

THE FOUNDERS

JANUARY 2021

The History of Dressage in Tasmania

Created by: Mim Coleman



THE FOUNDERS

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the
Dressage Association of Tasmania (DAT)

A wholehearted welcome to you from Mim Coleman, creator of
momentsbymime and The History of Dressage in Tasmania Project

FOREWARD

ABOUT THE HISTORSY OF DRESSAGE IN TASMANIA PROJECT

Mim Coleman's project to document the history of dressage in the remote island of Tasmania, will inspire you to explore your own connection with the sport of dressage wherever you happen to live.

In the fast paced world of instant gratification, real and fake news, scrolling, social media snapshots and podcast sound bites, the conversations and the memories can be forgotten and lost. Yet through the mediums as described, our collective experiences can easily be captured and remembered for generations yet to come.

Mim's project endeavours

to capture the treasured moments, the jewels of the bountiful and colourful equestrian history that abounds in Tasmania. If you have a curious mind you can explore further to uncover the secrets and mysteries that exist.

Mim rode her first pony in Berlin at the age of 4, on a bright sunny Sunday afternoon, her father leading the black Shetland pony through the inner city forest along shady paths softened by fallen leaves. It was a family excursion that

paved the path for Mim's future with horses.

Decades later the passion remains true. Over time the first ride progressed to riding at all levels of dressage through to the pinnacle that is Grand Prix.



Mim is no stranger to writing about her equestrian passion.

Her pursuits include, creating an online buzz with her blogs capturing the incredible 2015 Dressage World Cup Final in Las Vegas live from the grandstands, multiple articles for Australia's

leading equestrian magazine Equestrian Life and her very popular blog "The Road to Grand Prix" shared on Equestrian Life's blogger page.

The series of e-books in progress are Mim's expression of love and joy that the sport of dressage has given her, and each of you who have fallen under the spell of the magnificence that is Equus caballus, the horse.

PREFACE

ON A BLUSTERY DAY

The **History of Dressage in Tasmania Project** (the Project) emerged as a creative itch to capture the deep, rich history of the sport of dressage in my home state of Tasmania also known as Tassie or Tas. If you plug in the coordinates 42.8821° S, 147.3272° E you will find it.

Several years ago, at the end of a DAT meeting, in the dark, late at night, in the colloquial centre of Tas, a number of large storage boxes were migrated from the boot of one car into the boot of my 4WD. It was full to the brim. I was entrusted by the committee of the day with a fair chunk of DAT documents to help me scratch the itch and get underway.

The following morning, the heavy boxes were transported

one last time and carefully tucked away in the home office, stack on shelves, away from light and moisture.

Patiently the stories that were captured within the boxes waited for the lids to be lifted.

Some time later, on a rainy, blustery Tassie day, I pulled the boxes out, one by one. Sitting cross legged, on the floor, I sighed at the mountain before me and I reached into the plastic tub directly in front of me.

Like a prospector, anxiously hoping to strike it rich, yet fully expecting dust, what I discovered was that the mountain was abound with unimaginable jewels and precious gems. The dressage

history contained within the pale yellow pages was bountiful, ledger books and folders, note pads, envelopes, a kaleidoscope of words and images.



The buzz from the discovery was incredible, even so, the mountain looked too high and too steep to climb at the time. Gathering the precious jewels and gems together returning them as they were discovered, I replaced the lids atop the stories.

Many years have passed since that moment, when I blew the dust off the plastic lid and wondered “what’s in here?”

During the 2020 lockdown thanks to the COVID-19 Pandemic that paralysed the

world, I again stood at the foot of the mountain. This time determined to climb, small steps, tiny steps, any steps, and I once again lifted the lid and exposed the treasures within. Stories fluttering, teasing, dancing before me like winsome fairies encouraging me with their joy.

The plan is to create a series of short stories on the influencers that shaped the sport of dressage in Tas.

The coaches, the breeders, the dreamers, the riding schools, the competitions, the events that brought us together. There is so much to tell.

The first e-book “The Founders” documents the creation of the Dressage Association of Tasmania.

