

Polo History of Western Australia
By Leonard Hamersley.

Polo was played in 1892 in Fremantle by members of the then Fremantle Hunt Club, a Capt Cairns Candy, the Governor's Aide appeared to be the man of the moment in promoting the game at that point in time.

Games were played at "Orgy's paddock close to Preston Point Rd, also at Pearce's Paddock later to become Richmond Park. Some of those taking part were Hendy Henderson, Bill Pollick, Frank Bluett and brothers Jim and Bill La-Hoar.

In 1896 saw the formation of Perth Polo Club with His Excellency Sir Gerard Smith KCMG Governor of the colony being Patron. Patronesses were Lady Smith, Lady Forrest, Hon., Mrs Candy, Mrs E Darlot, Mrs A Hassell and Mrs Alex Forrest.

President: Neil Mc Neil

Vice President: E.F. Darlot.

Hon. Sec. D.B. Ord.

Committee. Dr O'Connor, Dr Kelsall, M. Fraser, A. Clark and I. Cowan.

It is worthy of note that at that time duration of play was one and a quarter hours with five minute breaks between each fifteen minutes of play .

1896, January 3rd saw a polo match played at Loten's Paddock, Hyde Park, and eastern side of Perth Oval towards East Perth marshalling yards.

This was played between Coolgardie, Tom Browne, Captain Candy, D. Nicholson and B. Nicholson [Capt.] and Perth T. Lowe, A. Forbes, E. Cookson and Dr O'Connor.

The result was Perth scoring 8 goals to Coolgardie 4 goals.

On the following Wednesday 8th Jan another game was played between the same teams and resulting in 3 goals each.

Saturday 11th. January there were polo club races with five races and the feature race over 6 furlongs for 25 pounds [\$50] Note: a man's wages at this time would have been approx 20 shillings a week! [\$ 2]

A third game was played between Coolgardie and Perth with the score going in favour of Coolgardie 7 goals to 6.

Wednesday 15 January saw a game played at Plympton between Fremantle and Coolgardie. The entertainment was held afterwards at the Club Hotel with His Excellency the Governor presenting the awards, having been rowed by boat from his summer residence on Rottnest Island. All was reported at the time in the West Australian newspaper.

1898. Polo games moved to the Esplanade in Perth where competing teams from Perth, Fremantle, the Goldfields and the Victoria Districts travelled in by steam rail

With the Midland Railway Company of England completing the rail link in 1896 from Walkaway in the north to Midland Junction. The sport of polo was played at the Perth Esplanade up until the beginning of the Great War in 1914 when polo in W.A. went into recession for the duration.

The significance of the Esplanade in history is too often forgotten as it was this area that was first used by the celebrated W.W. 1 airman Major Sir Norman Brearley when he established the first commercial air service in Western Australia. It was from there in 1920 that Major Brearley flew my grandfather John Major Logue north to his sheep station " Tamala " in the Murchison area and on arrival the manager Fred Blood was galloping up and down on the flat waving a wool bale to show where to land the aircraft . Upon landing the wheels became tangled in the winter grasses that were there owing to the good season.

The Esplanade is an open strip of land that runs between Perth city and the Swan River, it is this beautiful open space in the middle of Perth that adds so much to the charm of the city, with all its history it is hoped that generations to come will have the foresight to preserve this area.

Also a point of interest is that there was a polo grounds of some significance at the historical property " Glentromie " , situated a few miles north of New Norcia . Glentromie was established circa 1860 and was a remount breeding station with large two storied stables and out buildings , there is no information in my memory as to what polo was played there or whether it was only " in property " polo for the training of horses that were shipped to India .

1901. At this time Geraldton Polo Club was formed, the prime instigator was Walter McKenzie Grant of Newmarracarra Station together with brothers Alec Grant of Yanget Stn, Dave Grant of Moonyoonyooka Stn and Jack Grant of Glengarry Stn, also Sam Burges of The Bowes Stn, other players like Methopholos Moustaka, Icky Herman and Harry Pass soon followed. I was fortunate enough to know Methopholos Moustaka as he and his wife Peggy were great friends with my Grandmother Hamersley and used to stay at Wellstation and I knew him as Uncle Mossie. I also knew Jack and Alec Grant .

Sam Burges who was one of my ancestors played polo in England and France prior the Great War 1914/18 , he retired in later life and lived in Geraldton at " Railton House " where he dressed every day for lunch at the Gentleman's Club , always tucked his handkerchief in his sleeve and walked with his gold mounted stick . My Great Aunt Ally Lane from N.Z. who was a Burges from Oakabella Stn told me that in those days when the Burges families arrived in Geraldton for races or polo the four in hand buggies would always come in with a figure of eight flourish to halt so as the wheels would be open for the ladies to alight.

Polo in Geraldton was played at that time near Place Rd, Meru now a suburb of Geraldton on Couch Grass flats that were owned by the du Boulay family, who at that time owned the whole of Woorree, which later belonged to Chris Rowan and later son John Rowan.

