

MIXED EMOTIONS and TREASURED MEMORIES.

Despite the shadow of sadness cast over the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's 2015 Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting, President Darryl Paradise and his Committee are deserving of the highest possible level of compliment on the outstanding success of their efforts.

Held on Saturday November 7th, gloriously fine weather followed several patches of welcome rain during the preceding couple of weeks breathing a splash of green and freshness to the town's streetscape and racecourse, while adding a wonderfully pleasant atmosphere to the whole occasion.

For many of those who had never previously experienced the unique charm and sense of fascinating history surrounding Cooktown, even before entering the gates at the racecourse a swell of adrenalin and anticipation punctuated an air of expectation.

Judging by comment, smiles on happy faces and the wonderfully enjoyable atmosphere that prevailed throughout the afternoon of exciting Country Racing at it's best and the evening hours of music and dancing, no-one was in any way disappointed.

Despite the never-ending challenges imposed on a succession of totally voluntary Presidents, Committee members and an army of supporters through the past One hundred and thirty-eight years, the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's 2015 Cup and Bracelet Meeting added yet another resounding chapter of success to the organisation's proud history.

From a personal point of view, I ask your forgiving in what is bound to develop into countless mentions of myself and my reminiscences, with the aid of understanding the difficulty in my humble endeavours to pay tribute to at least some of the "Somehow Special Kind of People" I have been blessed to have rubbed shoulders with since Des Savage's invitation to call the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Ampol Cup Meeting in August of 1981, without involving myself.

Fair to suggest my late afternoon "Hose in One Hand and Stubby in the Other" reminiscence sessions in the back garden, invariably begin with precious memories of the warmth of hospitality I was afforded by Des and Gloria Savage and their two school aged children Wade and Jackie, all those years ago.

Without detailing the totally unplanned experiences and good fortune of a treasured relationship with the Laura, Coen, Chillagoe and Almaden Amateur Turf Clubs that transpired through the nineteen years following Des' original invitation, I so often reflect on those memories with a question in my mind as to what I ever really did to deserve those treasures in my life

Announcing my retirement from actual Race Calling after the completion of the 1999 Peninsula Racing Circuit, changed circumstances led to a break in my hands-on involvement that lasted until 2012 when Des invited me to renew the Des and Gloria Savage hospitality while staying with them to look after the position of Clerk of Scales, for the 2012 Cooktown Cup Meeting.

Des and Gloria's cherished sincerity of un-bending friendship has never waned, remains deep in my heart and high up on a "Mountain of Memories Money Could Never Buy I'm Blessed With."

A heart touched by Sadness, Mixed Emotion and Precious Memories accompanied me on my way to be greeted by the treasured welcome of Des and Gloria Savage, old friends from years gone by and President Darryl Paradise and the Committee to fulfil the roll of a very humble, but self-confessedly proud Master of Ceremonies of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's 2015 Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting.



A typical example of the interest and enthusiasm that literally beamed among a wonderfully supportive and record breaking crowd that again provided an atmosphere for which the “Cooktown Races” continues to claim recognition, and indeed ever increasing popularity.

THE SAD LOSS OF A TRUE LEGEND and TREASURED FRIEND

Just five days prior to the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club’s 2015 Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting, a true legend of the former Cairns Harness Racing, and since the early nineteen nineties the local Thoroughbred Racing Scene, Wayne (Pop) Massingham passed away suddenly on the morning of Monday, Nov 2nd 2015.

Diagnosed as suffering a severe and aggressive form of cancer, Wayne’s struggle was both brief and determined, news of his sudden passing immediately met with deep sadness and shock by the racing fraternity, and indeed everyone who had experienced the many special attributes that belonged to Wayne (Pop) Massingham.

Following the introduction of Night Harness Racing to Cairns in June 1974, Wayne arrived in Cairns from Sydney accompanied by his wife Jackie and their children, to take up a position as resident trainer / driver with a then recently established Harness Racing Stable situated in the Cairns City suburb of White Rock.

During the golden years of the newly introduced sport’s popularity as a Saturday Night family outing attracting consistently large crowds, the standard of racing was strengthened by visitation from the top Townsville based horses and drivers and not un-commonly, attracting the interest of metropolitan based representatives of the Harness Racing Scene.

Wayne Massingham’s name immediately became associated with the Pandamus Park Harness Racing Establishment’s ‘Stable of Stars’ that included crowd favourite Social Night, enjoying recognition as one of the premier drivers of that golden period of local harness racing.

Following the industry’s gradual decline and eventual closure, Wayne and his sons Warren and Stephen refocused their attention on thoroughbred racing, wasting no time in adapting to the new challenge.

Upon attaining the required age and providing evidence of their suitability to be granted a Trainer’s License, both Warren and Stephen followed in Dad’s footsteps and are currently firmly established among the list of top trainers in the local area.

The Wayne Massingham Stable's involvement in racing has from day one been very much a family affair. As a result of deep fatherly affection and careful guidance, five of the seven Wayne and Jackie Massingham children are all involved hands-on in differing capacities within the racing industry.

How could I not also add mention of the more recent addition of Wayne's Grand-daughter Danielle's name to the ranks of our region's Trainers

Also worth mention, I was recently reminded that since only recently saddling her first stable representative, Danielle has achieved the impressive record of four winners from four starters, leaving no doubt in my mind there is more success in store for the young, and pleasantly mannered Danielle Massingham.

Meanwhile, Wayne's nickname of 'Pop,' was tagged by family, however such was the manner, personality and sincerity of friendship admired so much by those within, and indeed outside the racing fraternity, his tag of 'Pop' soon became affectionately and widely spread.

For myself personally, I was fortunate to have met Wayne and Jackie and their family immediately after their arrival in Cairns in 1974 as a result of my involvement as On-course and Radio 4.C.A's Harness Racing .Commentator

Through on-going and un-broken association with racing in differing capacities, a treasured friendship founded all those years ago has never diminished, nor has the high regard in which I held Wayne, and will continue to hold the whole of his family.

