



# SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

INCORPORATED

*Forging the future of the Shire Horse in Australia*

**MARCH 2009**  
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



*Bucca Valley Winona owned by SHSA member Kate Williams*

**PATRON:**

Mr Rob Vickery

Council Member, Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

**[www.shirehorsesociety.com.au](http://www.shirehorsesociety.com.au)**



## Shire Horse Society Australia Incorporated

[www.shirehorsesociety.com.au](http://www.shirehorsesociety.com.au)

### President's Report

My last report in the August newsletter was in anticipation of the Fund Raiser we were about to have at Romeo's Restaurant in Port Kembla. I'm happy to report that the evening raised \$6000 profit – a big thank you to Lizzy Williams who provided the venue and gave us the lion share of the menu profits. We would also like to thank the very generous SHSA supporters who gave us some fabulous prizes to auction off at the dinner.

The newly launched Stud Book is being well received. I'd like to remind everyone that you do not need to belong to any Shire Horse organisation either here in Australia or in England to register your Australian Shire in the 'The Australian Shire Horse Stud Book'. It is a very economical alternative to registering your Shire in the UK as the exchange rate for the Aussie dollar into English pounds isn't too favourable and if you have to include late fees it can become very expensive. All of the Royal shows in Australia recognise 'The Australian Shire Horse Stud Book' so you can show your wonderful horses without going to a lot of expense. Our registration certificate is a beautiful piece of artwork and certainly worthy of putting on display. If you have any questions about registering your horses please phone or email Deb Buckland in Tasmania, she is more than happy to answer your enquiries. SHSA sponsors Shire Classes at all of the main Royal Shows in Australia - Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and

Brisbane – we donate the Champion trophy at each of these shows.

Lastly I wanted to thank all involved in making our Shire Horse Seminar in January so successful. We had around 50 people over the whole weekend, and there was a lot of laughs and a lot of learning. There is a full report later in this newsletter but special thanks to Ross Carberry and Karim Kooros for being our guest speakers.

The seminar was particularly meaningful for me as it brought together people interested in harnessing, showing and breeding the three main heavy horse breeds, Percherons, Clydesdales and Shires. We all share very common interests and new friendships and lots of enthusiasm and knowledge was ever present all weekend.

Looking forward to catching up with you all at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the premier showcase for Shires in Australia.

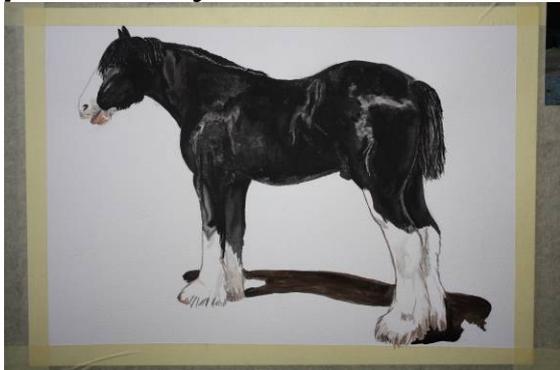
*Helene Scarf*

#### **In this issue.....**

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| SHSA News.....                | 3   |
| Seminar & photos .....        | 4-7 |
| Committee contacts.....       | 7   |
| Clydesdale/Shire seminar..... | 8-9 |
| How to breed for a filly..... | 11  |
| Online foal show .....        | 13  |
| SHSA stud web pages.....      | 13  |
| Service providers.....        | 14  |

# SHSA NEWS

***Have you always wanted a portrait of your horse?***



*Adele Hill portrait of Oakridge Speculator at 1 year of age.*

One of our members, Adele Hill, is a very talented artist and can do wonderful horse portraits. If you are interested in commissioning a portrait from Adele you can contact her at [ahi45862@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ahi45862@bigpond.net.au) or phone 0427 613 973. Her rates are \$70 for an A4 size, \$100 for an A3 (29.7 x 42cm) and \$135 for a 36 x 51cm size. This is for a single head shot or full horse paddock shots. If you would like more detail that's no problem but prices vary.

