

Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society Australia Inc.



Dear Member,

Further to the recent Federal AGM & Council meetings I provide an update on some items and highlight the main items that were referred to State Branches for discussion.

ASIC Registration – After a considerable length of time a Certificate for registered as Australian body has been achieved in the name of Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society Australia Inc ACN 690 197 865. This now allows the Society to legally trade throughout Australia operating under the Federal constitution.

DNA Testing – Notice of Motion proposed: All foals born during the 2025 breeding season shall be DNA tested along with breeding Mares, samples can be taken by the breeder. This motion was defeated by the Council, and a further motion was approved to refer the issue of DNA testing of Mares or Filly foals to the State Branches for further consideration and feedback to the Federal Council at its next meeting. It was felt that the DNA testing of females requires more thought and input from the States branches.

Microchipping – Notice of Motion was proposed to accept microchipping as a form of identification as an alternative or addition to branding. The Council accepted to include Microchipping as a form of identification when registering a Pure-bred Clydesdale progeny within the CCHSA studbook and the microchips must be administered by a vet or certified person.

Next Gen Committee – Discussion held regarding the formation of the Next Gen Committee 18-35 years age group with it approved that each State Committee appoint 2 State representatives to the CCHSA Federal Next Gen Committee, and the Committee has the option to appoint specialised positions if required.

Stallion Inspections – Discussion was held regarding the quality of Pure-Bred stallions being passed for breeding purposes. It was proposed to increase the fees for stallion inspections to \$250 including a DNA & Vet Certification and registration certificate upgrade. Mares DNA testing to remain at \$100, with the new fees to be introduced as of the 1st July 2026. This matter requires the state branches discussion and feedback prior to the autumn 2026 Federal Council general meeting where it will be an agenda item.

Casual Day Insurance - The use of casual day insurance by a non-member of the CCHSA (2 event uses per year) increase to \$35 per event as of 1st January 2026.

Membership Fees – Discussion held regarding an increase to the current Membership fee of \$85.00 for full Members. As proposed by the Finance Committee Membership needed to increase to help cover CPI at least. Motion approved was Membership fees for Full Members increase to \$100 as of the 2026/27 financial year and cpi increases be applied to the nearest dollar annually thereafter.

Rod Bowles
Federal Secretary

Has your Personal Contact Information Changed?

It is important that if your personal contact information has changed that you contact the Federal Office to update your details. You can call the office or send through your changes to fedsec@clydesdalehorse.com.au

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CCHSA Federal President Update - Russell March



Dear Member,

Breeding livestock brings both highs and lows, much like life itself. Recently, we faced the heartbreak reality of a still-born foal—a reminder of the challenges we all encounter. We've lost friends and family, and the world seems to grow more chaotic each year. Sometimes I wonder if it simply feels that way because we're getting older and struggling to keep pace with change.

Yet, when I reflect on the great country we live in and the wonderful breed we represent, those hardships seem small compared to what we've achieved. One saying I hold close is: "Don't ruin a good today by thinking about a bad yesterday." Another favourite: "Don't worry about what you can't change." These reminders help me keep moving forward.

Our Society continues to maintain steady registration numbers, and memberships remain strong. While some states have faced administrative challenges, I'm confident we'll see a resurgence in time.

Recently, I had the honour of writing the preface for the next edition of the Stud Book. Reading past Presidents' words reminded me how resilient our Society has been. After World War I and II, the Clydesdale population fell below 3,000 worldwide. Today, we sit at around 5,000—still vulnerable, but far from extinction. Imagine the gloom of those early committees as studs disappeared and draft horses were replaced by machinery. Adelaide even built a memorial at the Royal Showgrounds, believing the breed was finished. Yet, our members rallied, and the Clydesdale lives on.

This year, we completed our National Constitution and registered our name with ASIC. We've also adapted our by-laws to better serve members across all states, though there's still work to do.

The greatest highlight, however, has been the incredible efforts of our newly formed Next Generation Committee. I was proud to stand in the ring at their first official event at the Melbourne Royal. Their achievements in such a short time show how eager our successors are to contribute. For a young group to thrive under intense scrutiny was inspiring. Some remain sceptical about the committee's value, but I urge all members to encourage, support, and contribute in any way possible. Without these future leaders, everything we work for today risks fading into history.

Looking ahead, I'm excited for next year's shows. My year begins with the National Heavy Horse Festival, which promises to be another outstanding event. The Next Generation competition will be held in NSW in 2026, and I'm eager to see what they accomplish with the support of the NSW branch.

As we approach the festive season, I wish everyone a safe and joyful Christmas. May the new year bring blessings. Hold your friends and family close, cherish today, and remember—don't worry about what you can't change.

Russell March
Federal President

CCHSA Next Gen Committee



"To encourage & foster an enjoyable environment for the Next Generation of Clydesdale enthusiasts with activities that may include but not limited to training days, feature classes, social events, & scholarships".

The inaugural Next Generation State Of Origin Competition was held at the 2025 Melbourne Royal Show.

This competition was developed to showcase the skills and knowledge of the younger generation of Clydesdale owners and breeders. This event consists of a team of two competitors representing their state. This year we had four teams with representatives from VIC, NSW and SA. Each team is to wash, plait and prepare a Clydesdale ready for the show ring along with a series of five questions to answer before entering the show ring. Each team will then show their prepared horse in front of a Clydesdale judge and will be given another question about the horse they are showing when in the ring.