Words can't express my feelings of admiration and support for the family's decision to attend the Cooktown Race Meeting, to allow the nominated stable representatives to race and to celebrate the love Wayne had for Country Racing, Cooktown in particular.

A heart filled with mixed emotion and un-ashamedly worn on my sleeve, a sense of sadness softened by the blessing of precious memories and true friends were all part of a very special 2015 Cooktown Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting.

Hope you'll tag along with me as I humbly try to unfold more of my "Hose in one hand and Stubby in the other," reminiscences.



Jockeys Malayan born Nor Yardi, Brazilian born Wanderson D'Avila, long term local Kerry Rockett, Irish born Stephen Wilson, Kirk Stone, Apprentice Ngarie Nelson, Japanese born Shohei Kaya and veteran Frank Edwards with family members Stephen, Aileen, Kerry, Colin and Warren and the writer, observe one minutes silence before the first race in honour and memory of a legend of Regional and Country Racing in Wayne, (Pop) Massingham.

WORDS DON'T COME EASY.

I'm sure I made brief mention earlier of my admiration and support for Wayne's family's decision to not only attend the Cooktown Race Meeting but to allow the three stable representatives they had nominated to take their place as starters in the races for which they were nominated.

Two of the three horses were owned and raced by well-known racing identity Brian Jorgensen, trained on Brian's behalf by Stephen Massingham. With some level of trepidation, I can't help thinking Divine Intervention may well have played a significant roll in fulfilling the Massingham family's wish for the afternoon to reflect on, and celebrate Wayne's successes and achievements through his life, rather than dwell on the sadness of his passing.

Their belief "that's the way Pop would want it," was accentuated when Making Headlines, listed with Wayne Massingham as the trainer, won the Cooktown Hardware Q.T.I.S. Class 1 H'cap, in convincing style. Making that success even more rewarding is that Making Headlines is owned and raced by Wayne's son Warren, and his wife Ruth.



A moment on which to reflect and remember.

Family members Wayne, Stephen, Aileen, Colin, Stephen's partner Tina Clark and Kerry, with the Jockey Kirk Stone and Race Sponsor Cooktown Hardware Representatives Hazel Butler and Peter Geard.

Another extremely appreciated aspect concerning Making Headline's success so significant from the family's point of view, was the un-hesitating decision to allow the horse to race with Wayne Massingham shown as the Trainer in response to a request from the family, by Regional Chief Steward Mr. Sam Woolaston and his Townsville based panel.

I should also clarify the responsibility of the horse, including it's performance was temporarily transferred to Stephen Massingham, pending registration of an official transfer.

Unanimous comment throughout the afternoon clearly indicated support of the Steward's decision which was so obviously considered fitting perfectly with the wonderful atmosphere that traditionally belongs to Cooktown Race Meetings, and prevailed throughout the entire afternoon and evening again this year.



Stephen Massingham and his wonderfully supportive partner Tina Clark, enjoying one of several thoroughly deserved moments together.

JUST ANOTHER CHALLENGE

Hope you'll forgive me for allowing this old mind to get the wanders again, but the determination of the Committee to not only rise above the extensive structural damage inflicted by Cyclone Ita after it crossed the coast at Cape Flattery on April 12th, 2014 but to add significantly to the overall standard of the on-course facilities, is praiseworthy in the extreme to say the least.

Having been made aware of at least some of the damage, and the fury unleashed on Cooktown and areas in Cyclone Ita's path through Television, Radio, and Print Media Reports, I confess to having been absolutely amazed at the almost unbelievable extent of recovery that had been achieved in the short period prior to the Club's November 2014 Race Meeting.



Another classic example of the refusal to accept defeat attitude of the local fraternity and The Cooktown Amateur Turf Club Committee in particular, apart from facing the additional hardships with which they had been burdened, measures were put in place to attract both awareness and support of the fight against Breast Cancer.

The first thing that caught my eye when Des Savage took me out to have a look at the track the day of my arrival, was the Barrier Stalls perfectly painted in the Breast Cancer Council's Signature Colour of bright pink.

I certainly wasn't on my own in offering words of praise not only in regard to the extent of physical work involved, but the obvious depth and sincerity of desire to lend support to an organisation of such importance that led to the unique idea.

I guess I could also confess that when the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Race Meetings are mentioned in conversation, I invariably include the interest and favourable comment the bright pink Barrier Stalls have generated among local and visiting race-goers.

Much to my pleasure, the Bright Pink Barrier Stalls grabbed the attention and favourable comment from a more than healthy percentage of this year's crowd, and will no doubt find inclusion in their conversations as well. Now where was I?



The photo above was taken around 9.00am on Sunday morning when not so much as a scrap of paper was to be seen and more evidence of the additions that now compliment the restoration of the main building.

AS IF CYCLONE ITA WASN'T ENOUGH.

One could be excused for thinking the chance of a follow-up to Cyclone Ita in just-under twelve months would be highly unlikely, however the vagaries of Mother Nature proved that thinking less than credible.

Cyclone Nathan made it's presence felt when it thrust it's might on Cooktown and a large surrounding area in March of 2015 again testing the resilience of all concerned, although thankfully to a much lesser extent than the level experienced as a result of the damage inflicted by Cyclone Ita.



Most of the damage was confined to most sections of the inside running rail through the combination of wind and rain, most of which was able to be reused and reinstalled in it's true position by physical and determined effort.

Perhaps though, the worst effect at the Race-course was wide-spread flooding, the result of drenching rain that accompanied the Cyclone.



Structural damage and evidence of flooding can be clearly seen in this photo

Without wanting to so much as brush the edges of politics surrounding a troubled Queensland Racing Administration Board, there is no doubt in my mind the on-going efforts and achievements of the President and Committee of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club have been noted, and will be referred to in any future decision making process.

The high standing within the local business community together with those from far reaching areas of the Peninsula and stretching down to, and surrounding the City of Cairns, bears testament to the extent of valued and appreciated sponsorship the Club continues to attract.