***Stud Book*** – don't forget that for a limited time you can dual register for free in The Australian Shire Horse Stud Book.

Go to [www.shirehorsesociety.com.au](http://www.shirehorsesociety.com.au), click on 'Stud Book' then 'Dual Registrations' for instructions.

Many thanks to Deb, our Registrar, who is doing a great job.

***Proposed Horse Levy*** – we are pleased to say that the proposed Horse Disease Levy was defeated in the senate, thanks to the independent senators who voted against. Pony Club Australia were instrumental in the defeat, after making an excellent submission to the Senate in opposition of the Bill.

***SHSA Stallion Directory*** – open to stallions and semen owned by SHSA member's and registered with the SHSA, SHS (UK), ASHA (USA), CSHA (CAN). Stallions must be available to outside mares.

To be included in the 2009 edition contact:

Michelle Miles

SHSA Stallion Publication Editor

P: (08)9732 2207, M: 0410 340 872

E: [oldworldhorses@hotmail.com](mailto:oldworldhorses@hotmail.com)

***Sydney Royal Easter Show*** – Shire show date is Thursday 16 April. The classes start after lunch. Good luck to everyone competing, and we look forward to seeing members who come to watch. Shires are normally stabled in the Grace Pavilion, but if you are not sure how to find them, contact a committee member.

***Ultramarathon adventure*** – Ineke, our publicity officer, is heading to Morocco to participate in the Marathon des Sable (Marathon of the Sands) – the world's toughest footrace! She will be running about 250km over 7 days, through the Sahara Desert, carrying a backpack with all her food and bedding!

You can find out more about the race at [www.darbaroud.com](http://www.darbaroud.com). You can watch her progress on line, and she will have emails delivered to her tent every day of the race. She'd love to hear some encouragement during the race from any Society members who would like to email between 29/3 to 4/4 visit the race website and follow the instructions on the home page.

On her way she will be attending the National Shire Horse Show at Peterborough (UK). We wish her all the very best (or survival at the very least) and look forward to hearing from her when she gets back.

## SHSA Seminar Report and Photos

Over 50 members came from far and wide to spend the weekend at the idyllic Cedars Shire Horse Stud in Kangaroo Valley in January. Ross Carbery and Miriam Bentley arrived with their semi trailer full of harness, horse drawn equipment, and two quiet horses. It was very generous of them to travel all the way from near Holbrook and to bring such a lot of equipment for the benefit of those who attended the weekend.

Ross gave three exceptionally informative and interesting talks about the different types of heavy horse harness, driving heavy horses and versatile and light weight vehicles such as the American show cart and forecart.

Although Ross has proven himself to be an expert in showing in harness, the focus of these talks was how the driving of heavy horses could be as accessible and easy as possible for the average person. A highlight of his talks was his willingness to allow attendees to long rein his horse under his instruction, and then to

take those interested for a ride in his forecart.

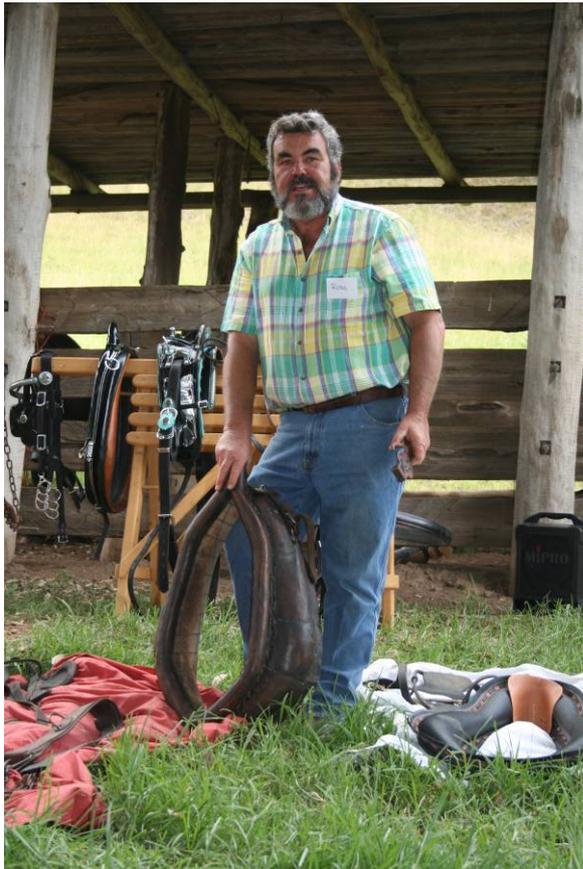
We had much positive feedback about Ross's talks and we would like to thank him very much for all his time and effort for the weekend.