This event aims to encourage our future generation of Clydesdale owners, breeders and judges into the industry. This competition is to follow the pattern of the prestigious Max Fowler Trophy around the royal shows.



The results from the 2025 Next Generation State Of Origin Competition were:

Winner: VIC Team - Claire Marriott & Rhys Kastrati

Runner Up: NSW & SA Combination Team - Montana Rheinberger and Nahni March

It was a strong field of competition between the four teams with all teams presenting their horse to a high standard.





In Search of a Dark Bay Stallion

The following is an edited extract of a talk given to the Braidwood and District Historical Society in June 2025 by Christine Ellis. It highlights the role that heavy horses have played in the colony- most directly by one horse- Alma- in Braidwood and surrounds and later on in the broader colony and Queensland

A friend told me you should always start a talk with a joke so have you heard the one about the heavy horse that walks into a 'Barn'.

Now I chose this joke because I found it funny. But it's also because it suggests a deeper significance of Alma's arrival into a barn, over 170 years ago.

While it's a pun on the word 'draught' – it's also about the arrival of a disruptive influence from 'the outside' that has the potential to unsettle a cozy thoroughbred picture, and also some of our notions of what life was like inside and outside the 'barn' which was the Braidwood District.



Just like the cartoon my story tonight is, at one level, simply about the search I undertook for more information about a heavy horse named Alma. But it's also about both Braidwood and Alma's significance in the wider colony.

In the next 20 to 30 minutes, I want to take you on my journey to finding and understanding the legacy of Alma and why our trophy for Grand Champion had to be named after him.

I suspect most of the people in this room will have known little if anything of Alma until recently, when the Braidwood and District Heavy Horse Association began to promote his name on the Cup, sponsored very generously by the Community Bank- Braidwood. For most of you it is probably as a footnote to the story of the Clarke Gang's falling out with Alma's owner The Hon. Hugh Wallace as found in Peter Smith's book, The Clark Gang.

But research opens windows – or should I say barn doors – showing us aspects of our history which are often forgotten or overlooked. So tonight, I want to tell you about my research on Alma, not simply to explain why he deserves this honour- but also because it forces us to rethink whether our existing focus on his minor role in the Clarke Gang saga may have obscured his more significant historical role in our community and colony's development.

Oscarville Pegasus (Peg) – seven times Champion Clydesdale at Sydney Royal, and bred by Paul Cooper from Cowra, was awarded the inaugural Alma Cup on 3 May this year. Which is really quite fitting given that Peg and Alma are both from the famous Old Stitcher line of Clydesdales. In Alma's case a 170 years earlier!

Let me give a quick introduction which helps you to understand where we are coming from and why we became so focussed on heavy horses in the district and having a major annual show to promote these horses.

For those who don't know me, I am one of four Directors of 'Ahern Shires and Clydesdales' – the name 'Ahern' means Master of the Horse. Our family stud has properties on either side of Braidwood at Northangera and Doughboy – the Doughboy property being the home of my son Nathan and his husband Matt (who incidentally is descended from Owen Mathews – 'The Pedlar' – who lived at Bells Creek in the Araluen Valley in the mid-1800s. In total we run between 20 to 25 horses across the two properties.

My husband Greg and I are recent arrivals to the district – 'blow-ins' from Murrumbateman – we arrived onto our property in late 2019 – barely six weeks before the bushfire tore through most of our property, and we had to evacuate. Fortunately, our house and key paddocks were saved by our local firies and mossies for whom we will be forever grateful.

Our experience was definitely a 'baptism of fire'. While we were new to the district the experience of the fires bound us tightly to our property and the community, and made it, emotionally, our home from the start. The role of the horses in this family and community drama is probably what led me to become so attached to another Clydesdale in the District, even if he had been born over 170 years ago.

Now what is it about Braidwood and famous horses? Because if you mention Braidwood and horses together, the name that most comes to mind is, of course, Archer, the inaugural and twice winner of the Melbourne Cup in 1861 and 1862.



In Search of a Dark Bay Stallion Continued

But while we all know the name of Archer - and his connection with the region is rightly commemorated in the Archer Park in Braidwood. – we have largely forgotten Alma. Now it's not hard to understand why Archer is widely known: horse racing is still going strong. But for heavy horses the tractor and the motorised truck undermined their role.

The Shire horse is now endangered; The Clydesdale numbers are below replacement levels. It would be a great pity if these long-suffering workers in the establishment of our rural communities, towns and cities just died out, forgotten except for pictures in books.

And I'm here to explain why Alma deserves the same kind of recognition as Archer. Certainly, in terms of the Braidwood District, I believe there is a strong case for arguing that, as a farming district, there should be an Alma Park.

They both stood in the district around the same time: Archer at Exeter Farm and Alma at Nithsdale. I actually imagine Archer as one of those cosseted thoroughbreds complaining about the cold in the cartoon!

I first saw an ad for Alma's services in Peter Smith's book, *The Clarke Gang*. The ad with the stylised image of a horse that looks nothing like a heavy horse! was placed in the newspapers for several seasons by The Hon Hugh Wallace for Alma's services as a stud horse. The ad mentions that Alma won the Royal Agricultural Show of England's "best two-year-old stallion of any breed for agricultural purposes"; and further notes the show-winning pedigree of his sire, "Merry Tom. The famous Gray Clydesdale".