Further evidence of the Committee's awareness of the Club's dependency and appreciation of it's sponsors is clearly shown by the professional printing, detail and presentation throughout their Race Meeting Booklet that in my humble opinion, is deserving of credit and compliment of the highest possible degree to those responsible.

A GOOD WAY TO START.



Despite having to climb into a helicopter midway through the afternoon to attend another engagement, "Country Racing Addict" Warren Entsch made good use of the few hours he had available to him catching up with old friends and clearly indicating his support of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club.

I confess to having been humbly proud as I stood alongside Warren, President Darryl Paradise of whom I find it hard to speak highly enough, and a delightful young lady whose enviable disposition and mannerisms match her vocal and Rodeo Event Talent, 15 yr-old Katie Vohland.

The Hon. WARREN ENTSCHE M. P., Federal Member for Leichardt Officially Opened the Race Meeting, and spoke glowingly of his admiration for the extent of voluntary physical work that had obviously gone into restoring the on-course facilities to such a high standard.

Warren emphasised his on-going support of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club.

ACTION ON THE TRACK BEGINS ON A BRIGHT NOTE.

The first two races on this year's Cooktown Programme provided The Piccolo Brothers of Gordonvale with what I'm sure proved a more-than-worthwhile first ever visit to a Cooktown Race Meeting.

Trainer Dean Piccolo and his brother Mike arrived with two representatives from their small, but well-credentialed Gordonvale based stable and departed on Sunday morning with a perfect, and not easy to achieve "Two winners from two starters" result.

The opening event on the seven event programme was a Maiden Plate of 1000mts sponsored in partnership by the Archer River Roadhouse and Mulley's Exchange Hotel in Coen, and was won by Dean and Mike's Ahotone

Here hang on a minute, give me my trumpet while I blow a few notes about the number of un-forgettable memories I treasure that relate to the many visits I enjoyed when Johnny and Cheryl Mahonashen provided the welcome at the Archer River Roadhouse, and Johnny and Mary Withers did the same at the Exchange Hotel in Coen.

Cooktown, Laura and Coen Amateur Race Meetings during the nineteen years I was hands-on involved with the Peninsula Racing Circuit would never have been the same without Cheryl, and despite her having relocated to Innisfail some years ago, she's still a regular at Cooktown and Laura.

Sadly, Coen Amateur Race Club felt the cruel blow of the Queensland Racing Administration Board when a decision was made to close a substantial number of Amateur Race Clubs, toward the latter part of the 1990's.

Walking out onto the track here in Cooktown this afternoon with Warren Entsch, my memory immediately flooded back to the number of dinners I enjoyed in Warren's company in the Exchange Hotel Motel's 'second to none' Dining Room in Coen, during the un-forgettable years I called the Coen Amateur Race Club's Annual Two-day Race Meeting. Warren seldom if ever missed a Coen Race Meeting.

Thankfully, the same warmth of hospitality and service is there to greet the ever-increasing number of adventurers lured by the history and scenic-riddled experience the trip to the Tip of Cape York provides, from the ever-obliging current proprietors of the Archer River Roadhouse, and by Mulley's Mob at the Exchange Hotel Motel in Coen.

Hang on a minute, I should've warned you about a wandering mind and an unbridled temptation to blow my trumpet I suffer from. Come to think of it though, you can blame Des Savage, for had it not been for Des' invitation to Call the 1981 Ampol Cup Meeting at Cooktown, none of it would ever have happened. Sorry about that, now where was I?

Both Dean and Mike's winners were ridden a treat by inform and extremely good rider Wanderson D'Avila who is based on the Atherton Tableland. Following Ahotone's win in the Maiden Plate, La Janita made it two in a row for the trio by winning the Bramwell Station Benchmark 50 H'Cap, run over the 1000mt journey.

It may have been Dean and Mike's first-time involvement with a Cooktown Race Meeting, but I'll be more than surprised if they don't back up again in 2016.

Despite never having been further north in the Peninsula than the Archer River, seldom if ever can I recall during a Race Meeting I called at Cooktown, Laura and Coen, Bramwell Station was not represented in one way or another.

Steeped in timeless history, Bramwell Station is Australia's Northern-Most Working Cattle Station, a warm and friendly welcome and available services appreciated by travellers on the road, and another of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's many valued and appreciated Sponsors.

ARCHER RIVER ROADHOUSE / EXCHANGE HOTEL MAIDEN PLATE WINNER.

AHOTONE



Trainer Dean Piccolo, his brother Mike, Jockey Wanderson D'Avila and winner AHOTONE, with the magnificent Race Sponsors Sash being proudly displayed during the Official Presentation to the connections. Photo by Peter Roy Photography.

BRAMWELL STATION BENCHMARK 50 H'CAP WINNER.

LA JINETA



A proud connection of the winner LA JINETA helps display the Sponsor's lovely Winner's Sash with Trainer Dean Piccolo, Dean's brother and co-owner and the winning Jockey Wanderson D'Avila. Photo by Peter Roy Photography.

ROUND THE TURN AND INTO THE STRAIGHT



Who said you've got to go to the Melbourne Cup to experience a Garden Party Atmosphere, and even if you did go you wouldn't enjoy the laid-back, shoulder to shoulder free seating luxury with a view of the track we are treated to, here in Cooktown



**An exciting finish in the Archer River Roadhouse / Exchange Hotel Maiden Plate when the two horses AHOTONE with Wanderson D'Avila aboard and CHANGEINTHEFORTUNE with Jockey Stephen Wilson hit the line with a head separating them in a photo finish. The narrow margin actually favoured the inside runner, AHOTONE and Jockey Wanderson D'Avila.
Photo courtesy of Peter Roy Photography.**

FASHION, TALENT and an ENVIABLE DISPOSITION.



Katie Vohland provided a delightful rendition of the National Anthem to compliment the Official Opening of the 2015 Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Annual Race Meeting. Photo Peter Roy Photography Mareeba.

THE COOKTOWN TYREPOWER COOKTOWN BRACELET.

The first of the feature races, the Cooktown Tyrepower Bracelet was run over the 1000Mt journey and despite a numerically small field, the race left nothing to be desired as far as crowd interest and an exciting finish were concerned.