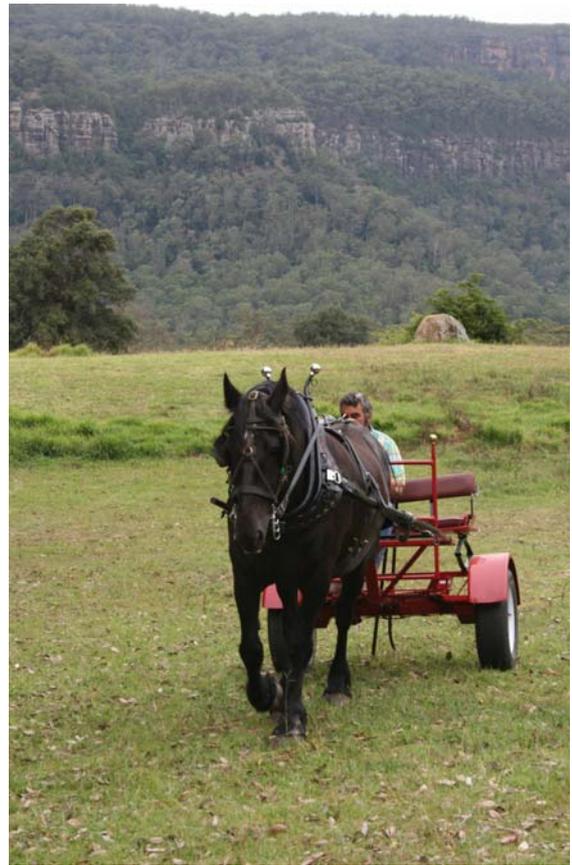
Karim Kooros from Retford Veterinary Centre at Bowral also kept everyone's interest with his presentation on artificial insemination in the breeding of horses. Many thanks to Karim for sharing his knowledge with us and for giving his time.

As with all our seminars, the social side was as important as anything else, and there was a lot of fireside chat. Friendships were made and renewed as people had come from as far away as Tasmania and Queensland. We all enjoyed Byron's lamb on the spit for dinner. Thank you Byron!

A very big thank you to Helene and Gregory Scarf who once again opened up their beautiful 'hidden valley' property and cottages for SHSA members to enjoy.







Ed: Membership. SHSA welcomes new members for both full and associate membership. Please go to [www.shirehorsesociety.com.au](http://www.shirehorsesociety.com.au) and download an application form if you know anyone who wants to join.



## Committee Contact Details

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Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society  
NSW Branch