I can well remember the late John Rowan telling me how he as a boy used to ride his Welch Mountain pony round the field boundary and pick up the ball when it went out of bounds. [John Rowan was a member of the 1930 Irwin team to win the Charles Cup]

A polo team from Eagle Hawk travelled to play in Western Australia in 1912 and played against Geraldton and Mingenew teams at Mingenew. The late Harry Pass who I knew well told me how he was a member of the Geraldton team and how they defeated Eagle Hawk in the play off.

1902. The Cue Polo Club was formed with players Sam and Ernie Clarkson, Eric McInernie, Harold Miller and Ben Heyden being the founders. Matches were played at Day Dawn against Geraldton teams that being a half waypoint between the clubs. Again horses could be transported on rail as the Government Railway serviced the north as far as Meekatharra.

In 1902 the Alcock Polo Challenge Cup was donated and won by the Perth team of E. Darlot, D. Orr, P. Law-Smith and M. O'Connor, again in 1903 a Perth team of N. Darcy, E. Darlot, D. Orr and P. Law –Smith were successful in defending the Alcock Cup.

1903. The W.A. Polo Association was formed, the office bearers were:

President: Everett F. Darlot

Vice Presidents: Gerald Brown, A. Crossman and Walter McKenzie Grant.

Sec / Treasurer: A. Forbes.

Associate Clubs: Perth, Fremantle, Geraldton, Moonyoonooka and Goldfields, which would have included Coolgardie and Cue.

1906 saw the formation of Mingenew Polo Club under the guidance of Gordon Law-Smith a player from South Australia, who came to employment for experience at Nangetty Station, Mingenew that was under the management of Mr Thomas Wells.

Gordon Law-Smith was a brother of P. Law-Smith who was already playing for Perth Polo Club.

Players in the early days of Mingenew Club were Irwin Burges, Gooch, Gardiner, Warrenner brothers and Cole. Irwin Broad, Fred Bridges, John O'Halloran and Colin Pearce later followed these among others.

During these early years polo was played further north in the Pastoral country, station properties like Warralong, De Grey, Mulyee, Ettrick and Boodarrie held polo games on the station among the various players in those vast areas.

Players such as brothers George and Thomas Hardie, J.L. Stewart, A. Swan, W. Vie, S. Corney, Thomas Richardson and Charles Holthouse were some that made teams in that Port Hedland area.

Mundabullangarner Stn. had a team of coloured stockmen who used to play on mules back in those early times.

1907 saw the formation of Northam polo team under the leadership of Horace Withnell; it is of note that descendant Keith Withnell who I knew well, played for Miling and many years for Perth Polo Club. We knew him all as Colonel Bindi Bindi.

1911. Three clubs Katanning, Narrogin and Broomehill were all formed at this time in history; the guiding hand behind most of this was the Hardie family. Three Hardie brothers namely Ted, Tom and George came south from the pastoral country to farm in the southern areas.

Ted located at " Denabling ", Tom at " Rosedale " in the Narrogin area and George at " Wallinar " in Broomehill.

In that same year the first tournament for the area was held in a paddock owned by H.V. Piesse and saw five teams compete. They were Katanning, Badgebup District, Broomehill, Narrogin and Mingenew, this tournament being won by Narrogin.

Katanning / Broomehill, comprised George Hardie, Edgar Stewart, N L Davis, E B Anderson, Geo House, Tom Richardson and Bob Louden.

Badgebup District, Arnold Warrin, Elliott Warrin, George Hudson, J C Warrin and C Banks.

Narrogin had Ted Hardie, Charlie Mitchell, Colonel Dr. Olden, Dr Lewis and Jack Brown.

Mingenew comprised Gordon Law-Smith, Irwin Burges, Alec Grant, Gardiner and Gooch.

1913 saw a team from Narrogin comprising Ted and Tom Hardie, H L Chipper and Charlie Mitchell travel north to Northam for a match against the local team. Unfortunately a member of the Northam team John Gollan died from injuries sustained during the game.

Narrogin polo was played on " Mickey Brown's " paddock up until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 , when Broomehill and Katanning also went into recess as did the rest of the state , however in Geraldton Gymkhana's were held raising patriotic funds.

1918 (during wartime) saw games played in Narrogin at Jack Higham's property " Minnigin " between the Oldies and the Youngsters.

The game was won by the Oldies, being Tom Hardie, Charlie Mitchell, Ted Hardie and Colonel Dr Olden, from the Youngsters comprising Jack Stevens, Paddy Brown, Aubrey Hardie and Jack Brown.

Other players taking part in games were Stan Bradford, Dave Barron, Clarrie O'Connor, Frank Robinson and Sam Bradford.

1920 saw polo again played in the Broomehill – Katanning area with players like Edgar Richardson, Bob Loudon, Bernard House, Ivor Roberts, Tom Catling, Archie Hardie and Phil Crossley.