Apart from the \$5,950.00 winner's share of the total prize money of \$9,150.00 the race offered, Marama Jewellery of Mareeba sponsored a magnificent Bracelet typical of the high quality for which Marama Jewellery of Mareeba is so widely known, and highly regarded.

Trainer Fred Wieland, who followed in his father's footsteps as far as his becoming involved in Racing, has been a strong and lengthy supporter of the Cooktown Racing Scene. Fred Wieland Snr was widely recognised as a Legend of both Country and City Racing, claiming many major Awards and Feature Races over a long and distinguished career as a leading Trainer in the local area.

No surprise really that one of the seven representatives of the Fred, Lyn and Neil Wieland Stable would provide the establishment with another major success when Isador Amore won the Bracelet, in convincing style.

Ridden by Malayan born Nor Yadi who served the final few years of his Jockey's Apprenticeship while under the guidance and tutelage of Fred Wieland, Isador Amore's win provided justifiable reason for celebrations all round.

Greg Whitaker was on hand to present both the Cooktown Tyrepower Sash on behalf of the Race Sponsor, and the Bracelet on behalf of Marama Jewellery of Mareeba.

COOKTOWN TYREPOWER COOKTOWN BRACELET WINNER.

ISADOR AMORE.



One of two Cooktown Tyrepower Representatives helps Jane Koch, part-owner of the Bracelet winner Isador Amore proudly display the Cooktown Tyrepower Bracelet Sash. Jockey Nor Yadi, strapper Neil Wieland, part-owners Rob and Jane Koch, Don Scheffler and Mikki, a delightful Japanese Exchange Student being hosted by Rob and Jane, enjoying the Cooktown Tyrepower Bracelet presentation

MORE OF A WONDERFUL SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE.



Two very special friends, Gloria Savage doing what in horsemen's lingo is referred to as "Riding one and leading one," while enjoying the company of Colleen Dukes and the wonderful social atmosphere that prevailed throughout the 2015 Cooktown Races.



Former Mayor of the Cook Shire Bob Sullivan and a couple of true-blue old mates John Guise and Bob O'Doherty, all three with indelibly stamped marks on chapters of Cooktown's History, doing what comes naturally at the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Annual Race Meetings.

HAND IN HAND WITH COUNTRY RACING

Friday nights in Cooktown are never without a variety of options in entertainment to attract a strong patronage from locals, and indeed an ever-increasing number of tourists now visiting the town.

The Sovereign Hotel for instance provides live music to compliment a Restaurant offering a high class menu, whilst almost straight across the road the local branch of the R.S.L. with it's relaxed atmosphere, extremely tempting and affordable menu topped with a guarantee the beer is always icy-cold and the hospitality warm and friendly, is never short of happy customers.

The Cooktown Bowls Club with it's recently installed all-weather roof cover, is another of the extremely popular venues for both playing and non-playing locals, while the growing number of visitors are also afforded a warm and friendly welcome.

What may well have been a record crowd in attendance for the traditional drawing of the Calcutta held at the R. S. L. on Friday evening, set the tone for the wonderful atmosphere that prevailed and continued throughout the afternoon and evening of the Races, the following day.

Whilst the ability of the venue's Restaurant and Bar facilities may have been understandably pressured by a far bigger than normal crowd, minor inconveniences did little to dampen the enthusiasm or enjoyment of a supportive gathering of "Country Racing Addicts."

Conducted on the feature race, The Cooktown Bowls Club Cooktown Cup run over the 1700 mt journey, spirited bidding for each of the eight runners engaged resulted in a pool of just short of five and a half thousand dollars.

Regular supporter of the Cooktown Races from as far back as my earliest years as the Club's Race-caller, Greg Williams led the bidding assault although denied of having things all his own way. Persistence finally won out though, with Greg securing purchase of the eventual race winner and collecting his healthy share of the total pool.

A BIT MORE OF WHAT COOKTOWN RACES ARE ALL ABOUT



Another contest winner with a happy smile, Cherie Jerome of Cooktown who won the Engel Legend in Reliability Car Fridge, her prize organised by Peter Rosentreter on behalf of Major Sponsors, Engel Queensland

ALL PART OF A PERFECT SETTING.



Tables being arranged and set-up in perfect view of the turn into the straight



Beautiful floral centre-pieces that graced the tables under the shade sails in one of the reserved areas set aside to accommodate several group bookings. The extent to which the Club went in presenting the whole of the Race-course and facilities, is a credit of magnitude to President Darryl Paradise, his Executive and Committee. Their efforts continue to attract highly favourable comment

TRIP ABOARD REEF MAGIC AGAIN PROVED POPULAR

Organised as a Fund Raiser in aid of Multiple Sclerosis by Cairns North Rotary, a large crowd enjoyed the luxury of the cruise to and from the Cooktown Races in glorious weather, aboard the Reef Magic.

The all-inclusive package included morning tea and refreshments on-board, free entry, lunch and a taste-tempting selection of finger food and delicacies at the track in a marquee brought up from Mareeba and erected the day before the Races.

Karyn Egansmith put extensive effort into the organising of the on-course part of the package in conjunction with the Committee, the success of their efforts echoed in glowing comment.

Busses were on hand to meet the Reef Magic immediately she birthed to convey passengers to the track, and to return them after the last race on the programme had been run.

The selected location of the marquee allowed a perfect and close-up view of the turn into the straight and the run to the winning post, and was taken advantage of and enjoyed by what could only be described as a happy, wonderfully enthusiastic and supportive crowd.

The return to Cairns aboard Reef Magic immediately after the last race provided non-stop entertainment featuring live music, lots of swinging and swaying complimented by cocktails and a variety of drinks, guaranteed a wonderfully enjoyable evening and the final leg of a somewhat unique experience enjoyed by all.

