produced seven horses for the ex-Kempsey and now Victorian ABCRA stalwart, Bob McMahon. Bob recalls that, 'Neville Fahey bumped into me at the Taree cattle market one day and asked if I knew anyone wanting to buy a few good mares. I ended up with three of them by Sea Craft. We mated one of them, JERRI ALLI BESS, to our stallion who was by a Tomahawk colt out of an ABBEY - FS mare. All seven progeny were fast, handy horses. I reckon the speed they had goes back to Sea Craft.' This group of progeny was quite similar in breeding to the progeny of BARONA AMY - FM, and reinforces the successful combination of these bloodlines.

All but two of BARONA AMY - FM's



BARONA ELECT (ABDUL - IS/BARONA AMY - FM)

ten foals were by the Hill's top campdrafting sire ABDUL - IS. I am told that they were mixed in type, with some being strongly thoroughbred while others were more the ABBEY - FS type like their sire. Some of these had what might be politely described as 'strong personalities', which tested the horsemen who handled them. This 'fiery temperament' in some descendants is no surprise, when we recall the female side of BARONA AMY - FM's pedigree.

BARONA AMY - FM currently has 1,115 descendants registered in the Australian Stock Horse Stud Book. Of her ten direct progeny, four were colts. Unfortunately, one of these was killed by a stallion as a young gelding, but the remaining three colts and six mares had full Stud Book status. BARONA AMY - FM visibly influenced the coat colour of six of her foals, producing a taffy, three duns and two palominos. Her daughters have produced well, with 33 foals in total, while her sons have produced 378 foals, most of these being sired by the noted stallion ADIOS REFLECT.

The Stud Book records the prefixes of her successive progeny: Barona, Comara, Barona, Comara and so on, as this breeding partnership continued to prove its worth. Only two colts' names departed from this sequence, namely the seventh foal ADIOS REFLECT and the ninth foal LASSITER. The Barona horses received the helping hand of well-known campdrafter Bruce Hollis and his wife Kerry. As age caught up with B.E., they assisted him with the handling, breaking-in and campaigning of his horses.

The first of the BARONA AMY - FM progeny was a taffy colt, BARONA DIRECT. In colour he was just like his granddam Palis. He was broken-in by Bruce and campdrafted a bit, but while being a brilliant horse, his nature was not the best, so he went back to B.E. He was then bought by Chris Clarke from the Narrabri district. BARONA DIRECT died at a fairly young age but sired 26 foals, including SHAMROCK NADIA, winner of both the Warwick Gold Cup and the Canning Downs campdraft. He sired two stallions; the first of these, BARONA HORNET, is out of BARRIS - FM and has sired

141 progeny, with many of these for the Wilson's Glen Lee stud. The other son is CLAIRVIEW SAINT BERNARD, bred by Tony Ryan.

BARONA SELECT was BARONA AMY - FM's 1978 foal, broken-in and started by Bruce Hollis. BARONA SELECT, a dun mare, was the only BARONA AMY -FM progeny kept by B.E. In the Hollis's opinion, 'she was the best campdrafter we have had – on par with ADIOS FLO JO. She won over 200 campdrafts, including the World Championship Campdraft in Sydney, and placed in the Warwick Gold Cup and in the Canning Downs. All the family rode her and she took a number of our children to ABCRA Junior and Juvenile titles. She was the ABCRA Open Campdraft Horse in 1993.'

When B.E. passed away, he left BARONA SELECT to the Hollis family. She produced five fillies for their Adios stud, which have all been kept, and one colt which was sold to the McNamara Family in Chinchilla. This colt, ADIOS CHEROKEE, is by PALMERS NAVAJO, who is out of the champion campdraft mare NABINABAH

BREEZETTE. 'We are now breeding out of the eldest filly ADIOS SELENA', said Kerry Hollis.

Fred Paterson, a campdraft judge well-known throughout Australia, considers BARONA SELECT to be 'an unbelievably brilliant mare.' He recalls when judging her once: 'the beast fell at the first peg in the final of an Open draft. The mare just stopped and waited. When

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Campdrafting success continues for the Hollis family with this line of horses. At the Armidale campdraft in January 2011, ADIOS STYLE (DR JEKYLL/BARONA SELECT) won the Open for Tim Hollis with a score of 90.