1920 again there was polo in Perth following the 1914-18 war, land in South Perth adjacent to Mill Point Rd was developed and became Kensington Park Racecourse, polo was played here and in 1923 racing ceased and the land was taken over by Polo and Sports Ground Ltd., a company formed by Langley Lefroy. This area was in the district known as Hurlingham and the ground became known as the Hurlingham grounds.

Mr E Waugh was secretary of the company with his office in the W.A. Turf Club building and Assessment No. 4078, Lots 38a – 98 were in the name of Edward Darlot and subsequently 400 pounds gave Perth Polo Club right of entry in 1925. It is understood that Perth Polo Club did own Hurlingham Grounds through the efforts of A L B Lefroy later to become Sir Langley Lefroy. As well as can be ascertained Darlot, Stewart and some others purchased the ground for 6000 pounds. What the final wash up of the area that happened at the outbreak of W 2., I do not know. There were several stories re this but I certainly never knew the out come although the late Charlie Readhead did tell me it was never concluded correctly.

During these years Chinese gardeners leased the river frontage for the sum of 4 pounds 10 shillings [\$9] per month.

The annual Polo Ball was held at the Hotel Adelphi [Parmelia] for a cost of 7 shillings and six pence per ticket [75 cents]. Playing Membership was 3 Guineas per year (\$ 6. 30) and social Membership stood at 1 Guinea (\$2 .10).

A top groom at that time was paid 3 pounds 10 shillings per week (\$ 7) for seven days attendance.

1924 saw a big revival of polo at Hurlingham with teams from Irwin, Broomehill, Moonyoonooka, Mingenew, Moora, Narrogin, Perth and Katanning register with the W.A. Polo Assoc.

1924 ; Moora Polo Club was formed and registered with players N. Lee-Steere , K. Roberts , L . Francisco and Dave Edgar whom I knew.

1921. This saw a revival of polo at Moonyoonooka with Charlie Murray a former Mt Crawford player from South Australia (Murray was a keen sportsman having excelled in a number of sports including a boxing championship of South Australia) being a grazier and having moved into the area along with local players Charlie Readhead, Hugh Hamersley, Keith Grant, Colin Grant, Harold Readhead, Edgar Grant, Walter Grant and support from Watty McKenzie Grant.

Walter Grant went on to play for Broomehill after the war and was one of their dominating players, I well remember him playing No 3 for Broomehill and Laurie Bain playing in front of Walter. Laurie hit 11 goals from what Walter Grant hit up to him .

Some where during the 1920's the Readheads had a difference of opinion with Charlie Murray and left to join the Irwin club.

1923. The Joseph Charles Cup along with the Gordon Gooch Cup were introduced for A grade polo, the Charles Cup being a championship cup played off the stick and the Gooch Cup played on handicap.

The Charles Cup was donated by Mr Joseph Charles of Land and Homes W.A. and the Gooch Cup by Mr Gordon Gooch of Wandagee Station, Carnarvon.

Originally the Charles Cup was offered so if any team winning it three years in succession, then that team retained the cup. Broomehill won the cup outright in the first three years under the captaincy of Edgar Richardson with slight variations of players, which included Aubrey Hardie, Tom Catling and Archie Hardie.

Joseph Charles donated a second cup, which was again won outright by Edgar Richardson captaining Broomehill having three other various players, they being Ted Richbeth, Bernard House and Ivor Roberts.

The third Charles cup was donated but Mr Joseph Charles made it then for perpetual competition.

In the years just prior to 1923 the Irwin Polo Club was formed and led by Col. Irwin Burges under the presidency of Nelson Pearce who later became president of Perth Polo Club 1928/29.

Irwin club was supported with players such as Edgar Grant, Arthur Oliver, Hal Watson John O'Halloran, and Irwin Broad who under the captaincy of Col. Burges presented a strong combination as they proved when playing and winning the tournament in Broomehill in the year of 1923.

It was also in that year 1923 that Col. Irwin Burges donated the Burges Cup for teams beaten in the first round of the Gooch Cup as played for until this present time.

1926 saw Narrogin develop a new polo ground for their tournament of that year with three teams competing, Perth; Langley Lefroy, Norm Darcy, Nelson Pearce and Dan Luck.

Narrogin; Aubrey Hardie, Jack Brown, Charlie Mitchell and Dave Barron.

Broomehill; Edgar Richardson, George Hardie, Tom Richardson and Phil Crossley.

1926; WA Polo Assoc issued new laws pertaining to the game i.e., ponies of any size could be played as only ponies 14.2 hands and under could be played prior to that time, also the ball was not to exceed 3 inches diameter or 5 oz in weight and shall be made of Willow or some other material agreed to by all States.

1926; the present Charles cup was played between Broomehill and Mingenew with Broomehill once again captained by Edgar Richardson running out winners.

Playing for Broomehill were Bob Louden, Ivor Roberts, Edgar Richardson and Bernard House.

Playing for Mingenew were Reg Percy (left handed), Charlie Readhead, Col. Irwin Burges and Harold Readhead. It is worthy of note that Percy played left handed and the rules obviously were amended after this time. I personally knew Reg Percy and he did play left handed.