The ad hinted at a time when heavy horses were highly prized and celebrated but it was a limited portrait of a truly fascinating and important horse – and he captured my imagination in a way I didn't expect.

At this early stage I was just fascinated in a local Clydesdale who'd been mentioned in a book. But I wanted to know more. In those early days Trove was invaluable – as was the Braidwood Museum. In a reasonably short amount of time, I had amassed a sizeable amount of information about Alma, the role he played in the district, heavy horses generally in the district, ploughing competitions, and even the suggestion (by Wallace and others) in 1862 that there be an annual show.

A notice in the Braidwood Observer and Miner's Advocate of 17 September 1862 noted that Wallace would exhibit Alma, "his imported prize draught stallion" at a show of stallions. The Observer went on to suggest that "the plan (to have an annual show) had been answered admirably in Melbourne... and in each case very small beginnings were made...but great results have been attained."

Up until this point, my research had been a fascinating (if not obsessive) pastime. While I had been involved in the Braidwood and District Heavy Horse show in 2024, we were looking at making it an annual event- and here was something we hadn't previously known. We were actually picking up a baton that had been dropped over a century ago.

I also think it's worth pausing to reflect for a moment on that little historical vignette because it allows us to catch another glimpse into the different world of the mid-19th century. Although Melbourne in 1862 – population 125,000 – was probably a dozen times the size of gold rush era Braidwood – the writers of that article clearly didn't consider the comparison unreasonable. An annual show worked for Melbourne. Therefore, Braidwood should have one!

So, going back to my research, it became clear to me that Alma gave us an important link to the district apart from the name of our Show (Braidwood and District). How important will come later.

I suggested to our group that we could organise a trophy for the Grand Champion of the 2025 Show and call it after Alma. The group agreed it was a great idea, but I wanted to provide certainty. While I had searched for information about Alma for my own interest – and was confident he was an outstanding candidate – I hadn't researched the history of all draught horses in the district. What if there was a better candidate?

Courtesy of the ad it was a bonus to know that Alma was a national champion in the old country; who his sire was; and that he had been imported by a significant local identity. But how could I be confident Wallace hadn't been 'gilding the lily'? What else could I find out to make sure we were celebrating the right horse?

Back to Trove and the museum.

There was an obvious issue at the start.



In Search of a Dark Bay Stallion Continued

The ad indicates that when Wallace bought Alma at the Carlisle Show in 1855, he was 'the two-year-old Dark Bay Stallion belonging to Robert Smith from Dumfries! When Wallace imports him and he 'safely' (according to the newspapers of the time) lands in Sydney he is now Alma. By the way, I think that name comes from the 1854 Battle of Alma in the Crimean War, where the British and French were victorious.

What else I became confident about was that Wallace brought him to Australia aboard the clipper 'Catherine Adamson' and he stood at Nithsdale from 1856 to 1865. These are all documented in various newspapers and journals over that period.

But there was more – I found he had stood at Bega and Wagga at Wallace's other properties. He was sold at various places (Camperdown, Gunnedah, Armidale) and the last ad I can find of him standing is in 1869 at Gunnedah (owner Robert Turner) when he was 16 years old. The last mention I can find of him alive is May 1878 when he was sold along with the entire contents of the Boorolong Draught Horse Stud in Armidale. And as he was definitely sold along with many of his progeny (and they were described as colts and fillies- so young horses- he was clearly still standing at the grand old age of 21!) These basic bits of his story became my research anchors. And whenever I worried that I might be going down the wrong track they helped me to see I wasn't.

There was a second, bigger issue – there were quite a few other horses with the name Alma in the period 1856 to 1878! The Battle of Alma was an important battle. Was I actually tracking the right Alma! There were many who were 'blood' horses (thoroughbreds) so they weren't relevant. But there were also a number of draughts called Alma. Even one of Alma's foals – a famous horse in his own right sold to a stud in Queensland – was "Young Alma!" There were other Almas in the wider district, one who stood at Springbank in Canberra. The advertisement for his services said that this Canberra Alma (foaled 1859) was by imported Alma (our Alma) out of an Alma mare. And when I thought I had found an ad for Alma in 1879 after the Boorolong sale it turned out to be stallion whose dam was by imported Alma.

So with my anchors (Carlisle, Wallace, imported, Clydesdale, stallion, winner, draught) in mind I searched adverts for our Alma, where he stood, his progeny, and their progeny; and then articles about other draught horses and their progeny etc until I had an exhaustive (and exhausting) feel for draughts in the District. Alma was still clearly ahead.

Incidentally, I need to tell you at this point, that long before Ancestry.com came on the scene and made family trees a common topic of discussion, horse pedigrees were being documented through official stud books! However, in Alma's case these had a limited, or a kind of 'backwards utility' because there were no official stud books in the UK before the 1870s, or in Australia for Clydesdales before 1907. And so, this meant trying to piece together linkages forward and backwards across continents and centuries. Alma seemed to slip through the cracks.

