



Foundation Mare

BARRETTS CREEK BETTY – FM HSH

ASH Reg: 3548

Many Members will have heard of the great New South Wales horseman, Laurie Stephenson and his popular (now deceased) sire, BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. Only one generation back, his dam too was a champion of her day. In the late 1950s she rose from the obscurity of the bush to the winners circle at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. With only two progeny, she has achieved Foundation Mare status.

Article by Lindsay Ferguson

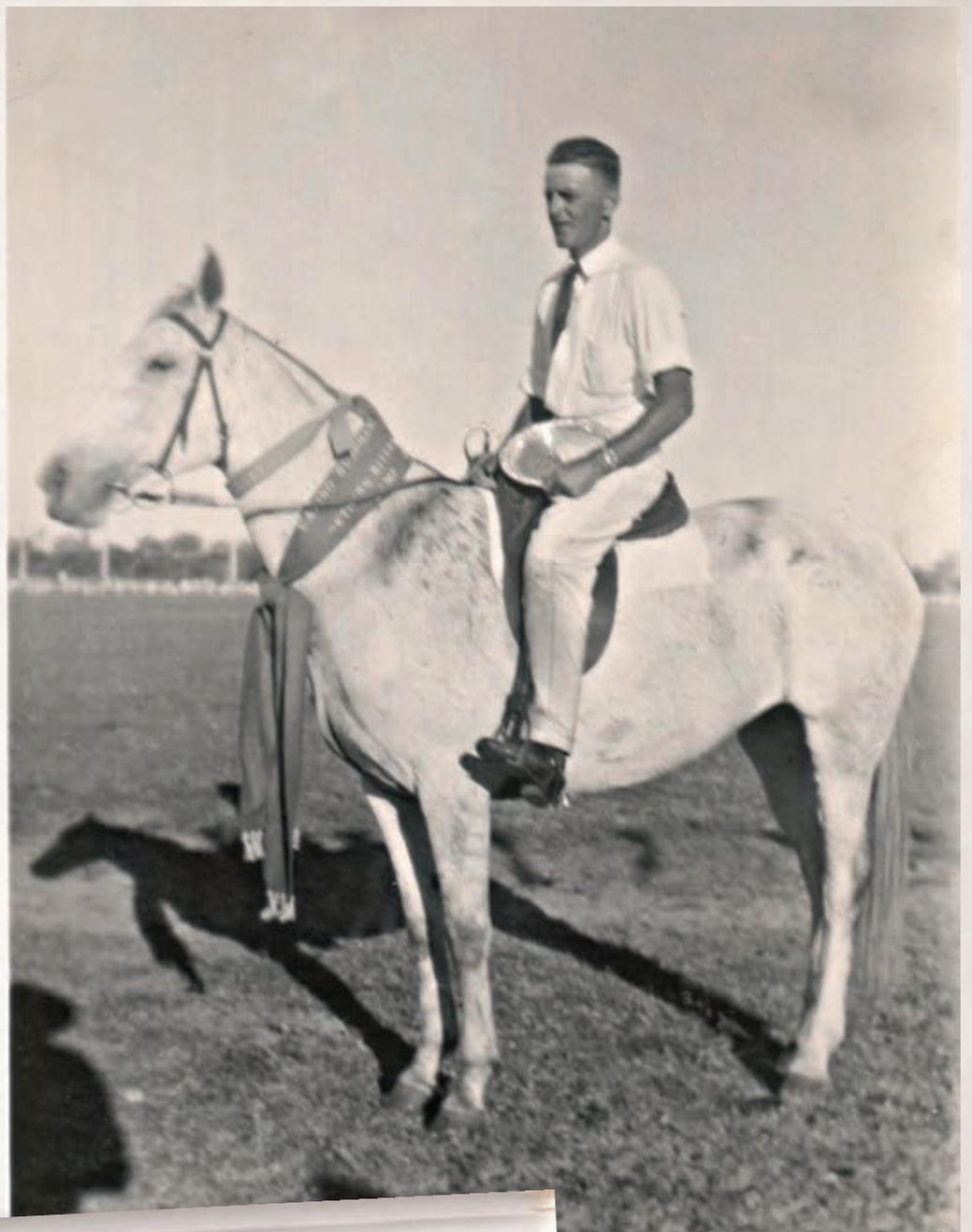
BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH has an unusual background – even for a horse of her day. Laurie's father, Charlie, managed the Barretts Creek out-station of Gordon Brook Station, an 87,000 acre grazing property near Copmanhurst on the north coast of New South Wales, which was part of the cattle empire of SJ Field Pty Ltd. Laurie commenced riding on his school pony and progressed to being a keen and successful campdraft competitor in northern New South Wales. Throughout the 1960s he worked as a 'tickie', i.e. a Department of Agriculture employee with the task of checking and dipping cattle and enforcing the government's cattle tick prevention programs. In that role he had plenty of use for a horse as he helped farmers muster their cattle.