A Sterling Silver hand beaten image on the Charles Cup was made from a photograph taken during this game and depicts the players.

Left to right , Bernard House , Edgar Richardson ,Reg Percy (behind) , Harold Readhead , Bob Lowden , Col.Irwin Burges (striking) , Charlie Readhead and Ivor Roberts (far right).

I personally knew six of these players, the only ones I never knew were my cousin Irwin Burges and Bernard House.

It is worthy of note that I think six of these players were returned men from the 10th. Light Horse .

1929 ; The Centenary of Western Australia and the W.A. Polo Association and its President Mr Joseph Charles promoted a Centenary Tournament while Nelson Pearce donated The Western Australian Centenary Polo Cup to be played for by a team selected from South Australian players competing in the tournament and a team selected from West Australian players competing in the tournament .

The cup would be played at the conclusion of the Centenary Tournament to be won outright and played off the stick over seven chukkas of eight minutes .

Competing in the Charles cup were :

Broomehill :
Bob Louden
Ivor Roberts
Edgar Richardson
Archie Hardie

Narrogin :
J. Brown
S. Bradford
A . Hardie
C .Craig

Adelaide :
M. Noonan
C. Law-Smith
F . Barritt
F. Porter

Clare :
G. Hawker
F. Fetherstonhaugh
A. Melrose
R. Warnes

Perth :
J. Noonan
G. Morley
J. Stewart
D. Luck

Irwin :
J. O'Halloran
I. Burges
C. Readhead
H. Readhead

Murchison :
E, Grant
C. Murray
D. Edgar
K. Grant

Katanning :
A. Anderson
H. House
B. House
P. Crossley

Adelaide won the Charles Cup and also The Centenary Cup defeating a combined W.A. team of Bob Loudon, Aubery Hardie, Edgar Richardson and Col. Irwin Burges.

1930 ; There was a turn of events with the Charles Cup going north of Perth for the first time when the Irwin team comprising John Rowan (back from playing in U.S.A. with Snowy Baker) Charlie Readhead , Harold Readhead and Col. Irwin Burges being the victors . Snowy Baker represented Australia at the 1908 Olympic games in three separate fields , diving , boxing and swimming , where he won the silver medal in the middle weight boxing .He was the manager of Chicago Polo Club in 1928 and another of his claims to fame was he taught Elizebeth Taylor to ride a horse for the movie Black Beauty .

John Rowan told me that while he was in America he and a group of Australians attended the inauguration of President Hoover and all being young men they for devilment lowered the American flag and pulled aloft the Australian flag, this was noticed by security who raced to the top of the building, but the Australians avoided arrest by fleeing down the fire escape and dispersing into the crowd. Baker offered John Rowan the position to stay on playing in the U.S of A, however his father was not in agreeance with the idea. John told me the polo grounds in Chicago at that time were just as good as bowling greens and it was impossible to miss the ball.

Polo declined into recession during the Depression years but revived again in 1935 with large crowds attending weekends at Hurlingham after advertising at the Grand Theatre also the Royal Theatre in Perth, neither of these exist today.

Broomehill dominated the Charles Cup from 1935 until the outbreak of war in 1939 with players such as Tom Atkinson, brothers Archie and Mick Hardie, M. Richardson, Hertel House, Phil Crossley, Tom Daws and Ted Richberth.

The State Tournament in 1939 included a visiting South Australian Team comprising E Howard, W. Bakewell, D. Reid and R. Porter, with a total handicap of 12 goals. The Charles Cup final was played between Adelaide and an extremely powerful West. Australian side of Tom Atkinson , Col. Irwin Burges , Mick and Archie Hardie who proved too strong for the visitors winning the cup 12 to 5 .

1939 Cliff Tidy and Jim Henderson were the driving force in forming the Serpentine Polo Club (hence The Henderson Shield in memory of Jim Henderson who was lost in the Air Force over occupied Europe).

1940 ; The Charles Cup went north again with Mingenew winning the cup for their first time , the players consisted of Stewart Harkness , Colin Pearce , Charlie Readhead and Col. Irwin Burges . During the years between the wars Burges was looked upon as one of the State's leading players, travelling to play in England and religiously practising every day where possible.

It was in 1940 that a Northam Club reformed supported by the Withnell family but unfortunately the war terminated all polo in the state.

Play ceased for the duration of the Second World War up until 1948 before any play of significance commenced. At the war's end The Worker's Homes Board began subdividing Hurlingham Grounds and soon afterwards the State Housing Commission began building homes in the district.

Scratch games were played in Perth at the corner of Kalamunda Rd and Great Eastern Highway in 1946 and 1947, at the end of 1946 the Perth Club was revived following a meeting held at the Adelphi Hotel electing Sir Langley Lefroy President and Bill Carcary Secretary. Following this meeting an approach was made to the Royal Agricultural Society and the Charles was played again in 1948 at Claremont Show grounds. Play remained there with the Annual State Tournament played each year until 1980, when Perth Club moved to its present grounds at King's Meadow in Guildford.