Other resources

Google Books was a great resource as it allowed me to look at rare books such as The History of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (Alexander Ramsey) where I could see the complete entries and some commentary on the results of the Carlisle Show (not just news articles) where Alma was a winner, as well as the RAS Board meeting at Carlisle- and can I say those Board members had a great time- lots of laughter and toasts. Heavy Horse Breeds and Management (Herman Biddel, et al) was essential reading to really get a feel for draughts in the old country and the debates that were had about the origin of the Clydesdale. Richard Beard the UK Editor of the Heavy Horse Herald recommended that I read The History of the Shire Horse (Keith Chivers) as it provided great context for Alma (even if he wasn't named) because it focussed on his sire Merry Tom. I mention these resources because again you never know where you might find that nugget that fills in another piece of the puzzle. In this case, a picture of Alma's sire.

To get even more information and 'certainty' I joined lots of Facebook Groups on Clydesdale horses, draught horses etc and asked the members if they had any information about Alma and Wallace. And here I want to say thank you to Ian Stewart-Koster who pointed me in some good directions. I joined regional history groups including the Historic Braidwood Facebook Group, to ask the same question – as well as seek information about later owners. I even joined the Photos of Old Carlisle Facebook Group where I found another piece of exciting information - Merry Tom- Alma's sire and the famous Grey – had a pub named after him in Kirkcambeck (near Carlisle) because he was shod by the local blacksmith whose premises were next to the pub. I'm currently tracking down a photo of Merry Tom in front of the pub.



In Search of a Dark Bay Stallion Continued

I contacted regional history societies from Armidale, Bega, Moruya, Gunnedah and of course, Braidwood.

I've also visited Nithsdale (thanks to Janey and Tim Lenehan for their generous hospitality) and been inside the stables where we believe Alma was stabled.

I hinted earlier that there was further information about Alma that was of great significance in assessing his overall importance. While I knew Alma was significant in the colony, I still didn't have proof that Wallace purchased Alma at Carlisle. It's a long way to travel to attend a Show and buy a horse. But then I found it.

And hopefully, if you still have lingering doubts that Alma is as important a horse as I am convinced, he is, this information will dispel them!

It's an important lesson that you never know where the information will come from. In this case it was in English newspapers on 'Find My Past' – another ancestry site. Yes- I used a genealogy site for humans to track down a missing bit of information about a horse.

An article was in several newspapers in 1857– two years after Alma won at the Carlisle Show. What it indicates is that Merry Tom had three colts at the Carlisle Show – one won best Clydesdale, one was commended highly, and one won best entire colt for agricultural purposes. And what was more exciting was that the article went on to say that the 'the agricultural colt was sold the same day for a handsome sum, to go to Australia, and since he arrived there the owner has refused 500 guineas for him- a sizeable amount. In fact, using a currency converter it would be conservatively valued at around \$70,000 to 80,000 in today's currency, though probably much higher.

So, the story and all its parts fitted together. I didn't just have Wallace's ad about Alma – I had a contemporary article mentioning his sire – the prize Alma won – and that he was bought on the day of the Show to go to Australia. He **was** valuable.

In the end – if this kind of ongoing search can be said to ever really end – what I have found is that, while there were many draughts in the district, Alma continued to stand at stud longer than other horses in the District and beyond – and in fact had clearly contributed to the overall improvement in the breed. Allow me to read this prescient article from the SMH 11 Feb 1856:

"The colony has during the last week received a considerable and highly valuable addition to its stock. By the Catherine Adamson there arrived a splendid brown cart stallion, aged 3 years, and named Alma. He was, as we learn, the winner of a prize at the Agricultural Show open to all England, when it was held at Carlisle. He was purchased by Hugh Wallace, Esq., of Braidwood, and his arrival will doubtless be hailed as a great boon by all breeders." (page 8).

Again, let's stop and note the real significance of the language being used here. This is not merely about some horse, one of many, arriving by ship. This is about a particular horse arriving as something of a saviour to a colony desperately in need of the horsepower needed to pull the carts and the ploughs for the colony to sustain its growth.

And the thing is, Alma retains this title – he continues to be distinguished from other horses in articles and books long after he is deceased, by the honorific of 'Imported'. He is the Alma who came to Australia. Even in the last notice I found of him, one in 1900 – 47 years after he was foaled – he is still referred to as 'Imported Alma'. Others simply followed. If that's not a saviour, it's certainly a very significant pioneer.

In total Alma was responsible for a veritable dynasty of Clydesdales in the region – I've found nearly 30 immediate descendants (and I know there's more) who went on to create their own dynasties, and nearly all mentions of them refer back to our Alma. Those descendants don't include the over 20 mares and colts that were sold with him at the Boorolong Draught Stud auction.

Now I need to raise a somewhat delicate point, known to horse breeders. A consequence of this much 'standing' in one district by a prize stallion can only go on for so long. Not because of any loss of stamina by the horse but because of the danger of what we, politely, call 'line breeding'. Once a stallion has covered all the mares in a district he's not directly related to, it's probably a good idea for the sake of genetic diversity that he moves on! And as I've mentioned he moved around NSW quite a bit.



In Search of a Dark Bay Stallion Continued

As for his genetic footprint on the breed in Australia, we also have the records to show that through his descendants this footprint extended to other states notably Queensland where his perhaps most famous progeny 'Young Alma' – described as "without exaggeration the largest stallion (17 hands and a beautiful jet black) that has ever landed in Queensland" was almost as famous as his dad!