**CLYDESDALE – SHIRE**  
**HORSE SEMINAR**

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

**Borambola Park Station**

***RMB 690 Sturt Hwy***

**Wagga Wagga**

**Cost - \$25.00 per person**

**Bookings Essential – Limited availability**

**Lunch provided**

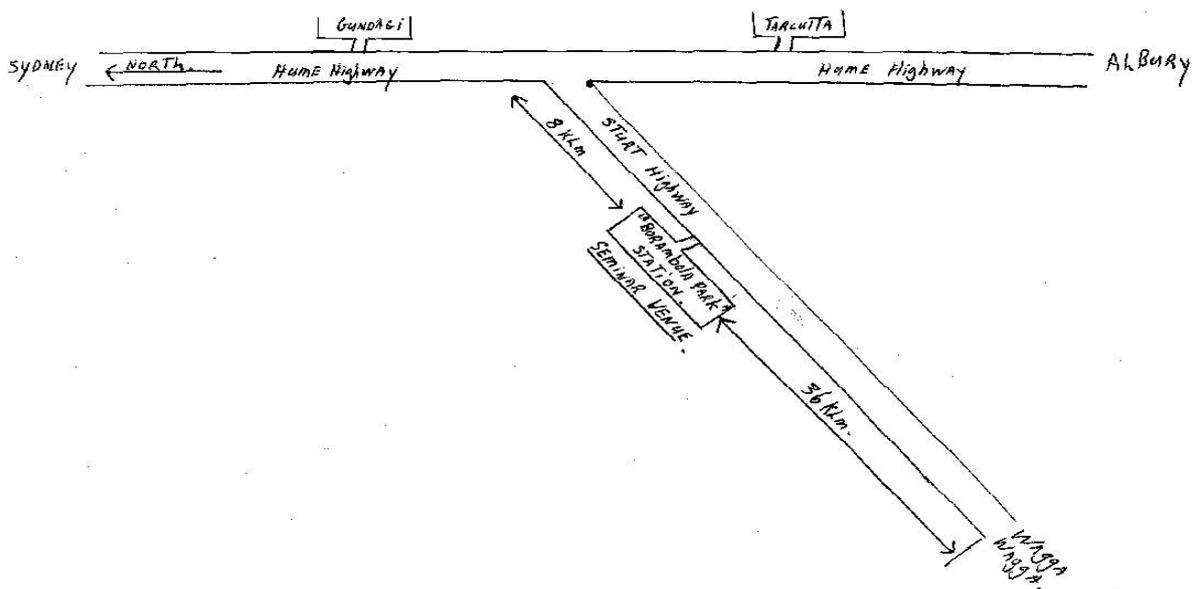
**Camping on the property is available overnight**

**Motel accommodation available Wagga Wagga or Tarcutta**

***For Bookings***

***Please contact – Bob Pierce 02 48 320439***

***Karen Britton – 0428 398321***



## Clydesdale – Shire Horse Seminar Program

Walt Bedford, the judge of Clydesdales, Shires, Percherons and Heavy Harness classes at this years (2009) Sydney Royal Show, has agreed to stay an extra week to hold this seminar.

Walt is half of the famous P&W Bedford partnership – the leading and most successful exhibitors of Clydesdales and Shires in both led and harness classes in the United Kingdom. He is renowned for his ability to plait, shoe and exhibit a show horse.

This is a rare opportunity to attend a seminar with someone so conversant in both led and harness, who is willing to share his vast knowledge and give a hands on exhibition of his skills and tutor people on the day.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 9.00am – 10.00am  | Points, conformation of Clydesdale/Shire<br>Difference between the two breeds   |
| 10.00am – 10.30am | Morning Tea   |
| 10.30am – 12.30pm | Preparation of the Horse for showing<br>Shoeing the Clydesdale/Shire for Show<br>Correct shoes to use   |
| 12.30pm – 1.30pm  | Lunch   |
| 1.30pm – 3.00pm   | Workshop - Plaiting and preparing Clydesdale/Shire<br>for showing. The different methods of presentation for<br>each breed<br>AND/OR<br>Hands on driving instruction available in a single horse<br>and vehicle for beginners under the instruction of Tim<br>and Mark Peel |
| 3.00pm – 3.30pm   | Afternoon Tea   |
| 3.30pm – 4.30pm   | Selecting and showing Clydesdales/Shire in Harness<br>What a harness judge looks for in the show ring.  |

# NZ wild horse study reveals how to breed for a filly

*A New Zealand study on wild horses has revealed the changing condition of the mare at conception may play a major part in determining the sex of the foal.*

*The study found that 97% of mares losing condition at conception gave birth to fillies, and 80% of the mares gaining condition at conception gave birth to colts.*

## Background

In a six-year study funded by the New Zealand Department of Conservation, researchers Dr Elissa Cameron and Dr Wayne Linklater found that the change in condition of the mare around the time of conception, as opposed to her actual condition, better predicted the sex of the foal.