BARONA ELECT, born in 1980, was started by Bruce and sold by B.E. to Peter Chapman. 'I knew B.E. when I was a kid as he used to ride my father's mare Dot (by Tony)', explained Peter. 'I would describe BARONA ELECT as a burnt dun with dapples, about 15hh, when I got her as a four or five year old. She had a fantastic



**Tim Hollis on ADIOS FLO JO (ADIOS REFLECT/BARONA EVONNE)
– Winning the 2002 World Championship Campdraft at Sydney Royal
Easter Show**

nature – so easy to handle’, he said. ‘We never campaigned her much but she won a number of Opens and went on to win the 1991/92 ABCRA Open Horse of the Year for the Northern Zone. We were lucky to have Allan Laurie ride her for us in all her drafting.’

She had six foals for the Chapmans, but two died. Her first foal, the stallion WAYERRI PROSPECT, is now owned by Wayne Smith and making a name for himself in the campdrafting arena. By LINDSAY, this stallion is of blue-ribbon campdrafting blood and has 49 progeny to date. He has won four Opens to date, with many placings. He also took out the Hunter Branch Futurity as a three year old. Peter has kept two colts out of BARONA ELECT, with one of these currently on the market. Peter had to put her down in 2009, just short of her 30th year.

ADIOS REFLECT was BARONA AMY - FM’s black, 1983 colt. The Hollis family bought him from B.E. and raised him, campdrafted him a bit, put him to a few mares, then later sold him to John Wilson in St George, Queensland. Phillip Kirkby then bought him to cross with his WARRENBRO OMEGA mares. ‘I didn’t know BARONA AMY - FM’, said Phillip, ‘but I am a great believer in good families, and all the horses I had seen from this family were outstanding.’

Phillip describes ADIOS REFLECT as, ‘15.3hh in size, with a very good nature. He was a gentle giant – a most switched-on, cowy horse and beautiful to handle. I didn’t mind his size, as after cattle he felt like a 14hh horse’. He was a 12 year old, Open campdrafter, but relatively unknown as a sire when bought by the Kirkby Stud. ‘He was pretty crippled when I got him, with an old injury to his hock. If I was to breed with him, I wanted to know what the horse was like. Even though he hadn’t been ridden for about six years, he went really well under saddle,’ Phillip recalled. ‘Unfortunately he died of a heart attack during the horse flu epidemic in 2007’, he said.

He has sired 337 registered progeny that are now spread all over Australia, including supreme champion winners and many top campdrafters. Amongst these are eight horses with the Adios prefix and 52 with the Kirkbys Stud prefix. Amongst his successes as a sire is winning the Sire’s Progeny campdraft at Armidale in 2002, out of a field of over twenty teams.



**COMARA GLIDE, daughter of COMARA SNOWCAT (ABDUL - IS/
BARONA AMY - FM) by STARLIGHT STUD ANCHOR. Photo: J. Tonkin**



BARONA SELECT (ABDUL - IS/BARONA AMY - FM)

The outstanding campdrafting mare ADIOS FLO JO, by ADIOS REFLECT and out of BARONA EVONNE, is the winner of multiple ABCRA campdrafting awards. From the many ADIOS REFLECT offspring, Phillip rates ADIOS FLO JO as one of the best, along with his own stallion KIRKBYS STUD ECHO. In 2003, KIRKBYS STUD ECHO won the Champion Working 3yr Old class at the ASHS National Championships in Dubbo, and the following year took out the Reserve Champion Working as a four year old. The grey stallion has already started his stud career, with 33 foals registered. A three year old son KIRKBYS STUD INDET sold for \$25,000 at the 2010 Dalby ASH Sale.

To complete the circle, ADIOS REFLECT was used by the Hollis family over a few mares and has produced the colt ADIOS

RESPECT, who in the current campdrafting season has already won a Maiden and been placed second in Novice campdrafts four times. 'Our son Tim will be standing this colt next year', said Bruce.

After seven successive matings to ABDUL - IS, B.E. put BARONA AMY - FM to one of his home bred colts, BARONA ITEM. This colt is out of B.E.'s third Foundation Mare BARRIS - FM, and is of similar breeding to ABDUL - IS, also being by ABBEY - FS. The resulting foal BARONA SECRET was bought by the Muldoon Family, and has produced five foals for them.

The other, alternate half of BARONA AMY - FM's progeny were kept and registered by the Comara stud. COMARA ABDUL STAR was the second foal, born in 1977 and sold to Mrs Win Dorse. She produced nine progeny, most of which were by Harold Willard's great campdrafter Target.

COMARA SNOWCAT was the 1979 filly. She was also a dun, but 'somewhat lighter in colour than her dam', said Julie Tonkin. 'My sister got her started and rode her a fair bit - she was a really nice mare. We have kept her first foal COMARA GLIDE (by STARLIGHT STUD ANCHOR), and now use her for breeding. COMARA SNOWCAT also took Ken (Skippy) McCarthy's eye when he was looking for a commercial broodmare.