It was 1947 that Irwin Polo Club again appeared fielding a team of Dennis Readhead, Dick Vincent, Francis Burges and Charlie Readhead.

I can remember going to a practise match at " Irwin Park " in those years when my father Hugh Hamersley, Dick Vincent, Francis Burges and Gerald Criddle and others were playing on the day.

It was approximately around this time that Mingenew and Irwin amalgamated with players such as Dennis Readhead, Charlie Readhead, Stewart Harkness, Peter Lefroy, Colin Pearce, Fred Bridges and others.

Serpentine Club had grown in numbers and by 1948 were fielding players such as Cliff Tidy, Fred Baldwin, Ivon Elliott, John Lewis and George Elliott to name some.

Minninnooka Polo Club was formed in 1950 at " Minninnooka Stn ", in the Walkaway – Northern Gully area , Minninnooka belonged to the Readhead family , and fielded large numbers of players like Harold Readhead , Frank Burt , Rich Maslin , Mrs Sheila Readhead , Dennis Readhead , Colin Pearce , Eric Sewell , Mrs A Sewell , Colin Carr and from 1952 onwards when I commenced playing players such as Ted Culliton , John Watson , David Grant , Dr Guy Wallace , Elizabeth Sewell , Lucille Parker , Len Hamersley and Cedric Parker .

Minninnooka Club continued into the 1960's until when the Readhead family sold the property and later the Team became an Associate team under the leadership of Owen Readhead and went on to win the Charles Cup in 1974 with John Carey (who started playing in N.Z.) Ian Webster, Owen Readhead and Richard Webster.

One of the states prominent clubs Kojonup was formed in 1949 , and attracted players such as Bob Russell , Desmond Reid , Stan Haggerty , Geoff Fisher , Brice Bunny , Robert Reid ,Graham Bunny , Buster Ednie –Brown and later there were many young players Ivon Morley , Rod Trethowan , Ivan Haggerty , Mark Mc Guire , Fraser Reid , Derek Reid and Don Byrne to mention some , the club still continues

to produce young players . Kojonup became a force in the late fifties and dominant in the sixties and seventies.

The dominant club team during the 50's and up until the early 60's was of course still Broomehill " Red " with players like Mick Hardie , John Anderson , Stewart James , Neal Richardson , Kingsley James and Peter Anderson . During these years team combinations from Broomehill won the Charles Cup on most occasions.

The Kojonup club has produced some of the states leading players and won the Charles Cup on more than a score of occasions.

The early 1950's saw polo clubs form in Mt Magnet and Meekatharra. Mt Magnet had a team made up of pastoralists comprising David Fitzgerald, Johnny Jones, and Bob Clarkson and captained by Jim Leacock.

The more successful being Meekatharra that were known by the rather flamboyant name " Teano " named after the Teano Ranges in that area . The original team consisted of pastoralists being Laurie Bain of Woodlands Stn , Val Sorenson of Bryah Stn , Dudley Farrar of Mt Augustus Stn and Allan Bain of Mt Clare Stn .

It was in 1950 that Harold Readhead together with his polo-playing wife Sheila, son Dennis and Frank Burt of Glengarrie Stn motored together with horses to Meekatharra and assisted with the beginning of polo for Teano and Mt Magnet.

I must make mention of the support Harold Readhead gave to polo in these years of re starting. He would load a tractor onto his Thornycroft truck and drive to Perth via the Midland line road some 11 hrs to Claremont Show Grounds and spend the week working on the grounds with the staff preparing for the State Tournament.

It was also at about that time at a polo game in Perth that Peter Cullen who managed one of Jack Money's stations organised the Meekatharra group of interested supporters into meeting at Ennie Bain's property in Forrestfield and forming Teano Polo Club.

They first played in competition in 1951 at the Meekatharra racecourse against a combined team from Minninooka and Mt Magnet and then the following year Ian Thom who owned Mulla Bulla Stn donated the Murchison Cup. This was played between Teano and Mt Magnet at Mt Magnet with Teano proving the stronger. Several games were played between Minninooka, Mt Magnet and Teano for the next couple of years, then in 1954 Teano first nominated to play in the annual State Tournament which in those times was held in the month of March at Claremont Royal Show Grounds.

It was on this occasion that Val Sorenson was instructed to mark Col. Pat Keenan who was playing for Perth Gold and told not to leave him. As it turned out when Keenan went behind the back line to take a knock in Val rode back with him and rode him off the hit in!! The good Col. was not amused at this and asked, " Could someone take this bastard away "

1956 was the year Keith Grant joined the team at Claremont in place of Val Sorenson having brought his horses down by sea from the North-West to Geraldton where he played several weeks at Minninooka then on by State ship to Fremantle where he rode the ponies from Fremantle to Claremont Show Grounds. Things were so very different in those days as I remember them.

Bruce Brown also played for Teano filling in when Val Sorenson was unable.

