



## Newsletter - April 2024

Hi Everyone,

April has so many holiday days that you start to think that life in Australia for many is one big holiday. There was Easter, School Holidays and Anzac Day (plus one sick day for some to make a 4 day weekend). For most people, this allowed them to spend lots of time with their horses or to escape for another holiday.

Alexander Park Dressage Club held their 2-day competition on 21st and 22nd. On Saturday morning it rained and rained. My grandson Hugo Gray, 8 years old, was riding his pony Merrindale De Niro (Danny) in his first dressage competition. I asked Hugo what he remembers about his first comp and he replied:

1. The lady at the office gave me two blue ribbons and the first judge gave me 70.33% in the Prep 1. The second judge said Danny needed more overtrack so Granny had to explain!
2. I was the first competitor of the day in the pouring rain.
3. I remember how to ride a 20 m circle in trot.
4. I couldn't remember my pony's show name but I know he had a show bridle on and my whip could not be longer than 1 m.
5. Get your new helmet tagged and go to the gear check after your test.
6. Danny was fantastic and I want to compete again.

On April 7th, I decided to take Hugo, Myles and Austyn to Stroud to their first ever show and to visit Melanie, Corey and their baby, Hudson. One of my young pupils, Grace had many entries in the show (but not in the horse section) and won many firsts and other placings in cooking, quilting, arts and crafts. Congratulations Grace, you are very talented. The show dogs were a highlight and the owners were really friendly. I came across Ann Ryan who kept a horse at my parents' place



*Hugo and Danny*



*Meeting the Show Dogs*



*Grace at Stroud Show*



in Duffys Forest in 1974. I also spotted Bonnie Holstein and we had a nice glass of white wine and some cheese and biscuits with her three show dogs.

Grandma got lost twice out the back of Seaham and nearly hit a wild deer, but apart from that we had a great day.

On April 27th I travelled to the beautiful Southern Highlands to James Fry and Jessi Murray's wedding. Jessi is Lewis' cousin. It was a beautiful day, held at Mali Brae Farm. Congratulations, best wishes and happiness for the future.

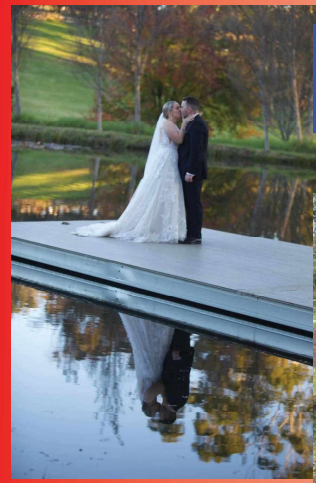
I finally have two new staff members. Welcome onboard Imogen Robards and Demi Maslen. I hope you will learn a lot and stay a long time at HVEC.

On a sad note, on April 21st I received a message from Matt Ryan that his father Rod Ryan had passed away at age 95. My deepest condolences to all the family and lots of hugs and warm wishes for Rod's wife Mavis.

My family met the Ryans when they purchased a farm in Black Hill in 1981. The Ryans lived down the road on the Steggle's property. We instantly became friends and have stayed friends to this day. In recent years Bruce and Rod spent time together at competitions and parties. They were really good mates. There are hundreds of stories I could tell about our time with the Ryans over the 43 years of friendship. I learnt so much from by time spent being around the family. Their competitiveness, their high standards and driving ambition, their principles in life, their intelligence and their family unit will always be remembered. I know Mavis will be very sad and we will miss Rod so much.

RIP Rod with Sue in Bugaldie.

From Shaun



*Congratulations  
James and Jessi*



*Welcome to  
HVEC Imogen*



*1982 at the NSW Driving Championships at Felspar, Seaham. The team of 4 horses were Andalusians owned by Rod and Sue Ryan. The driver was Georgi Bardos (World and European Champion from Hungary), Navigator Matt Ryan, 1 Hungarian interpreter (who knew nothing about horses), and Shaun who can't be seen due to fear of making a mistake. A Ryan experience I will never forget as I knew nothing about 4 in hand driving. We did win in true Ryan style.*



*Rod and Bruce at Scratchleys, Newcastle. They were making sure the menu was to their liking.*