So, we had the right horse, a champion in the ring and in the paddock, and now memorialised in the Alma Cup. I mentioned the Community Bank Braidwood's fantastic sponsorship of the Cup and the generous cash prize for the winner. I should also mention that we received great sponsorship from many other businesses and organisations for which we are grateful. Show day did see a noticeable flow on effect for business in the town which we hope we can make bigger each year. The financial support definitely puts our show on the heavy horse map – and while we aren't as big as the Melbourne Show (or its heavy horse equivalent at Werribee) yet- we attracted over 600 visitors (which probably didn't fully account for the number of children in attendance) and 40 horses on ground.

My search still continues, and while we have the Alma Cup and we recognise the important role he played in the district and beyond, I can't find where he ended up after the Boorolong Stud auction. But I'm following leads with the University of New England Archives who have a box tantalisingly titled 'draught horse pictures'. I've also been corresponding with Charlie Blomfield from Bega and his sister Denham Williams in Nimmitabel. Charlie and Denham are direct descendants of Edwin Cordeaux Blomfield who owned Boorolong where Alma was in 1878. I'm hoping they might have pictures.

I am also looking at developing a pedigree for Alma using that backwards and forwards utility I mentioned before. I like to think that this will put him back in his rightful place.

Sadly, despite my best efforts, I still have not been able to find an image of Alma! Or any of his progeny – but if I do you will know.

But let me give you a hint of what he may have looked like and introduce you to another dark bay stallion from this district.

'Mac'

McMurchie Ingleston ('Mac') a champion bred by Colin Brown from Mandurama in NSW, stood at our stud for over four years, siring about a dozen Ahern foals. Mac, like Alma, is a dark bay stallion. And like Alma, Mac was reluctantly sold after his sterling work in the Braidwood district; and, in his case, moved south to ply his charms with Victorian mares.

So, while I can't give you a picture of Alma, I can reveal that our magnificent Mac, now enjoying his mid-life without crisis in Victoria, is indeed also related to Alma (like Peg) through the Old Stitcher line. So, not a photograph of Alma but a dark bay stallion descended from the same family line. I like to think almost a living embodiment of Imported Alma!

Thankyou

SA Branch Report - State President Ross Blewit



Numbers at the Royal Adelaide Show Clydesdale Breed Classes were certainly down which was disappointing, with no colts or stallions shown. There were only 3 mares and 4 geldings shown with the Supreme Champion Clydesdale being Wheelabarraback Flash Bonnie owned by Glenquarry Clydesdale Stud. Reserve Champion Mare was Lowan Vale Yvonne shown by Lynette Fritsch. The Champion Gelding was Lowan Vale Master Angus shown by Katie l'anson and Reserve Champion Gelding was Glenquarry King Hinkley shown by Glenquarry Clydesdale Stud.

Harness classes were reasonably well supported with the Supreme Heavy Harness Exhibit being Lowan Vale Yvonne driven by Lynette Fritsch. Unfortunately, entry fees and stabling fees had increased this year and with people struggling with the high cost of feed etc, I believe this had an adverse effect on entry numbers.



Pictured Left

Royal Adelaide Show 2025 Supreme Champion Clydesdale

Wheelabarraback Flash Bonnie exhibited by the Glenquarry Clydesdale Stud



Pictured Right

Royal Adelaide Show 2025 Supreme Heavy Harness Exhibit

Lowan Vale Yvonne exhibited by the Lynette Fritch

There have been ups and downs with this year's breeding season with Glenquarry Stud having a stillborn colt born to our maiden mare but then 10 days later getting a lovely strong filly being the 2nd foal of the season. Caversham Stud had a big strong colt as their first born for the season followed by a lovely filly born a couple of weeks later. Sadly, the mare died within a matter of hours, which left them with an orphan foal needing to be hand reared. Thankfully she was a good strong foal who learned to bottle feed, was halter, lead and float trained all within 12 hours of birth! A happy ending to that story with Caversham Hazel now living at the Victor Harbour Trams with a foster Mum and being loved and adored by the general public doing their "Behind the Scenes Experience" at their stables.

Down in the south east, Wheelabarraback stud has had a strong colt foal born so far but have two mares due around Christmas along with another two mares having late foals in February. Lowan Vale Stud in Mount Gambier had 2 foals due, both born slightly prematurely, however one was probably either still born or only lived a few minutes, the other is going OK but initially needed assistance to get it feeding properly. Having foals is not always easy on the heartstrings.

Our next major shows will be the Mount Pleasant Show to be held on 21st March 2026 and the 2026 Heavy Horse Festival of South Australia to be held at Strathalbyn Polo Grounds on the 16th & 17th May 2026. Further details and class entry details for both shows will be available early in the new year. Please keep an eye out on the Clydesdale South Australia Facebook page for updates.

VIC Branch Report - State President Eileen Jorgensen



Show season has started with many schedules being submitted to our secretary to forward on to our members. Melbourne Show is now a memory with the numbers being slightly down on last year. On a positive note, we did have some new exhibitors who filled out some of our regulars who decided not to show this year. Dr Jutta Irvine was the judge and she is to be commended for the work she did throughout her time in Melbourne. She started with the Junior classes on the Saturday evening and went through to the Clydesdale Harness events on the Tuesday.