He bought her at a Comara sale with a colt foal at foot by COMARA ABSOLUTE, and in foal again to COMARA ABLO. Skippy recalls, 'We had another five foals from her but she died foaling. They were pretty good foals and we have sold them all. The best would have been ILLAWONG KATRINA, who was beautifully quiet, and the last one ILLAWONG CATALENA, was pretty handy for my son Tim before she was sold'.

LASSITER, also by BARONA ITEM, was the ninth foal born - a 1986, palomino colt. Apparently this was a colour not favoured by B.E. so he was sold to a friend, Richard Mumford of Walcha. Richard advertised for someone to campdraft the horse, and Fred Paterson from the Gloucester district, who was looking for a good horse at the time, took up the offer. Fred, who still campdrafts, is well known in the campdrafting world as a Councillor of the ABCRA in New South Wales for some 15 years, with five of those as President.

Even though he was campdrafted under the name 'Barona Collect', B.E. disapproved of Richard using this name for ASH registration, so he was registered as LASSITER - perhaps due to his really gold colour. At 14.3hh, this horse grew on Fred and he was pleased that Richard finally offered him for sale. After some negotiation Fred

kept the horse and he developed into a competent competitor around the circuit.

Fred rode the horse to win his Maiden campdraft in the first spring that he had him; then four Novices and many placings in Opens, including a third in the Australian Championships, besides winning many Ladies and Junior campdrafts. Fred honestly and modestly declares that despite the 20 campdrafts he won, the horse had the ability to go further if he had been campaigned harder and by a better rider.

As a sire, Fred considers LASSITER's progeny to be 'not brilliant, but tidy.' He said, 'At one Bulahdelah draft, LASSITER had his progeny placed from second through to fifth in a Maiden draft.' Like me, you may be surprised to learn that only 15 foals by this stallion were ever registered. Fred explained that he never registered any of his own, as he only used them for himself and never showed. 'He actually has hundreds of progeny all over the place - he even covered a few last season at the age of 24', said Fred. 'His colour, if anything is a disadvantage to his popularity, but he was a pin-up boy on the cover of the ABCRA magazine in 1997 - perhaps that made him popular,' joked Fred.

Stephan Denison of Foster is very pleased with the two horses he bred by LASSITER. 'BUNDLEER GYPSY GIRL is ridden a lot by my daughter and rarely fails to get a score for a full course. She is an attractive buckskin - we could sell her every time we take her out', said Stephan.

'LASSITER is a beautifully natured horse - we love him', admits Fred. 'You could take him anywhere in public and

people wouldn't even realize he was a stallion, I could go around the mares with him in a headstall and bring them up to the yard. When drafting, he didn't need me - he could do the course himself. The thing about this family is that they rate the cattle so well. All those horses out of BARONA AMY - FM were brilliant. It's a bit hard to explain, but riding these horses was different to riding an ordinary horse', said Fred confidently. That's a strong endorsement coming from a horseman who has judged countless campdrafting runs.

COMARA GALA, the last of the progeny, produced two fillies for the Comara stud, and then was sold at the stud's dispersal sale to John and Liz Manchee of Narrabri, New South Wales. The Manchees use horses on their cattle and play polocrosse with the Galloping Gully Club. They were looking for a quality broodmare from which to breed good stock horses with a quiet temperament and ability. They had already used ADIOS REFLECT in their breeding program previously, so were aware of this mare's family. Unfortunately, they have not had any success to date getting a foal. However, the 20 year old mare is still going strong and is currently being joined again.

BARONA AMY - FM is typical of many of our Foundation Mares - good type, temperament and ability, depth of quality breeding, and most importantly, good progeny that have both reproduced and performed well. Today, the Barona name lives on, as Adrian Coombes is breeding as closely as possible to his father's ideals and still looking for that elusive 'good blood horse' to cross with. 🐎

PROFILE: BARONA AMY - FM

Colour Dun (Buckskin)

Height 15hh

Lifespan at least 26 years (1965-1991 approx)

Breeder Reg Noakes

Performance Station mare

Progeny Ten foals (four colts and six fillies), most notable being the stallion **ADIOS REFLECT** and the mare **BARONA SELECT**.

BARONA AMY - FM ASH Reg: 13138	sea craft 02	channel swell 02	fairway 02
			papilla 02
		midsea 02	midstream 02
			helensbrook 01
	palis 02	eye look 02	bullseye 001
			unknown
		shirley 01	mollison
			maisie