In 1959 and 1960 Len Hamersley played for Teano with Dudley Farrar, Laurie Bain and Alan Bain as captain (Alan Bain was a tall powerful man, known as Big Al and we all gave him the utmost respect, as he had been known to pull the surcingle off the saddle to discipline jackaroo's. It was during that time Laurie Bain humbled me by saying that Len Hamersley would fall off at the gallop if called to do so in the game.

During the 1960 tournament we as Teano played and defeated Broomehill Red which nobody could believe, least of all their coach Edgar Richardson. After the initial shock he was heading off to get himself a whisky when one of his old team mates Ivor Roberts said to him , " Edgar that is one of the greatest things that has happened here for years " ! Edgar looked at him in total disbelief and said with heart felt meaning " if there was a H'aristocracy for bastards you would be a H'ear!!! Bringing forth much mirth from the spectators.

Teano ceased to play as such in 1962 and players went onto other teams, the name Teano played once since in Geraldton in 1988 against a Walkaway team held at the Equestrian Grounds, Woorree.

Playing for Teano were Laurie Bain and son Miles, along with Alan Bain and son Grant. Playing for Walkaway were Trish Jones, Bob Martin, Len Hamersley and Jo Parker.

1951 polo had Jim Armitage introduce Waroona team Bill Ward , Morrie Twaddle , Eddie Hull and himself , I always thought Jim Armitage was one of the most underestimated players to come to Western Australia , he came to the state probably forty years before his time . Had he arrived here in the 1990's people would have appreciated where he was coming from, Jim learned the game and played in Argentina prior the war and coming to W.A., he was handicapped on 5 goals and had above all, outstanding horse control plus the ability of enormous hitting power. Once in the early 50's his team Waroona drew Broomehill in the State tournament at Claremont, Armitage played a fantastic exhibition of polo with a team of new recruits against the hard seasoned Broomehill and on loosing by a narrow margin he pulled his gloves off and said to the team, " I am sorry I let you down " , so was Jim Armitage.

He also travelled to the Eastern States and captained a W.A. State team in 1951 consisting of Peter Lefroy, Ernest Lee-Steere (later Sir Ernest Lee-Steere), Neil Richardson and himself. Armitage received much praise from the East Coast press for his playing ability while on tour. Several years later I spoke with Neil Richardson of these games and he reinforced the fact of how well Armitage played in those

games in South Australia , NSW and Victoria and how the morning press described him as the brilliant young Armitage from Western Australia .

The team played for a few seasons then became Murray Districts and had several different players, being Mack Campbell and his son John, Ken and John Gibbs also John Stoddard. It was some years later that Johnny Campbell playing at Claremont Show Grounds made a tragic error and met Armitage head on at full pace, killing one of Jim's top ponies and injuring him quite badly, so much so that he never played polo again.

During the mid 50's clubs such as Roelands appeared with Forrest Rose, Jock Johnstone, Owen and Richard Piggott later with Peter Rose, Wally Patten, Ross Payne and Ivan Webster (father of Ian and Richard who played elsewhere in latter years).

During the 1950's Western Australian polo received a lot of moral support from the then Western Australian Governor Sir Charles Gairdner , who prior the war had been a player of standing having played off a handicap of seven . I can remember Sir Charles Gairdner once telling me that the late and great (Hurricane) Bob Skene was the toughest and roughest player he ever played against.

Other teams to appear during this time were Canning Districts with players Gill Chalwell, Bob Winter, Roy Irvine, Glen Davies and Keith Pollard. This team eventually melted away and saw players join Serpentine , all of these particular players were quite volatile and when they played as Serpentine and wore the purple colours I christened them " The Purple People Eaters " after the song that was on the hit parade at the time . This name stuck for as long as they played and wore those colours!

Miling Club came into being in 1956 with Malcolm Seymour , Ted Black , Keith Withnell and Theo Seymour , on Withnell's retirement Evan Hamersley went on to play a few seasons until the late Mrs Walsh from " Egoline " at Northam started up and sponsored the new Northam team consisting of Robin Lamperd . Theo Seymour, John Smart and Evan Hamersley.

The Australian Gold Cup was played at Claremont Show grounds during the State Tournament of 1956 between South Australia ; Hamlin Treweeke , Jack Noonan , Tom Porter and Dr Bill Hayward . West Australia; Geoff Fisher Bob Russell, Mick Hardy and Edward House, with W.A. defeating S.A. by ten goals. The W.A. side was very strong with Bob Russell and Mick Hardy in the middle and each having his choice of player in the team as I was told back then. Bob Russel chose Geoff Fisher and Mick chose Edward House. I remember Hamlin Treweeke's chestnut gelding Nylon winning the A.A. Hardy Champion Pony, that year.

W.G. (Bill) Bennett fielded a team as Gosnells in 1958, playing in blue and gold colours, the team consisted of Jack Townsend, Jack Ramsbottom, Len Hamersley and Bill Bennett, the fifth player who played some practise weekends was George Hall.