We were excited to have the inaugural Next Gen competition held on Saturday, 27 September. Barb Ford judged this event the evening before the Led classes at Melbourne Royal. The members of this group were to be commended on their participation giving us an insight into how this event may evolve with time on an Australia wide basis. Next year it is planned for the competition to be in Sydney along with the Max Fowler award. Please get behind your Next Gen members and encourage them to participate in the future. The feedback has been positive. The Junior Presentation event was held just prior to the Next Gen competition and I am proud of the work the Juniors put in to the task at hand.

The planning for the National Clydesdale & Heavy Horse Festival will be held on the weekend of January 17 & 18 is progressing well. The schedule for this event has been released with online entries now being taken. The judge for the Led Classes is Amber McLaughlin from Canada, her husband, Ray, will be judging the Harness classes.

A great day was had at the Dandenong Scottish Heritage Day with the sun out for most of the day. Mathew Trewin was the judge and freely gave comments throughout the event. Graeme Marriott has excelled at coordinating this event over many years and is to be commended for the work he does.

The Benalla Driving Day held at Moorngag was once more successful. The entrant numbers were up on last year which is amazing considering the lack of rain and the cost of attending any a horse event these days. Andrew Lavis who spent all day on the microphone explained to the public visitors what was going on with the big and little horses moving around the many obstacles that the drivers and horses had to negotiate.

Moora Working Draught Horse Muster was attended by 8 CCHSA members to compete, along with 14-day members and approximately 30 horses. Entry for the long rein classes was free. There were approximately 400 spectators. Bernie Rice judged the events with John Quinsee and Bruce Hamblin judging the Max Seamer memorial award, which was judged on horsemanship and how the horses worked. Josh Taylor did a demo loading wool onto a wagon.

The Echuca Clydesdale & Heavy Horse Showcase held in conjunction with the Steam, Iron & Trades Revival on the long weekend in June saw a small contingent 10 horses attend with CCHSA members competing in some basic driving competitions. Exhibitors put on displays for the public in uses of the Clydesdales past and present with wool loading demonstrations, super spreading, show presentation, ground tillage implements and various vehicles. Guest speaker Noel Wiltshire spoke to attendees about the wool wagon trip from Echuca to Melbourne in 1975. A great effort put in to a cold wet weekend.



The Victorian Branch is preparing for the 2026 National Clydesdale and Heavy Horse Festival, which will be held on the 17th & 18th January 2026. The event looks forward to the arrival of our International judges Ray & Amber McLaughlin from Ontario Canada. They exhibit their Clydesdales throughout Canada and US including exhibiting their 8 hitch Clydesdale team.



We invite all Clydesdale enthusiasts to the festival and look forward to catching up with everyone.

*National Clydesdale
AND
HEAVY HORSE FESTIVAL*
WERRIBEE PARK NATIONAL EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

17-18 JANUARY 2026

Get your entries in at Event Secretary
<https://eventsecretary.com.au/equestrian/21109>

International Judges



New Classes



Check out our Facebook page for more information!

National Clydesdale & Heavy Horse Festival



heavyhorsewerribee@gmail.com



QLD Branch Report - State President Bradley Wood



It is that time of the year again, I cant believe how quickly it has come around. Hopefully the breeding season has been kind to you and that those that have foals we would love to see photos of them, so Queenslanders send those photos in so we can share them with everyone on our Facebook page and Newsletter. We have not had a Newsletter since May and most of our updates have been on Facebook. We would love it if you could share any stories you have of your horses so that we can include them in our Newsletters, a newsletter is only as good at the information sent in.



Our own 23rd Junior Championships & Gelding Show was in July and judged by Andrew Marriott, it was a tremendous day with great entries, a little down on last year, out of the 34 entered 28 were exhibited. The full results can be found on our facebook page, Thank you to everyone that supported and assisted at the show and to our sponsors we could not do it without you.



Supreme Champion 2 - 3 Year Old
KJ Patriot - G & D Teatoff



Supreme Chmp Under 2 Year Old
Brookleigh Lodge Piper
S & M Clausen



Champion Gelding
Duneske Discovery
Stewart-Koster Family



Champion Junior Handler
Chelsea Smidt
Judge: Rhonda Harnell

2nd August we held a very successful training day at our president Bradley Wood's Birkwood Clydesdale Stud. The day commenced with sign in and morning tea and there was attendance of both members and non-members as well as other breeds on the day. We started the day with preparing your horse for the show ring, and show ring etiquette. We then moved on to how to correctly fit a collar and harness. Then moving on to harnessing your horse to a vehicle and learning about what types of harness and vehicles are suited, with most importantly safety in harness and how to avoid dangerous situations. Some attendees drove their horses for the first time in long reins and we were very fortunate to have members from the branch and other knowledgeable people to assist on the day.

We would like to thank all those that helped new people on the day and in particular Gary Kirchner for bringing his horse Duke along to fit the harness to and also give people that had never driven before the experience of driving a horse in different vehicles.

We would also like to thank David Martin and Graham Ehrich for sharing their knowledge and helping nervous first time drivers with their horses. We look forward to our next training day.