I hope you enjoy it. Mim

THE FOUNDERS

INTRODUCTION

On that
bleak rainy,

blustery day, looking for an excuse to avoid
housework I wandered downstairs and
looked at the bookshelves groaning under
the weight of all the stories stacked high
and wide.

It is extraordinary that the first plastic
storage tub that I reached into would
expose the last thing I could have ever
imagined.

What I found, made me exclaim out aloud
and fall back on to the floor, with my jaw
agape. For in my hands I held a deep olive
green record book, 84 lined pages and
within the hard bound cover I had
uncovered the origins of the Dressage
Association of Tasmania.

The cover indicated an age long passed, the
corners worn, the olive green bleached by
light.

I carefully opened the hard cover and in
front of me, meticulously glued to the
inside cover were two newspaper articles
carefully cut out from the local newspaper
of the day. Secure, ensuring that the public
recognition of the foundation of DAT
would not be lost nor forgotten.

**"A DRESSAGE
association has been
formed in Tasmania.
It is the first body of its
kind in the State."**

*-The Mercury Wednesday
10-2-1971*

**"Dressage is as skilled
type of horsemanship,
calling for a high degree
of training from horse
and rider, who perform
certain tests from
memory without visible
aids."**

*-The Examiner Wednesday
February 10, 1971t*

BIG MAGIC

My heart rate quickened, my eyes quickly scanned to the right, and on that page, page 1 of 84, again meticulously secured by glue, was a typed document, 13x21.5cm, with perfect punctuation, and neat alignment were the words my heart stopped

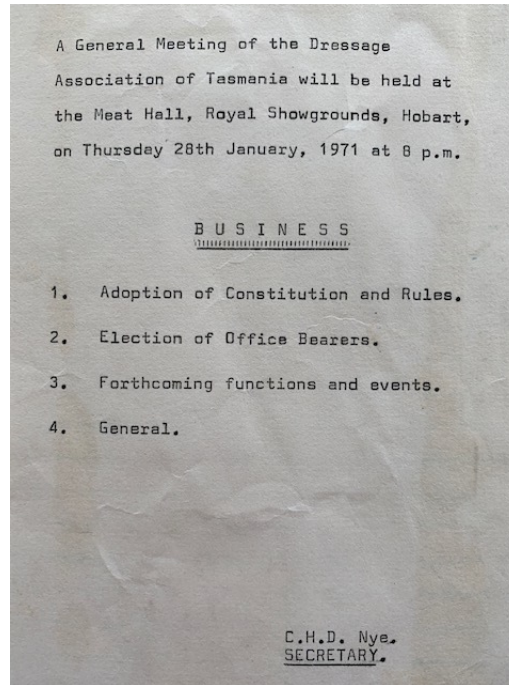
I quickly shut the record book. I gulped air in to my lungs, quick short breaths. I must have held my breath the entire time I had the record book open.

A feeling grew from within the middle of my chest. Like a flower that opens its delicate petals towards the sun for the first time, reaching, stretching towards the source of light that gives it energy, the warm flow of love, truth, discovery, wonder, magnificence, MAGIC made itself at home in every nerve of my body.

I felt so overwhelmed, and with tears in my eyes, I unfurled my legs, stood up and walked away.

The ledger book returned to the plastic box that held it safe.

THE FOUNDERS



TIME WILL TELL

What on earth do I do with this?

The magic was too powerful.

It was too much.

I can't.