Incidentally, Karyn Egansmith has been in touch with the Committee, indicating her interest in arranging a similar on-course package again next year



The enthusiasm and interest of the crowd can be clearly gauged by the above photo which was taken looking toward the turn into the challenging Cooktown straight. The roof area of the big marquee which provided comfort for the large crowd of welcome patrons who by their having travelled from Cairns aboard the Reef Magic, swelled attendance numbers to what may well have been a record figure of 1800.

Photo by Peter Roy Photography Mareeba.

THE COOKTOWN HARDWARE Q T.I. S. Class 1 H'Cap WINNER

MAKING HEADLINES.

Un-bridled emotion I tried desperately to control swelled within during my introduction of the starters and riders in the fourth event on the seven event Cooktown programme, particularly when it came to my mention of the runner carrying the number six saddle cloth in the original field of eight runners.

Making Headlines is owned and raced by Warren Massingham, and prior to the sudden passing of his father just five days prior to the Cooktown Race Meeting the horse had been trained on his behalf by Wayne, (Pop) Massingham.

I'm sure I made earlier mention that as nominations and acceptances had already been declared, permission was granted for Making Headlines to race with Wayne Massingham shown as the Trainer, although responsibility for the horse throughout the meeting had been transferred to Wayne's son, Stephen.

That decision was not only appreciated by Wayne's immediate family, but met with over-whelming support from within and outside the local racing scene.

Devine intervention may well have played a hand when Making Headlines raced to the winning post, accompanied by the spirited cheers of a wonderfully supportive crowd, to win the event in great style.



Family members Warren, Stephen, Aileen, Colin, Stephen's partner Tina Clark and Kerry, with Jockey Kirk Stone, Sponsor's Representatives Hazel Butler and Peter Geard proudly acknowledging a very special occasion and displaying the magnificent Cooktown Hardware Sash after Making Headlines memorable success.

As a matter of interest, Cooktown Hardware is a subsidiary of Cairns Hardware, the business originally founded by Mr Ron Hastie in the very early 1950's. The thriving and ever expanding Cooktown Branch services the town and wide surrounding areas with a complete range of Hardware, Building Components such as Windows, Doors, Roofing and Trusses, and stands proud on it's reputation of the professionalism of their operations.



***Jockey Kirk Stone brings COOKTOWN HARDWARE H'CAP WINNER MAKING HEADLINES back to the Saddling Enclosure after a thoroughly deserved result perhaps shared with a touch of Divine Intervention.
Photo, Peter Roy Photography Mareeba***

BACK ON THE SOCIAL FRONT.



An atmosphere of relaxed social enjoyment complimented by glorious weather, splashes of mixed colour, sun and shade all contributing to the out-standing success of the 2015 Cooktown Cup and Bracelet Meeting. The area shown here fronts the entrance to a well appointed food and beverage facility including furniture to provide comfort for those enjoying both lunch and evening meals, a fully stocked bar and the Bookmaker's Ring.

THEY'RE RACING



Legs and a skirt fly in the hotly contested 100m COOKTOWN DASH for LADIES, which carried prize money of \$500.00 to the winner. Prize money for each of the Men's, Ladies, Boys and Girls under 15 DASH FOR CASH RACES were sponsored by Darryl and Linda Paradise, Kings Plains Station, J.L.C.Helicopters Mareeba and Clinton Paradise and Donna Armstrong, Edward River Crocodile Farm, Pormpuraaw. Photo Peter Roy Photography Mareeba

BARE FOOTED LADIES and ALUMINIUM SHOD THOROUGHBREDS.

The four bare foot races run on the track after the completion of the official programme created a great deal of light-hearted participation of a wonderfully supportive crowd, intent on enjoying the atmosphere for which the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Race Meetings are so widely recognised.

Adding an additional dimension to an action packed seven event programme of racing through the afternoon, the bare foot races kept a healthy percentage of the crowd in a cheering and hand-clapping mood, much to the delight of the runners themselves. Earlier in the afternoon though, the fifth race for the thoroughbreds had been run.

THE LION'S DEN HOTEL OPEN HANDICAP WINNER.

KING MAGNUSSON

Stephen Massingham had saddled the first of two winners for well known and popular Bookmaker Brian Jorgensen when King Magnusson won the Lion's Den Open H'cap. Brian's been a long-term supporter of Country Racing, Cooktown in particular both through applying his Bookmaker's trade, and by entering and travelling horses he owns and races to strengthen the fields at Country Meetings.

Both the Stephen Massingham trained and Brian Jorgensen owned winners were ridden by Kirk Stone who finished a thoroughly rewarding day on a high, having ridden three of the seven winners on the card.



KING MAGNUSSON with Jockey Kirk Stone aboard goes strongly to the line ahead of the grand old veteran galloper CANHEDANCE with BOOM SHA LA finishing third.

Photo Peter Roy Photography

There's a well-known saying that's been around a long time among locals and indeed visitors who have experienced the unique character and atmosphere of the history endowed LIONS DEN HOTEL, "YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO COOKTOWN IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE LIONS DEN HOTEL."

Judy Fry offers a warm and friendly welcome with a guarantee the beer is always icy-cold, and a counter lunch or snack to keep you going, will satisfy the most scrutinising taste buds.

You can't miss the LIONS DEN HOTEL on the Coastal Road drive to Cairns.

A SPECIAL OCCASION.



Event sponsor Judy Fry of the Lion's Den Hotel joins Warren Massingham, Tina Clark, Steve, Aileen Massingham, Jockey Kirk Stone, owner Brian Jorgensen's wife Eve and their grand-daughter Taylor proudly displaying the Lion's Den Hotel Sash won by King Magnussen



If only the words I spoke could've expressed the heart-felt feelings that swelled within as I was joined by Warren and Stephen Massingham and Stephen's charming partner Tina Clark during a Presentation. Deep feelings of emotion were softened by celebration of Pop's full-on life and his love of Country Racing, and my having enjoyed his un-bending and lengthy mateship. Photo Peter Roy Photography.

THE EVER POPULAR FASHIONS ON THE FIELD.

