

## DALBY AMATEUR PICNIC RACE CLUB HISTORY

### 1970 – 1979

The club saw some difficult times the early seventies. Members were becoming increasingly busy with their farming and grazing operations and found less time to pursue their racing interests. Race fields became smaller partly because motorbikes were gradually replacing stock horses consequently there were fewer horses available to race. Many townspeople had work commitments during the weekdays and poor crowds were experienced. There was even a suggestion that the club should be disbanded. However, the club convinced the its controlling body, the Downs and South-West Queensland Racing Association, to move the annual races from the then unsuccessful mid-week format to Friday and Saturday meetings. The first Friday and Saturday meeting was held in 1973, which unfortunately clashed with the Burrandown Picnics. The next year the club changed dates to ensure that the clash did not occur. This remained the format until 1981.

In the early seventies a number of younger members joined the committee (George Jekyll, Bob Wild, John Wicks among them) in the early seventies. They were enthusiastic and keen to see the picnics traditions continue; often racing up to five horses each resulting in bigger fields and more exciting racing. Together, these changes saw the club's fortunes improve, indeed go from strength to strength through to the mid seventies. However, the difficulty fielding grassfed races continued and in the latter part of the decade races for grassfed horses were gradually being replaced by ones for cornfed horses.

The traditional Dinner and Race Ball were held on Friday and Saturday evenings at the Dalby Showground Pavilion which was superbly decorated by Mr John Cavanaugh and the Dalby Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce). John and his team would work on the decorations for weeks and weeks and the decorations would remain in place for the rest of the year, often added to for other events such as the Catholic Ball. The colour theme used was based on the racing colours of the club president. The result was so spectacular that hundreds of people would come to the hall before the event just to see the decorations.

### DALBY HERALD APRIL 27 1976

#### EXCITING LADIES BANGLE TO COBILLA

*The feature event of the first day, the Ladies Bangle, raced over 1400m, was the thriller of the day with Mesdames J., C. O. Frith's Cobilla and Mrs. E. Bassingthwaight's Taonga staging one of the best finishes seen in a long time.*

Mr. D Baker, on Cobilla, used excellent judgement and kept his horse in the right position throughout, while Mr. T. Kane, on Taonga, also used his experience to give a good exhibition. But Cobilla had too much up his sleeve, and raced away to a three length lead over the last few metres. Taonga took the lead from the start and was closely followed by

  
**DALBY PICNIC RACES**  
EST. 1902

Mitamit (Mr. J. Hill) and Sir Barrett (Mr. R Harms), Cobilla, Crash Wheat (Mr. K. Turner) and Bright Realm (Mr A Fraser).

At the 1200m, Taonga had a length over Sir Barrett and Cobilla was about two lengths away in third place. Then came Crash Wheat, Mitamit and Bright Realm. Coming into the straight Cobilla put in his first challenge and took the lead from Taonga, but the latter fought back and captured the first position for a few strides, but Mr Baker called on Cobilla for the extra effort and he had no trouble in going to the post with a three length margin.

A photo was called for by the judges to decide between third and fourth, with Mitamit getting the placing.

Cobilla was a firm favourite at 5/4 on for most of the betting, and his win justified the confidence of the punters. Taonga was available at 4's, shortened to 2's, and started at 3's, while Mitamit was available at 8/1. Bright Realm opened at about 7/1 and started at 5's, while there was little interest in Crash Wheat, who won the event in 1974 and the Ladies Bracelet in 1969, and started at 10/1.



**Image:** Cobilla raced by Mesdames J., C. O. and T. Frith and ridden by Mr. D. Baker, won the Ladies Bangle at the Dalby Annual Picnic Races on Friday. Pictured above are Mrs. C. O. Frith, Mr. J. Frith, Mr. D. Baker, Mr. N. S. Baldwin (trainer), Mrs. T. Frith, Mr. C. O. Frith, Mrs. J. Frith and Mr. T. Frith, who appeared to be very happy with their win.