Laurie is getting on in years now, but his memory of the day that this mare entered his life remains clear. It starts with Laurie, or 'Stevo' to his friends, at the Ulmarra rodeo in 1957. 'We all were lined up waiting for our run in the campdraft when this chap rode up to us. Laurie recalls the chap saying, 'Anyone want to buy a good, quiet horse? – if not she's going to the doggers'.

Laurie said, 'She stood about 14.2 hands; was poorly presented; not especially pretty and no-one was interested. I liked her nice quiet eye, so I told the chap I'd speak to him after the draft.' Despite the distraction, Laurie was able to focus and win that Open Campdraft on the mare Patty, owned by his uncle Clarrie Brown.

'That chap with the horse was a dinki-di, hardworking bushman named Jack Preston', said Laurie. 'He used the horse every day to get his bullocks in and while he was out snigging logs, she was tied all day to the wagon'. She was actually owned by Sidney Davidson, of Ulmarra, and was on loan to Jack. When Sidney decided to get out of horses, she too was on the market.

Laurie continued, 'After my run I rode her and was quite impressed, commenting to my dad that the mare could be all right and that we ought to buy her as we wouldn't find many as good'. But Charlie needed some convincing as she looked very plain, being unrugged and having the 'itch'. Nevertheless Charlie spoke to Sidney offering him 20 Pounds, which was accepted. 'I cleaned her up a bit then I nominated her the same day in the Consolation Campdraft.'



Opposite page: Laurie Stephenson and BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH at the 1959 Casino campdraft.

This page, top: Laurie Stephenson and BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH after winning the 1959 North Coast Championship.

This page, left: Laurie Stephenson and BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH receiving the Ethel Austin Memorial Trophy in 1966, for the second time after winning the trophy in 1964. They got to keep it.



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A Campdrafting Legacy

1. Laurie Stephenson's father Charlie and BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH after winning the 1959 World Championship Campdraft at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

2. Laurie Stephenson and STEPHENSONS STUD SERINA (BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH/CRYSTAL II) in the final of the 1997 Canning Downs Campdraft. Photo: Sue Jones

3. Gloria McCormack (nee Richardson) receiving a campdraft trophy on BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA (Oscar/ BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH). Photo courtesy of Queensland Country Life

4. Gloria McCormack (nee Richardson) riding BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA (Oscar/ BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH) at Gurley Campdraft. Photo: Barbara Beetson

5. Laurie Stephenson and BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH winning the 1988 Canning Downs campdraft at Warwick. Photo: Loraine Nott



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'She won by 25 points and I received 25 Pound for the win – so we went home with an extra horse in the truck – one that was all paid for', said Laurie with great satisfaction.

'We took her to the Northern Rivers Championship at Casino two weeks later and without a word of a lie – I could do anything with her', he said. With a string of impressive performances behind him, Laurie and his mare were invited to the 1959 World Championship campdraft in Sydney, which they won by 20 points. He took her back to the Ulmarra show and rodeo where she won the Open campdraft eight years straight. Her success continued and she mixed it with the greats of her day. At a Dorrigo campdraft she was second to ABBEY - FS HSH. She won a total of 40 Open campdrafts over her career. 'She was a delight to ride – she always gave her best', said Laurie.