I vividly remember complimenting the Ladies and Participants in the various age groups of Fashions on the Field at Cooktown Amateur Turf Club Race Meetings throughout the nineteen years I had the honour of being part of the presentations,

Come with me as we do a Flash-back to earlier years when the Fashion Contests were as popular and as well contested as they were again in 2015. Times may have changed but certainly not my support for the inclusion and emphasis on the Fashion Scene

Incidentally, the 2015 Cooktown Cup Meeting's Fashions on the Field attracted record entries with thirty-four ladies in the Gold Class Category providing a wonderful presentation of the very best of to-day's fashion scene, to the delight of the crowd.



The actual year this photo was take escapes my memory but I'm sure it features the contestants in the Open Ladies Category adding that "Something Extra" Cooktown Amateur Turf Club Race Meetings are so well recognised.



I often look back at this photo and wonder who used to get the most enjoyment out of the "Littlies Category" of Fashions on the Field, myself or the kids taking part. I confess though I loved every minute of it and nothing had changed my feelings while in the same roll in 2015.

FASHION IN 2015



These delightful young ladies themselves matching the glorious fashion on show in the Local and Visiting Ladies categories of the 2015 Cooktown Cup Race Meeting's Fashions on the Field. Photos Peter Roy Photography.



Three young fellows who added a definite touch of style, competing in the under 10 yrs category of Fashions on the Field



Three delightful young ladies adding a splash of colour, fashion and style, competing in the Girls under 10 yrs category of Fashions on the Field. Photos Peter Roy Photography.

BRACKENHURST CONTRACTING / POISON CREEK STATION,

BLAIR AGRI ADVISORS CLASS 3 PLATE.

I'M MARIAH.

A field of six runners were called into the barrier stalls prior to being dispatched to race over the testing 1400 mt journey of the second-last race on the 2015 Cooktown programme.

In the old scale of seven furlongs, the distance was always considered a fair test for middle distance horses and always welcomed for inclusion in race programmes.

I'M MARIAH'S win brought up the second leg of a winning double for Trainer Stephen Massingham and owner Brian Jorgensen, and a third winning ride for Jockey Kirk Stone.

The same trio of Trainer, Owner and Jockey have enjoyed consistent success through a recent period in which visits to the winner's stall have been included, and thoroughly deserved.



***The magnificent BRACKENHURST CONTRACTING / POISON CREEK STATION BLAIR AGRI ADVISORS SPONSOR'S SASH, being proudly displayed with representatives of the joint sponsors joining Trainer Stephen Massingham, family members and Jockey Kirk Stone during the Official Presentation. Owner Brian Jorgensen's wife Eve and Grand-daughter Taylor are also in the photo
Photo Peter Roy Photography.***

Continuation of improvements to the track surface, widening and alterations to curves in the track's circumference over the past few years have had a substantial effect on the track's rating, and ability to provide greater safety in races over varying distances.

Clearing of a substantial additional area to allow for the continuing increase in over-night campers attending the Meetings has also been welcomed and utilized.

PLANS LAID FOR CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Some twelve months ago, Warren Entche called a meeting with Club President Darryl Paradise and Treasurer Barry Innis with regard to broad-scale future development of the whole of the Race-course Reserve, including the track and all existing buildings.

Warren's plan is for the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club to organise a meeting of all interested parties, not necessarily those involved in racing or sport, for the purpose of putting together a plan based on multi purpose, and more frequent use of all associated facilities.

This would require each individual organisation to present simple draft drawings together with a written submission outlining the organisations individual needs.

With the aid of this information, it would allow the C.A.T.C. to present well documented and credible application for funding through various avenues. There is no question on the merit and chance of funding for multi purpose usage, making the idea certainly worthy of consideration.

Warren has un-hesitatingly stressed his support of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club and the proposed development plan and has given his assurance he will do everything in his power to see the concept come to fruition.

An initial and welcome boost to the Club's confidence in a bright outlook for the year ahead was mention of a possible grant of an additional \$20.000 toward the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's 2016 Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting



The glorious setting the Cooktown Race-course offers with the perfectly manicured inside area providing an un-obstructed view when races are in progress, and the captivating backdrop of a blue sky and fringing mountain range.

BAREFOOTED AND FAIRDINKUM.



The hotly contested Girls under 15 Cooktown Dash for Cash created it's own share of encouragement and cheering from the crowd, the action a-plenty complimented by the magnificent back-drop across the track to the fringing mountains. Photo Peter Roy Photography Mareeba.

THE COOKTOWN BOWLS CLUB COOKTOWN CUP

GUNDY STAR.

An afternoon of Country Racing at it's best was complimented by the running of the 2015 Feature Event, The COOKTOWN BOWLS CLUB COOKTOWN CUP, run over the staying distance of 1700 mts, or eight and a half furlongs in the good old-fashioned language.

With the barriers positioned toward the top of the straight, after being dispatched the field were required to run to the winning post before completing a further full circuit of the course proper.

Being able to see close-up the barrier gates fly open and experience the added excitement of the Jockeys looking to position their mounts to their best possible advantage, added an additional adrenalin rush within a wonderfully involved and supportive crowd.

Enjoying the valued and appreciated sponsorship of the extremely popular COOKTOWN BOWLS CLUB, the winner Gundy Star may well have given popular and astute Owner / Trainer Sharlee Hoffman her first thoroughly deserved success in a Feature Cup Race

Sharlee is one of the latest, and very welcome additions to our list of North Queensland based Trainers, her small team stabled at Tolga on the Atherton Tableland.

Hope you'll forgive me for allowing my wandering and ever appreciative mind to stir the "Mountain of Memories surrounding the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club, Des Savage's original invitation and the 1981 Cooktown Cup," I am blessed with.

Looking back on the nineteen proud years I enjoyed as the Club's Race Caller. being honoured with a Life Membership Award in 1999, having the Mounting Yard identified in my name in 2013 and still welcome in 2015, leaves me to question in my own mind what I've ever done to deserve the good fortune that has come my way.

Hang on a minute, I did warn you about my trumpet blowing. Now where was I?



Wanderson D'Avila brings Gundy Star back to the Mounting Yard after winning the Cooktown Bowls Club 2015 Cooktown Cup.