The researchers, who were students in the Ecology Group of the Institute of Natural Resources at Massey University, were studying wild horses in the Kaimanawa Mountains and surrounding areas in the central North Island of New Zealand, between August 1994 and 1999.

Dr Cameron, in a previous study for her PhD thesis, set out to test the expectation that more males should be born to better-conditioned mares.

The primary motivation for the initial research on the herd was to trial remotely delivered contraceptives to control herd growth.

Dr Linklater said that the subpopulation in the Moawhango River basin area was the focus of the study.

“There were few difficulties locating the horses in the wild, as there was a decent number, and they were loyal to their home ranges. Once you know which area a group is in, it’s actually pretty easy to find them,” Dr Linklater said.

“More than 400 horses were individually identifiable by either freeze brands on their rumps or natural markings.”

## Research method

Body condition scores (BCS) were estimated by visual body fat

distribution on an 11-point scale (0 - 5 with 0.5 graduations) with the aid of strong binoculars or a telescope. Scores were recorded every time a horse was seen, provided visibility was good.

Body condition at conception was calculated by backdating from the date of foaling (accurate to  $\pm 5$  days) by the average gestation length ( $336 \pm 10$  days), and pre-conception (conception  $-20 \pm 10$  days) to post conception (conception  $+20 \pm 10$  days).

Only mares who’s BCS had been recorded at least twice during each 20-day period were used in the analysis, and the sample size was 118 births. The BCS of the mares ranged from 1 to 3.5, with an average of 2.5. The scores were compared before and after conception to measure the change in condition in each mare.



*A mare from the study group in the Kaimanawa Ranges*

## Research Results

When mares were categorised by whether they were losing condition, maintaining condition or gaining condition around conception, the results were striking. If gaining condition at conception 80% gave birth to a colt, but if losing condition at conception only 3% gave birth to a colt.

There was no difference in foaling rates in relation to condition at conception. This makes it unlikely that the results could be explained by differential loss of the more costly sex during gestation, particularly since the sex ratio deviates significantly in both directions – towards sons when females are gaining condition and towards daughters when females are losing condition.

“Wild horses are a good species for this sort of study,” Dr Linklater said.

“The mares are not supplementary fed and go through annual condition cycles, and there is only one offspring. Animals with multiple offspring make such a study very difficult.

“Foals are easy to spot because horses don't hide their newborns. Cattle and deer often take their offspring into hiding but wild horses tend to be nervous in cover,” Dr Linklater said.

“Visual body scoring also works well with horses as their fat is spread all over the body, unlike cattle and sheep which tend to concentrate fat around their internal organs.”

Previous studies into the variation in the production of males and females have often produced inconsistent results.

One theory to explain these results is the Trivers-Willard hypothesis, which states that:

- i) mothers in good condition with more resources to invest would be advantaged by producing sons, as highly competitive sons

would out-compete highly competitive daughters, who are constrained to a lower reproductive rate; and

- ii) mothers with less resources to invest would be advantaged by producing a daughter, as a daughter would out-reproduce an unsuccessful son.

“So our results were not surprising, as the theory predicts what we found. It is delightful when that happens,” Dr Linklater said.

## Further study

Dr Cameron has also hypothesized that glucose levels play a part in sex ratio, and a year-long study into the relationship between the sex of the offspring and glucose is about to start, using sheep. The process is simple and non-invasive, with the glucose being inserted into the uterus via a catheter in the cervix.