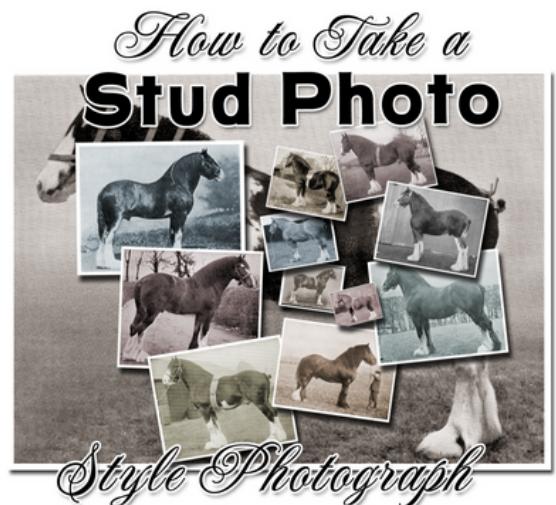
How to take a stud photo of your horse?

A glimpse through old stud photos of Clydesdales shows many consistencies in their pose over the decades and much can be learned when studying these pictures.

A glimpse at many modern stud pages on social media displays quite a different theme! Generally speaking, there are three types of photos usually taken: stud quality type, to hopefully show the animal to its optimal proportions and stance which would make a great advertisement, then paddock, casual, candid, quaint or pretty photos, and then awkward ones that some of us would rather not show off!

The problem is many people new to the breed don't really know what to look for or how and why certain photos are good but others are not- when it comes to 'studbook quality' photos. This article attempts to address that dilemma.

The advent of mobile phones as cameras has many advantages as far as being always at hand and ready, compared with a professional photographer's through-the-lens reflex cameras. The big disadvantage with mobile phone cameras is easily seen in the photo to the right: the built-in wide-angle lens can lead to great unflattering distortions of heads and perspectives when close-up photos are taken. Not only does this photo look 'dorky' at best, but the ears are aimed in two different directions. The nose is clearly chopped off and the head looks bigger than the hind legs. This is extreme, but it illustrates a point: be careful where you stand when taking what you hope will be a good stud advertisement photo or you simply will not be able to show the horse in any of its correct or ideal proportions!



Many photographers these days, both professional and amateur, stand about level with the horse's shoulder and take a directly side-on photo from there. That is not a bad idea, but it fails to be ideal in two aspects in this photo to the left. The biggest one is the singularly most important breed trait from old breed score sheets: the hock, and the ability to stand close behind with hind canons vertical and parallel. You simply cannot appreciate those traits in this angle of photo. The second aspect here is that the Clydesdale's hind legs are forward and backward. It might look OK to a beginner, but this is no help to show what should be a Clydesdale's best features.

The photo to the right, to many people looks great because the horse is looking at the camera, but they fail to notice the huge patch of shadow on the horse's neck and shoulder, and again the hind legs are still not set well enough together to be considered 'good'. One positive aspect about both those photos is that the photographer was taking them with the camera set at about level with where a horse is branded about 1 metre from the ground and not at typical 1.6-1.7 metre high eye-level of a mobile phone.



The photo above, is an improvement as far as the hind legs go, but it still does not yet show the Clydesdale to its best in that regard. It does however, show the hind canons and hocks placed where they should be: vertically below the point of the rump.



The photo to the left, has improved immensely in ideally featuring the best aspects of the hind legs, by both being taken from a point side-on but slightly behind the back legs (not level with the shoulder), and by having the sunlight such that there is slight shadow between the hind canons to help show both the close- ness and also the distinct parallel correct nature.

How to take a stud photo of your horse?



The photo above is good, but the camera is a bit higher than the previous photos, and the angle is from a bit further back, which is not necessarily such a problem, but here the sunlight comes in between the horse, so body detail disappears the hind legs (you can tell from the shadow into subtle shadows all over. It is also on the grass), and while you can see good broad hocks, wide flat canons, and good sloping pasterns, the hock definition and parallel aspect is bleached out by the brightness and lack of shadows on the feather, compared with the previous photo.

Conversely, there are times when a more front-on angled photo does have advantages when the lighting is right, such that one hind leg shows the narrowness of the hind canon bone while the other shows the breadth of it - both significant features of the breed compared with thicker round bone which is much less desirable. The photo on the next page illustrates this. A problem with this angle of photo with some horses is that a rump can appear steeper than it is, and a hind leg can appear straighter than it actually is, although neither is the case with this particular photo below which appeared on the front cover of *The Heavy Horse (UK)* in 1982.



The photo above, taken from almost the same angle, remedies the previous photo's lack of visible definition in the hind legs, but this is the shady side of the horse not badly so, but there is room for improvement.



The photo above improves the angle quite a bit, and shows the head off the shady side of the horse.



The photo above attempts to fix that, by being the sunny side of the horse, so the body shows nicely except that the mane blends into the shadows of the grandstand, and the sun is in front of the horse, so the definition between the hind canons has largely been lost.



The photo to the right takes the front-on angle even further forward and succeeds in showing the legs tremendously well from the perspective of clean joints, well-defined canons, fetlocks and coronet, straight hair, wide flat bone, and close parallel hind canons and hocks. It was taken with the camera at about knee height, but it does not show the horse's body shape or leg set as ideally as would be preferred, and it is also aimed at the shady side of the horse's body, although there is still good detail visible. Generally that angle is not a good one to show a horse at its best, although it worked well here with a particularly good horse.



How to take a stud photo of your horse?