Taking the stairs up to the kitchen,

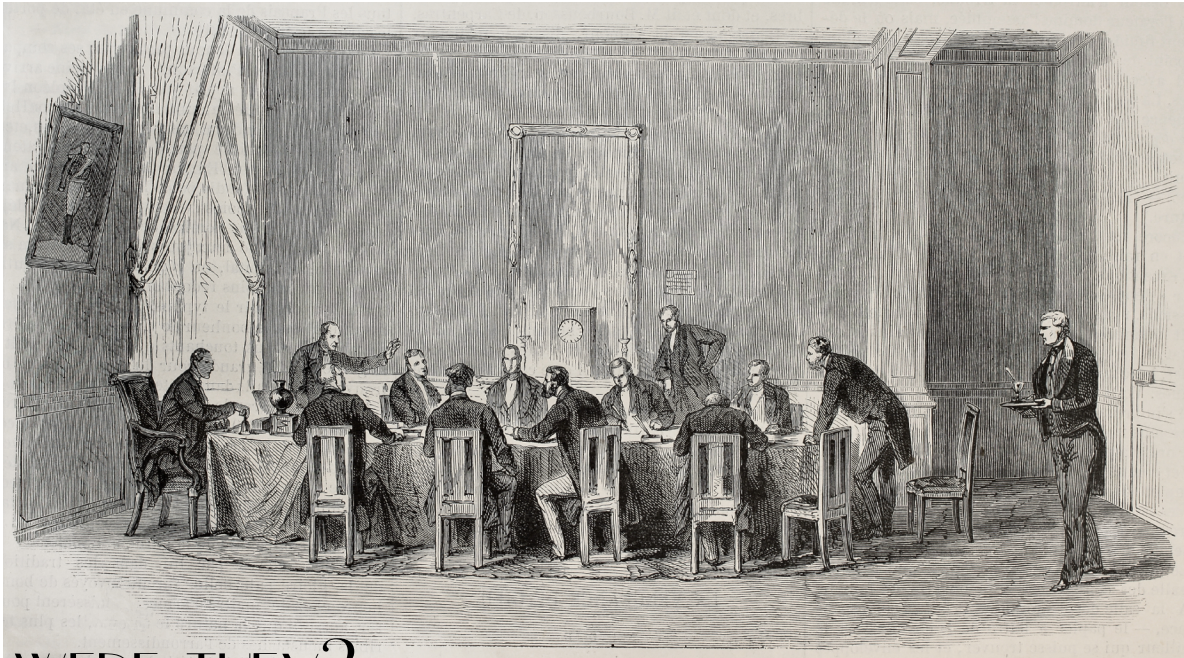
I turn on the kettle, pull out my favourite mug, put in my favourite tea, and sit on the lounge and look out toward kunanyi / Mt Wellington topped with grey rain clouds looming behind the Derwent River running wild.

I looked for calm in the landscape.

That was 5 years ago.

As the 50th anniversary looms,

I must honour and embrace the magic, have the courage to honour in words, those who came before us, honour the record book that holds memories of a lifetime ago and share with you the world within the TASMAN Record Book 84 leaves REF.124



WHO WERE THEY?

President

MT R Macleod

Vice President

Dr R S Parsons

Secretary/Treasurer

C H D Nye

Committee members

Mr P Croft

Mr B Connolly

Mrs Chesterman

Mrs Atkinson

Mrs Wolfhagen and

Mrs Shields

Sadly many of our founders are no longer with us to speak to the events that lead to the writing of the constitution. However some are, and in the upcoming editions I will share with you their memories of that day of January 28th 1971. What was their motivation? How did they come together? What was happening in the sport at that time? All those questions and more.

THE FIRST MEETING

THE FIRST EVENT

The first meeting was on Monday the 8th of February 1971, at 8.30pm hosted at "Dysart House" Kempton.

"Dysart House" is a majestic, upright, Georgian style, 2 storey sandstone former coaching inn built in 1842. The romanticism of the first meeting of a noble sport being hosted in an equally noble abode is inspiring. Imagining the grand rooms of sandstone and cedar joinery, stables and coach houses I wonder what that moment was like. All of the committee gathering to discuss the matters of their newly created association. Was the table grand to seat

them all, was there a wood fire roaring, casting a flicking glow around the room, how was the agenda formed?

I wonder, don't you?

The committee set about it's first order of business, a collaboration with the Hamilton Show Society.

The Hamilton Show Society committee had extended an invitation to DAT to conduct a dressage event at the show on the 27th of March 1971.

Mr Nye was a committeeman of the Hamilton Show Society and played a role in connecting the two associations.