A justifiably elated Sharlee Hoffman, Owner / Trainer of Gundy Star sharing the moment with Jockey Wanderson D'Avila and the winner of the Cup, Gundy Star. Sharlee is holding the magnificent 2015 COOKTOWN CUP while Wanderson looks after the WINNER'S SASH. Photos Peter Roy Photography Mareeba.

SHARING A JUSTIFIABLY PROUD MOMENT.



President of the Cooktown Bowls Club Bob Sullivan and Vice President Bob O'Doherty, seen in the photo about to present the 2015 Cooktown Bowls Club Cooktown Cup to Owner / Trainer of the winner, Sharlee Hoffman. Sharlee and Jockey Wanderson D'Avila proudly display the Winner's Sash also provided by the Race Sponsors. Photo courtesy of Peter Roy Photography Mareeba.



The magnificent 2015 Cooktown Cup was kindly sponsored by Warren and Elaine Phillips, Atherton Trophies and Engraving.

PROGRESSIVE THINKING.

In February of 2015, much to their credit the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club signed a contract with MY PATHWAY, an organisation involved with a Work for the Dole Scheme that has proved a resounding success.

Judging by the brief conversations I had with several participants in the scheme through the afternoon at the Races, not only has a healthy relationship with MY PATHWAY been cemented, an element of pride in being involved among the participants was patently obvious and so rewarding for all concerned.

Much of the restoration and added development would not have been possible without the added assistance of scheme participants, who have every right to stand proud on their on-going efforts.

With the contract not due to expire until June of 2018, future development plans already on the drawing board will benefit greatly from the healthy relationship that exists between the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club Committee, My Pathway and the participants in the Scheme.



In appreciation of a healthy and constructive relationship enjoyed by both organisations, a Certificate of Appreciation was presented on behalf of the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club by President Darryl Paradise. Receiving the Certificate on behalf of My Pathway and Scheme Participants, Site- Supervisor Eril Ross-Kelly is accompanied by Activity Co-ordinator Sue Mitchell and one of the proud participants, Hamid Le foe with every justifiable reason to stand proud. Cooktown Amateur Turf Club President Darryl Paradise, is also in the photo.

PRESENTATIONS TO LEADING TRAINER AND JOCKEY.

Following the Presentation of the magnificent trophy to the Owner / Trainer of the Cooktown Bowls Club Cooktown Cup Winner Gundy Star, Club President Darryl Paradise had the pleasant duty of presenting the Awards to the Leading Trainer and Leading Jockey of the Meeting.

The much sought after Award for the Most Successful Trainer was won by Stephen Massingham, having saddled three winners for the afternoon.



In case you're thinking there was an element of pride showing in me while I announced the winner of the Trainer's Award, you bet their was pride, and unbridled pride at that. Club President Darryl Paradise is about to present the Award to Stephen Massingham whose ever supportive partner Tina Clark was there to share the memorable occasion with him.

THE LEADING JOCKEY AWARD.

President Darryl Paradise' next duty was to present the Leading Rider Award to Wanderson D'Avilla, who added sufficient points under the scoring system to his tally derived from three winning rides, to thoroughly deserve to win the Award.

Equal feelings of pride swelled within as I introduced Wanderson D'Avilla, while Leading Trainer Stephen Massingham stood by to congratulate Wanderson, and Club President Darryl Paradise made the presentation.



Tina Clark, Stephen Massingham, a proud M.C. and President Darryl Paradise

THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO PETER ROWE.

Due to an un-fortunate clash of race dates affecting Ingham and Cooktown, regular Race-caller Bluey Forsayth found it necessary to declare himself un-available to provide his appreciated long-term services, for the Cooktown Cup Meeting.

Fortunately, a young fellow whose interest in racing began at a tender age and had shown natural talent in calling races while still in his teen years, a talent quickly recognised by the Cairns Jockey Club Committee, and the racing fraternity in general.

Despite no shortage of encouragement to the young Peter Rowe to pursue a career in Race-calling and Broadcasting, he chose to continue his hands-on ties with the Racing Stable overseen by his Father, one of the area's leading Trainers, Trevor Rowe.

Encouragement for the young Licensed Stable-hand to at least continue to further develop his natural ability intensified upon the retirement of the only other Race-callers in the whole local area, leaving Bluey Forsayth in the position of the "One and only."

A harmonious relationship between Bluey and the young Peter Rowe soon developed into Peter accepting a Stand-by roll and his willingness to step in when required, much to Bluey's satisfaction, and that of all others concerned

During the past few years, there have been several occasions when due to varying circumstances, Peter Rowe has not only rescued an otherwise troubled situation, but indelibly exposed his grossly under-used talent.

In accepting the commitment to provide his services at Cooktown, Peter was also faced with the responsibility of caring for, saddling and presenting the four Rowe Family Stable Representatives in the Mounting Yard prior to their individual races, a commitment of considerable demand on it's own.

Despite the added imposition, the accuracy and clarity of Peter's calls of the seven races run throughout the afternoon were frequently and complimentarily commented upon by the Committee, and many within the crowd. Incidentally, Peter had not called a race since he stood in for Bluey at Ingham through similar circumstances, the same time last year.

I'm not on my own in offering my congratulations to Peter Rowe on the excellence of his calls of the seven event programme, featured during the 2015 Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting.



HANG ON, THAT'S NOT PETER.

Probably the only fan and full-on attention I ever managed to attract during my Race-calling days. Local and long-term supporter of Racing in Cooktown, Colleen Fenn, took this photo in the mid nineteen eighties, which reminds me of a relationship with the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club, I so deeply treasure.

I must confess I often feel concerned about cracking my whip about myself, however in my defence my daughter Deslie who has been the motivator behind my humble attempts to record at least some of the experiences and good fortune I have been blessed with, the result of "Hanging on the end of a microphone" through an almost countless number of years, has to wear at least some of the blame.