The next photo, above right, gets most aspects pretty correctly, for a front-angled picture, only it does not really show the breadth of the hind canons and hock, only their cleanliness, and except for the depth-of-field and focus helping ears and neck sort of blend with the back-ground. A back end angle might have been better.

A greater problem with a front-on angle is shown below left, where the horses' hind canons are clearly neither vertical nor is the hock under the point of the rump-it is 'standing under' a bit, and looks post-like or the gaskins too vertical as well as looking 'sickley'. This horse should have been stood up a fresh time to put the hind legs where they needed to be, and the photo taken from a better angle, otherwise imagined faults seem to exist, the rump looks steeper and the legs look straighter than they actually are. The ears don't really tell a happy tale in this instant either!



To illustrate a point, to the right is the same horse as the previous photo. This back end angle, shows a much better hind leg set and rump as they normally exist, compared with the poorly portrayed back end in the first photo, but the hocks and hind canons still do not show as well-defined as some other photos display.



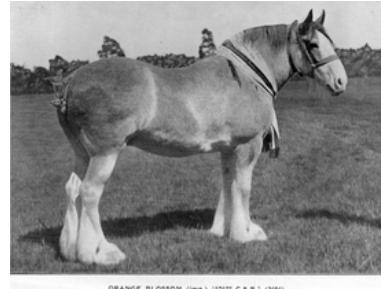
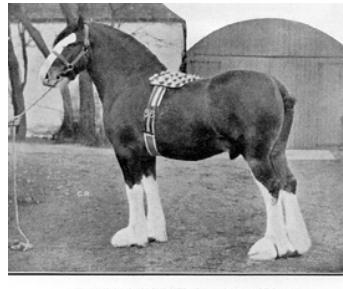
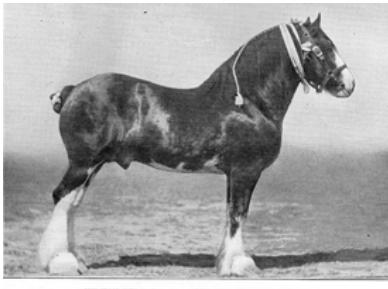
To the right is a quick brave attempt to take a nice picture, without first considering the tree growing out of the horse's head and neck, the fence post beneath the belly, the stretched out hind legs, (the hind canons are not vertical nor the hocks under the point of the rump) and it being the shady side of the horse. Where possible, taking the time, and the care, to stand and present your horses and yourself to the best angle and light for a photo, and to watch out for distracting witches hats, flower pots, trees, and power poles in the background, is well worth the effort.



Then there is the way many North American heavy horses seem to be photographed in recent decades, with very obviously tilted horizons or backgrounds, and noses high. They have their reasons for doing that but it was never a standard old way of portraying Clydesdales in Scotland, nor in Australia. To conclude, here are some historical photos taken the way breeders liked, when it was most important to their livelihood to show Clydesdales at their optimal! They were photographed when they had to hope for the best and then assess the photos after the film had been developed and printed some days later.

Not all photos will be 'perfect' or ideal, and it is still great to be able to see the casual paddock snaps as well as the better ones! If this analytical article helps a few people to be able to study their own pictures, think, and work out how to then take better standing ones for stud adverts, then it has succeeded in its aim!

Ian Stewart-Koster



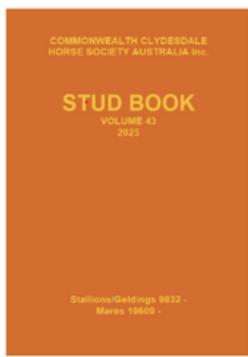
WESTON HERO (Imp. from N.E.O. (1848 N.Z.C.U.H.) (1786).
Champion, Royal Show, Adelaide, S.A., 1875.

CRAIGIE MASTERSTROKE (Imp.) (1895) C.S.B.I. (186).
Champion, Royal Show, Sydney, N.S.W., 1911 and 1914, and Reserve Champion
1912.

ORANGE BLOSSOM (Imp.) (1742) C.S.B.I. (204).
Winner of Coxcomb Cup, 1901, Royal Show, Melbourne, Victoria.
1912, 1913 and 1915.

OVERDALE (Imp.) (1880) C.S.B.I. (186).
Winner of Coxcomb Cup, 1901, Royal Show, Melbourne, Victoria.
1912.

Stud Book 43



Stud Book Volume 43 is currently being produced with some remaining content to be sent it from members for photos to be included but it is hoped it will be printed and available February/March.

This Stud Book will include 3 years of reporting.

Stud Book 43 is available for purchase at \$75.00 including postage. Many members have pre-ordered their stud book with their membership so if you have pre-ordered it will be sent out as soon as they arrive. If you would like to order a stud book you can make payment as per below:

Payment can be made by direct deposit as per the account details below:

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Find us on

Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society Australia

Check out the website for all the information you require including forms, state contact details, judges list and more....

The database is updated regularly and the search for details of horses, owners, breeding etc can be accessed via the website.

Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society Australia Inc.

Reg No. A0019631A ABN 24 748 123 650

Rod Bowles – CCHSA Federal Secretary
PO Box 1053 Bendigo Victoria 3552
Phone: 03 5442 8890

Email: fedsec@clydesdalehorse.com.au Website: www.clydesdalehorse.com.au