Following on to mid 1960's there was Capel Polo Club with Brian Garstone, Neville Rodwell, Len Rodwell and Henry Clifton. Others to follow were Chris Garstone, Wilf Henderson, George Miles and Keith Johnstone.

In the 1960's Peter Lefroy introduced the Cranmore team, there were a number of players there over the years that the team fielded these included Laurie Bain, Peter Lefroy, Bruce Lefroy, Alan Bain and John Harley (Rhodesia).

Perth Polo Club enjoyed a healthy period during the 1960's with A, B and C grade teams under the Club Captaincy of Stewart Harkness. Their A team consisting of Eric Denning , Peter Fischer , Len Hamersley captain and Dennis Readhead were the challenge to Kojonup for the Charles Cup on several occasions .

In the year of 1965 the first polo team from W.A. visited Singapore and Malaysia and played a series of games against teams from both countries. The team consisted of Robin Lamperd, Laurie Bain, Leonard Hamersley and Evan Hamersley.

The team was a private team as I had an invitation from H.R.H. Sultan Sir Ismail of Johore to take a team and to be his guests at Royal Johore Polo Club at Pasir Pelangi polo grounds.

The team played the weekend prior to sailing against Perth teams at the RAS grounds in Claremont.

I provided the ponies and the team embarked on the M.V. Centaur in January 1965, arriving in Singapore on the 25^{inst.}, all the ponies being purchased by H.R.H. Sultan Sir Ismail.

The team won six of the ten games played against teams from Singapore, Selangor, Royal Johore and Royal Pahang.

The more notable players played against during that tour were Lt Col., Brian Tayleur O.B.E., (assistant commander of the Far Eastern Land Forces) Singapore Polo Club , H.R.H. Tunku Mahkota of Pahang (Eddie) , Royal Pahang Polo Club , Mark Barlow , Dr ., Vija Lukshemayer , Selangor Polo Club , Dato ., Capt. Osman , Royal Johore , Major Hussain , Royal Johore , Ismail Ali , Royal Johore , Capt. Richard Keightley , Mike Hooper , Singapore Polo Club , Paul von Lissberg , Singapore Polo Club and Dr Mike Henigan , Singapore Polo Club .

(Sinse that tour the spelling of Johore has been amended to Johor on their gaining independence from Britain.)

1965 was the founding year of the Walkaway Polo Club, founded by Len Hamersley and his brother Evan, the original team being Rodney Ludgate, Laurie Bain, Len Hamersley and Evan Hamersley. Laurie Bain kept his ponies and groom at Mt Hill Pastoral Co owned by L and E Hamersley and he flew down from Woodlands Stn in his Cessna aircraft each weekend, while Rodney who lived at Mt Wittenoom Stn trucked his ponies each weekend. In later years Laurie and family lived at Hamersley's Bros " Wellstation " for the duration of the polo season.

The club quickly grew in size and strength with some 35 playing members playing each Sunday during the Summer months on the two club grounds situated at Wellstation some two miles from Walkaway town site, also on grounds at "Fairfield" made available by the late Robert Hamersley. The club boasted a large bough shed clubroom, tearoom and bar as well as brick showers and toilets.

Players such as Mike Harley (Rhodesia), John , Ross and Len O'Brien ,Mike Cobley , Adrian Cobley , Miles Bain , David Craven , Sandy Pate . Jeff Martin , Bob Martin, Roger and Jo Parker , Chris Foster ,Don Cant ,Ian Grant , Ian Broad ,David Williams , Craig Criddle , Peter Bennett , John Marriott , Drew Briety , Adrian and Geoff Gannon , Neville Stewart , Robert Gillam and many more joined the ranks .

Mike Harley was one of the club's many success stories; he came to Walkaway playing off one goal and left on four to take up playing on the East coast.

On numerous occasions the club nominated four teams in the State Tournament, which was conducted at the RAS grounds at Claremont, following 1980 teams nominated and played at King's Meadow, Guildford. Walkaway Club soon became strong contenders for the coveted Charles Cup, which it first won, in the early 1970's thus breaking Kojonup's dominance.

It was on two occasions that the celebrated 10 goals Robert Skene visited Walkaway Club to conduct polo clinics; it was on one of these visits he described Walkaway Polo Club as the loneliest club in the world as it was so far removed. Skene won the Argentine Open in 1952 and 1954 and won Champion Pony on both occasions.

The Australian polo captain Jim McGinley plus 7 also visited and conducted a polo school at Walkaway covering all aspects of play and umpiring. These clinics were invaluable to the club and individual players, as was proven in the years to follow.

The club first won the Charles Cup in 1972 and from that date became one of the strong contenders winning the trophy several times afterwards.

The Walkaway Club always conducted two tournaments a year with team from Kojonup , Perth , Serpentine , Minninnooka , Crystal Brook and others attending to play the Williams and Murchison Cups .

The club still conducts two tournaments a year, one prior Christmas at Guildford Grammar School and the second after Christmas on the Perth Polo Club grounds at King's Meadow.