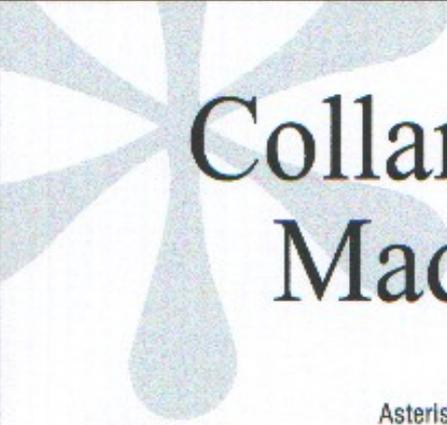
Rich feed and stress can cause an elevation in the glucose levels in animals. Add to this the glucose-birth sex link and there could be major repercussions for all livestock farmers, particularly horse breeders, many of whom feed rich supplements to their broodmares.

“If an early embryo gets too much glucose, it kills the females,” Dr Linklater said.

“We would love to investigate what drives that relationship in horses. We are confident that the pattern occurs, but why?”

According to Dr Linklater, with this glucose link established a shift in the birth sex ratio by five to 10 percent may be possible, by “what you feed them, when you feed them.”

*This article was sourced thanks to Horsetalk.co.nz*



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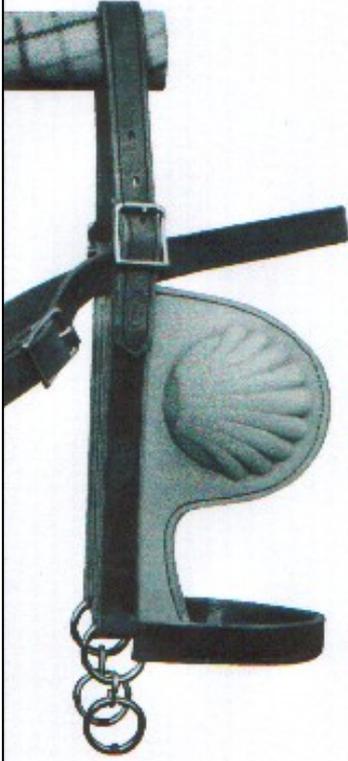
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website that should make it easier for browsing the entries.

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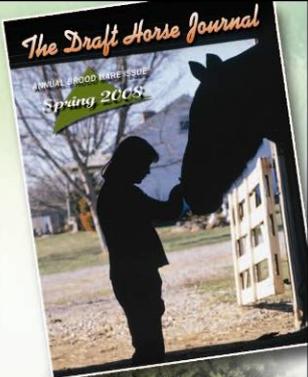
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## Don't forget to list your stud on the SSHA website

The SHSA website gets a lot of traffic and numerous inquiries from people interested in buying Shires, looking for stallions or meeting other Shire Horse enthusiasts.

The Stud pages hold about five photos or images, a stud logo, a full A4 page of text and your contact details. Each stud has its own click through link for

enquires, going directly to your email address.

The annual \$200 fee (plus GST) covers all set up costs, minor changes throughout the year, and an annual revamp of your content and images if requested.

To place your page, please contact Andrew Gunter –  
07 5599-4463 or [andrewg@ita.com.au](mailto:andrewg@ita.com.au)

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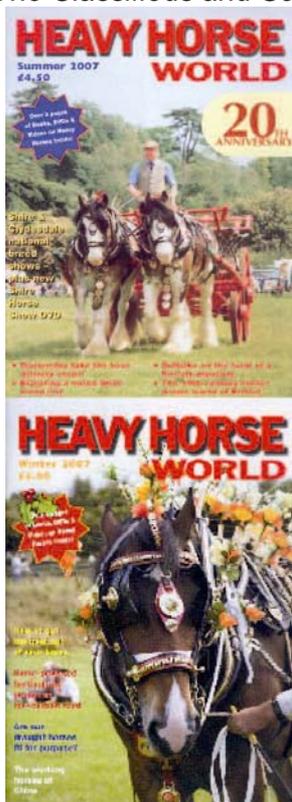
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