Laurie had the mare classified soon after the Australian Stock Horse Society was formed in 1971. A leading north coast horseman of his time, Ventry McLennan of Yarranoo stud, was part of the classifying team. When a horse with such ability appears from nowhere, it is logical to wonder how much of this ability was inherited. Unfortunately there is no detail available on her breeding, and Laurie can only go on what he was told when he bought her. 'Her mother was a bay mare that Joe Martin, another 'tickle' at Copmanhurst, used to ride when doing

his rounds. Three colts were running with these horses that Sidney owned and Betty was the result,' he said. 'While I don't know the bloodlines, I can confidently say that she didn't have any Thoroughbred blood.'

Another horse of Laurie's was BARRETTS CREEK LITTLE BETTY, born in the early 1970s. This horse was not related to our Foundation Mare, but was named after her. She was by a Sovereign colt, owned by Peter Tindal of Copmanhurst, and out of the mare Tadpole, that was owned by David Middleton of Baryulgil, New South Wales.

As a broodmare, BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH also excelled – not in quantity but in quality. In 1970 she produced the grey filly BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA. This first foal came about through the Stephenson's family friend, Allan Rogan. In 1951 Allan was appointed as manager of the Horden family's large Santa Gertrudis cattle station "Yulgilbar", at Baryulgil on the Clarence River near Grafton, and remained there for many years.

Allan organised a service for BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH to the station stallion, Oscar. This chestnut horse was broken-in by Allan as a two year old and campdrafted by him, winning two Novices and an Open campdraft from limited starts. Oscar's pedigree shows he is by Tejano Chico and out of the mare Eva, by MESCAL - FS. Tejano Chico has left his mark on

the Australian Stock Horse breed through numerous progeny, but particularly through the stallions HUMWOOD MILLMAN - FS and Barry Murphy's stallion TEXAS CHICO.

BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA also proved to be a good campdrafter and won 22 campdrafts, including a number of Ladies campdrafts. Laurie says that she took after her dam. 'She was a really soft mare and easy to get into the correct position when campdrafting', he said. She was ridden with a lot of success by Gloria McCormack (nee Richardson) and later by Laurie Mills' daughter, Robyn.

'Stevo' had competed against ABBEY - FS HSH many times in his campdrafting career and was keen to put his mare to this stallion when she was retired. In November 1972, Laurie finally got the foal of his dreams with a colt by ABBEY - FS HSH, which he named BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. He turned out to be similar in colour, conformation and temperament to his dam. Broken-in by Jack Smyth of Kempsey, he began campdrafting as a five year old and over his career won 43 campdrafts, including 38 Opens.

In the Far North Coast Zone he was ABCRA Novice Horse of the Year in 1977, and over the next seven years was awarded Open Horse of the Year four times and Runner Up twice. He won the 1980 Warwick Gold Cup, beating Bob Palmer on the great mare NABINABAH BREEZETTE - HSH. He went on to win the 1983 Canning Downs Cut Out and the 1988 Canning Downs campdraft. He also sired the 1995 Gold Cup winner in GREENPARK ASHANTA, and numerous placegetters and winners of other major campdrafts.

BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH has been written about in this Journal on a number of occasions (*see Stephen Harris' article in Jan/Feb 2001, and the Vale article in Mar/Apr 2007*). Since then, his reputation has grown further due to the good performance of even more of his descendants. He died in 2006, but through the use of artificial insemination he continued to have progeny registered each year up until 2010, with a total of 442 direct progeny and over 1,851 descendants to date. With Laurie still taking orders for semen, these numbers will continue to grow. Now into no less than the fifth generation down from BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH, this stallion is clearly the reason for his dam achieving her Foundation Mare status, with over 1,808 descendants.