Any concerns I've had about being branded a born skite are somewhat softened by Deslie's outside the square thinking that it's hard to pay tribute to the special people I've been fortunate to have rubbed shoulders and shared un-forgettable experiences with, unless prepared to do a bit of whip cracking about myself.

Don't worry about it Dad, just write whatever's on your mind, after all there's a lot worse things could happen than being thought of as an opportunist in "Cracking your own whip." Now where was I?



CRACKING MY OWN WHIP.

Seldom if ever have I come home from a Cooktown Race Meeting without precious memories of one form or another being added to, and the 2015 Cooktown Cup Meeting proved no different

Meeting a very lovely young Katie Vohland for the first time immediately brought to my mind an un-forgettable highlight of the 1989 Cairns Show. Katie provided a most pleasing rendition of the National Anthem during the Official Opening before winning the Girls 11 to 16 yrs age group of the Fashions Contests.

Mention of Katie being a Grand-daughter of Club Treasurer Barry Innis and his wife Sally stirred my curiosity suffice to learn Katie's mother is in fact the former Michelle Innis, who through her involvement with Pony Clubs, the North Queensland Show-jump Club and the local circuit of Agricultural Shows, I had the pleasure of introducing to audiences on an un-countable number of occasions.

It was teenager Michelle Innis' outstanding performance in the Open High Jump, feature Ring Event on the 1989 Cairns Show Programme that remains vivid in my memory, and one on which I so often reflect during my late afternoon "Hose in one hand and stubby in the other," reminiscence sessions.

Without going into detail, Michelle and a horse called Rickshaw Star, who until competing in the Local High Jump two days before had never seen a High Jump Fence in his life, jumped the incredible height of 7 feet 5 inches.

Favoured to win the event, Duel Australian Olympic Representative Guy Creighton and the widely experienced Gulf Country succeeded in clearing the same height, before being forced to jump a new Official Australian High Jump record height of 7 feet 9 inches to claim the out-right event honours.

Despite two courageous, although un-successful attempts to share the event honours and the Australian Record, Michelle Innis and Rickshaw Star's outstanding performance remains imbedded in my "Mountain of Memories"

Hold your horses a minute and I'll explain what started me off about Michelle and Rickshaw Star. You see I managed to prize out of Katie her interest in, and notable success in at least two disciplines included in the "Thrill a minute world of Rodeo."

At just thirteen years of age, Katie won the Ladies Barrel Race at the 2013 A.B.C.R.A. Normanton Rodeo against a total of fifty-two competitors, and competed in the 2014 National Rodeo Finals in Tamworth.

At the time of writing, Katie is competing in the A.B.C.R.A. Barrel Racing and Breakaway Roping Circuit in New South Wales before heading for Tamworth and the National Barrel Racing Average Title

O. K., I've got the message, what's all this got to do with Racing? Well nothing really, apart from the un-forgettable experiences and stories I'm blessed with, and the distinct possibility you may have stories of your own to treasure and relate to, gathered during your attendance at the 2015 Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting.

AND THIRTY-FIVE YEARS LATER.

While I'm still in my reminiscence mode, I can't help questioning the good fortune and blessings that have come my way as a result of an un-planned introduction to a microphone some fifty years ago, and Des Savage's invitation for me to call the 1981 Cooktown Cup Meeting.

To have been invited to accept the position of M. C. of the 2015 Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Cooktown Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting by Club President Darryl Paradise and his Committee and again treated to Des and Gloria Savage's un-matched hospitality, leaves me to count my blessings with a heart full of appreciation.

Despite the many changes that have so noticeably taken effect since the days of the True Amateurs and the over-all change in our life style and values in general, for myself and I'm sure for many others of my era there remains something somehow special about Cooktown itself, and walking through the gates to enjoy the unique character and atmosphere that belongs to the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Race meetings.

MIXED EMOTIONS AND PRECIOUS MEMORIES.

Opening under a cloud of sadness through the sudden passing of Racing Legend Wayne (Pop) Massingham, the cloud of sadness was quickly replaced at the request of Wayne's Family with a mood of Celebration of Wayne's love of Country Racing, Cooktown in particular.

The high regard in which Wayne and his family are held was clearly evident, adding something special to a wonderful atmosphere that prevailed throughout the entire afternoon and evening.

Again I'm prompted to offer my sincere and thoroughly deserved congratulations to the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's President and Committee on the resounding success of a Record-breaking 2015 Cooktown Cup and Bracelet Race Meeting.

I should also thank Club Treasurer Barry Innis for providing me with a number of photos and snippets of information, my daughter Deslie and Gloria Savage who both went out of their way to procure photos from various sources for me, and last but certainly not least, Peter Roy.

More evidence of the good fortune I've enjoyed through "Hanging on the end of a microphone," rests with the regular contact I have with Peter through my humble but self-admittedly proud position of M. C. for the Mareeba Turf Club's Race Meetings. Peter's professionalism under the banner of Peter Roy Photography is both well known and highly regarded.

A phone-call to Peter with a request for his help with photos to compliment my humble literary offering of an overview of the 2015 Cooktown Cup Race Meeting was immediately met with a positive and un-hesitating response.

WHERE DID THAT YEAR GO.

And so another year has slipped under the radar almost without notice, but certainly not without my appreciation of the good fortunes that have continued to favour me.

Des and Gloria already have my room booked, and just to be on the safe-side I'll soften Darryl up at the next Race Meeting we run into each other, in the hope he'll find me a job of any sort for the 2016 Cooktown Cup Race Meeting.

Finally, I owe my wife Elaine much more than a few humble words of thanks for her un-complaining acceptance of the frequency of my "Hanging on the end of a Race-course or Show-ground Microphone," through the years of our treasured life together.





A Flash-back to 2013 and one of the most proud moments of my life after the un-covering of the sign identifying the Cooktown Race-course Mounting Yard in my name. Des Savage's invitation and along with his wife Gloria's welcome into their home in 1981 provided the beginning of a period and experiences in my life, I will forever treasure and never forget.



Wade and Gloria Savage, Self, Shae and Elkie Green, typifying the wonderful memories I treasure of my early years as the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club's Race Caller.