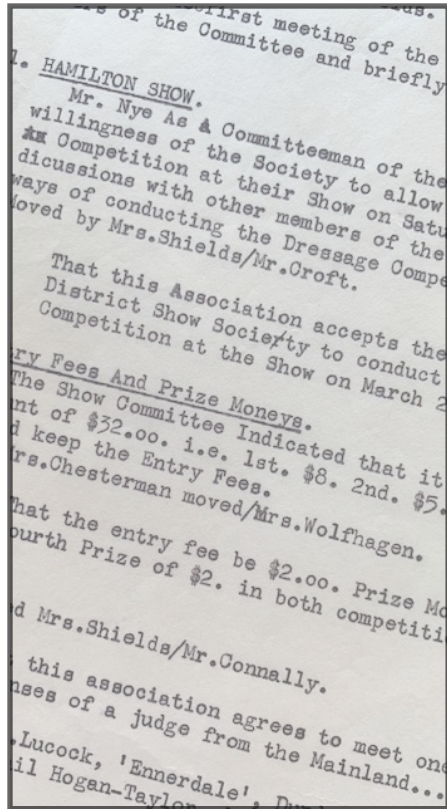
The invitation was accepted by the committee and the motion carried.

The meeting progressed to

EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

discuss the organisation of the event.

What struck me was as I read the minutes, that at this first meeting the topics covered in organising the event such as **ribbons, entry fees, prize money, judges, the dimensions of the ribbons, the colour and number of ribbons to order, and organising scoring cards** are exactly the same as the topics currently being discussed around the globe by dressage event directors and their committees.



THE RULES

CONDITION OF ENTRY

The minutes go on to describe the conditions of entry for the event. They are of particular interest to me as it can be contentious.

The minutes detail that the rider had to have attained the age of 16 and the horse was to be over 14.2hh.

The grading of the horse was in accordance with the **EFA rules** of the day.

If the horse or pony had won 2 novice classes or one elementary class ridden by any rider, the horse ceased to be eligible for the novice class.

It is interesting how the rules have differed over the many years. The evolution of dressage rules is an

interesting topic.

How have they changed, why did they change and who decides what is changed?

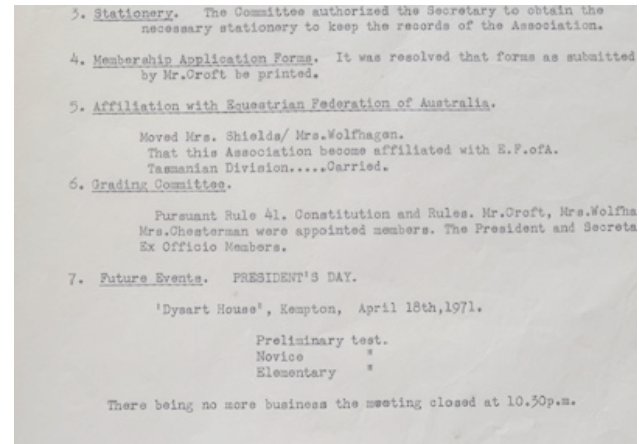
The minutes show that the committee discussed the conditions of entry briefly.

How intriguing, were there perhaps other conditions of entry that may have been mooted around the table?

Was there discord?

Was 16 considered too young? Was 14.2hh too small?

Or was the consensus easily reached?



OTHER BUSINESS

Membership application forms were resolved to be printed,

a bank account was opened,

DAT became affiliated with the **Equestrian Federation of Australia (Tasmania Division)**,

a grading committee was formed and,

future events put for consideration.

The meeting ended at 10.30pm as signed by the Chairman.

FROM HUMBLE BEGININGS

SO IT FOLLOWS

Who would have known that the documentation of the creation of the Dressage Association of Tasmania and the association's first meeting would be discovered in a humble plastic storage tub.

What a gift of magic.

From that first meeting, on the 8th of February 1971, so began the weeks, months and decades of committee meetings held late into the night, attended by dedicated and passionate dressage representatives, to bring the sport of dressage to the Tasmanian equestrian community, to learn, endeavour, support and enjoy.

Happy 50th Birthday to the Dressage Association of Tasmania and thank you to the Founders that set in motion a

train of events that **50 YEARS STRONG** has lead to

a rich and deep history of dressage in the far flung 20x60 arenas in Tasmania.

Join me and participate in the first project of its kind.

Help me unlock the background stories, solve the mysteries that exist and celebrate The History of Dressage in Tasmania.



CONTACT

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Images are the property of Miriam Coleman, who acknowledges Roger Fitzhardinge Photography and Jess Van DerVlist for their contribution to the original images, edited for the purposes of this e-book..