1966 saw another team from W.A. tour overseas to N.Z; Geoff Fisher organised a team consisting of Laurie Bain, Des Reid, Neal Richardson and himself, they played several games in N.Z at various clubs with mixed results.

Early 1966 was the beginning of an exciting year for W.A. polo, The Rothman's Foundation funded Sinclair Hill 10 goals to visit the state for five days to hold a polo clinic, which was conducted by Perth Polo Club at Claremont Royal Show Grounds.

There was a large nomination of players from all over the state attended and were introduced to lectures and demonstrations along with practical practice as had never been seen here before or since . Players were afforded to instruction in all aspects until Saturday lunch time when Sinclair had arranged with Perth club captain Stewart Harkness to choose the best team for W.A. , he said he would pick the second team and play and as he said , “ I will beat you “ .

Saturday game W.A.team `consisted of Stan Haggerty, Peter Lefroy, Len Hamersley and Keith Kiely / Peter Fischer turn about. Versed, Rodney Ludgate, Mark McGuire, Buster Brown and Sinclair Hill.

Sunday game for W.A. was Stan Haggerty, Peter Lefroy, Len Hamersley and Dennis Readhead, against Sinclair and his second pick with the result that Hill won both days. It must be remembered Sinclair was at the peak of his playing career and we had never ever seen a ten-goal player, let alone played against one!! However it was the greatest lesson in polo I ever received, in fact I never ceased learning from it. Things he touched upon were like how every player has a mute side when playing , making it all important for a team to keep the opposition in certain places by dominating the center of the ground and when the goal is approached from different directions how the ball will curve , how and why it is fruitless to take a second strike on a neck shot , what play to use to prevent the ball from rotating anticlock wise round past the goal you are shooting for , how to hit penalties and many more things I had never heard before .

I feel it is worthy of note to document an incident that happened during the Sunday afternoon game against Sinclair. I won the ball in a play near the boundary some 150 yards from goal and hit a long ball down the ground, when some 30 yards out from goal I could hear Sinclair approaching extremely fast on my right, riding a grey mare “ Olga “ belonging to Peter Lefroy, so rather than let him come and smother me I went over to meet him. I thought to myself , I can't beat him , but I can beat his horse , as I was riding a very good one at the time . I balanced my pony and bumped him hard which moved the mare some 12 inches off her line.

This tactic would have spoiled most players long enough to allow me to tap the ball just that once more, however Sinclair who rode short in a strong brace position which enabled him to let the mare go and he came across and sat on my saddle, I found myself at full pace and standing on one stirrup fast running out of room, as soon as I pulled off him he focused on the ball and hit it back from the goal mouth some 80 yards. This was yet another lesson in riding which gave him that advantage and maximum strength in the saddle.

During early 1970's Col. Pat Keenan established a team at York on his property Wilberforce, various players drifted through the ranks while it was in operation. Perth teams visited and played games at Wilberforce for a couple of years during that time. I well remember playing there over a weekend, there was an Englishman Carr-White staying at Wilberforce and he played in the games on both days.

1981 was the year the Gooch and Charles cups were first played at King's Meadow in Guildford, having been played for the prior 30 odd years at Claremont. It was a big move for W.A. polo as polo had always enjoyed the excellent facilities at the RAS

grounds, where there was accommodation for all the grooms, kitchen facilities, stabling for all the ponies on sight, bars and grandstand available for spectators plus the polo Cocktail party as held in the RAS Members pavilion following the final of the Charles Cup on the final Saturday evening where we drank crates of Champagne. It took time for King's Meadow to be established, however a hard working Perth Polo Club driven by the champion of King's Meadow Reg Denny turned it into the polo ground it is today.

West Australian polo is deeply indebted to the late Reg Denny, he commentated polo at the RAS for almost thirty years and at Kings Meadow for another twenty years, acted as Secretary and Treasurer of both Perth Polo Club and also the WAPA on different occasions. Reg was one of polo's tireless workers.

1986 John Fischer and Ian Webster were playing a weekend at Walkaway and they broached the subject with me of a W.A. Open, we talked over it for all weekend and in the following year of 87 the first W.A. Open was conducted. We also talked at length of establishing a W.A. Masters but it never came to fruition. Of course the W.A. Open as first established was nothing like it is today, to be honest it now is just another ordinary tournament like all the others.

The original idea we dreamed up was for a grade teams only, with each team being put together from W.A., A grade players and they being able to import one outside player if they wished. The whole idea was to give A grade players the opportunity of higher grade polo in W.A. by building teams from the best players in the state plus the inclusion of one import from anywhere in the world. But unfortunately over time it was down graded to what we see today and the great inspiration was lost.

The W.A. Open of 1987 was won by Fraser Reid, Wayne Rodwell, Len Hamersley with Derek Reid who had returned from playing several seasons in Florida and U.K.

Other high profile players were imported such as Jamie Makay, Jim and Pat McGinley, Jim and Stewart Gilmore, Richard Walker, John Osbourne, also brothers Will and Andrew Hine from U.K., and Brett Kiely who had also played abroad for several years similar to Derek Reid.