Commencing in 1982, Laurie bred from BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA producing a total of four fillies. The first



Above left: BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA (Oscar/BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH) with CLEARCHOICE CADENCE (by YARRANOO STROLLER - HSH). Above right: CLEARCHOICE CADENCE (BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA/YARRANOO STROLLER - HSH) with foal at foot, CLEARCHOICE RUFFIAN (by GLENMORE PARTNERSHIP BUSTER - HSH).

foal, BARYULGIL BLACK CRYSTAL went to Allan Rogan. She was by the BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH colt, HALLMARK STUD TRINITY. She has had two foals, registered with the BARYULGIL prefix, both by DOCS FRECKLES DUNDEE.

Laurie and his wife Elaine had registered their own Stephenson's prefix, which they used from 1980 onwards, with 28 horses eventually bearing that prefix. With a keen eye to maximising the genetics of his Foundation Mare, Laurie line-bred BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA three times to BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. Therefore, each of these foals has BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH as their grand-dam on both sides of their pedigree. The first of these was a colt that was crippled, but the second was a good mare named STEPHENSONS STUD BOSTIC, that was sold to Phillip Elliott.

The third of these was the 14.2hh, grey filly STEPHENSONS STUD BOSCA, who was sold on and ended up with John Atkins of Singleton. He tells me that he was pleased to finally own this mare that he had seen as a yearling. She had won a Maiden and six Junior campdrafts before he got her, and John did Team Penning with her at the 2006 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Like Laurie, John has a high regard for the family. 'I really like the ABBEY - FS HSH line through BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH; in fact I'm sold on them. I've bred quite a few over the last 30 years', he said. 'That entire breed has good cattle sense. They don't take much training - they seem to know just what to do.' In Tamworth, John's son Tony has now bred three foals from her in the last few years.

BARRETTS CREEK BOSCA's other filly came about because of Gloria McCormack's earlier connection with Laurie. He offered her the mare to breed from, with the stipulation that he would take the mare

directly back from the stud and hand the foal over to Gloria on weaning. Such is Laurie's concern for his horses.

As a long admirer of Maxine Brooks' horses, Gloria chose the STAR BLACK MINSTRIL - FS HSH colt, YARRANOO STROLLER - HSH. The black foal was registered as CLEARCHOICE CADENCE. 'She was a quiet and pretty little mare (14.3hh) but also a pretty cow horse with a big motor', recalls Gloria. She was used mostly by Gloria's daughter, Nicole, as a campdrafter and won some Cut Outs before becoming a broodmare.

Gloria selected stallions that were 'laid back' to complement the mare's temperament. She produced some outstanding foals, most of which have been sold and had success in campdrafting, polocrosse, Working classes and futurities. One of the fillies has produced our Foundation Mare's fourth generation in this side of the family. 'We have had a good run with ten foals from her now. She still

looks a picture and is currently in foal to KIRKBYS STUD CREDIT - HSH', said Gloria.

BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH died of old age in 1976. 'It's an amazing story', says Laurie, 'she was beautiful, without being anything to look at, as she was so athletic. And if we hadn't bought her she would have gone for dog meat.' Built like a jockey, Laurie is a tough man who has survived numerous heart operations and other illnesses since his late 40s. Allan Rogan describes him as 'a very, very successful campdrafter who is as tough as old boots.' The number of descendants that this mare has is also testimony to Laurie's skills as a studmaster and promoter of his horses.

Laurie still makes time to speak with great knowledge and passion about the horses that were his life. No doubt, like their owner/breeder and rider, this thread of grey campdrafting talent will survive through thick and thin and be woven through the fabric of our breed for a long time. 🐾

BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH

Colour: Grey **Height:** 14.2hh
Lifespan: 26yrs (circa 1950-1976)
Sire: unknown **Dam:** unknown
Breeder: Sidney Davidson, Ulmarra NSW
Performance: Bush horse and campdrafter
Progeny: 2 registered progeny, the most notable being BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH.

Editor's Note: BARRETTS CREEK BETTY - FM HSH has been granted Heritage Stock Horse status in accordance with Section 13.1.1.1 of the Heritage Stock Horse Rules and Regulations: ASHS Foundation Sires and Mares (with unknown parentage) recognised by the Society as Australian-bred will be deemed to be of 100% Australian breeding including Waler ancestry and given HSH approved status, so descendants may still be eligible for Heritage Stock Horse status.

