

**BEFORE 2000  
- TROTGING IN NEW ZEALAND -  
A RETROSPECTIVE**

*Presented by*

**Lindsay Kerslake**

1999 World Trotting Conference  
~ Sydney, Australia ~



## KEY STATISTICS OF THE NEW ZEALAND HARNESS BREEDING INDUSTRY - 1998/99 SEASON

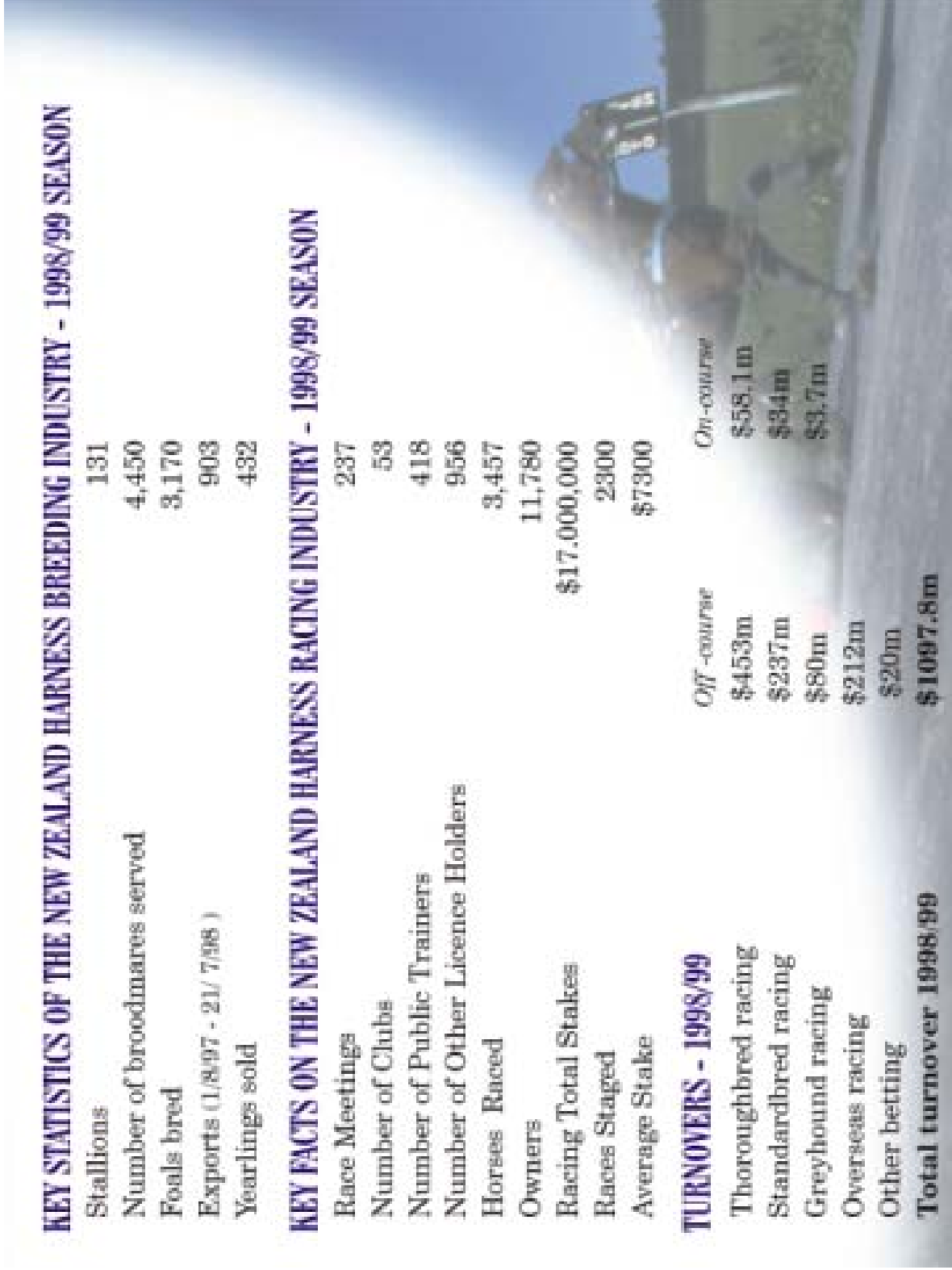
Stallions	131
Number of broodmares served	4,450
Foals bred	3,170
Exports (1/8/97 - 21/ 7/98 )	903
Yearlings sold	432

## KEY FACTS ON THE NEW ZEALAND HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY - 1998/99 SEASON

Race Meetings	237
Number of Clubs	53
Number of Public Trainers	418
Number of Other Licence Holders	956
Horses Raced	3,457
Owners	11,780
Racing Total Stakes	\$17,000,000
Races Staged	2300
Average Stake	\$7300

## TURNOVERS - 1998/99

	<i>Off-course</i>	<i>On-course</i>
Thoroughbred racing	\$453m	\$58.1m
Standardbred racing	\$237m	\$34m
Greyhound racing	\$80m	\$3.7m
Overseas racing	\$212m	
Other betting	\$20m	
<b>Total turnover 1998/99</b>	<b>\$1097.8m</b>	



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**Susan Archer** *New Zealand Thoroughbred Marketing*

**Mr Bruce Graham** *N.Z. Equine Health Board*

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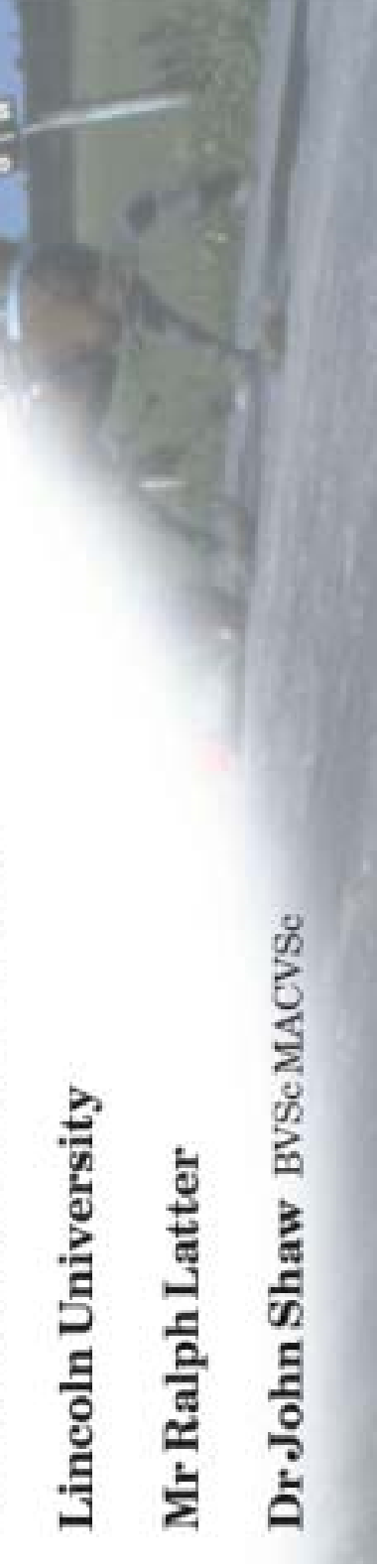
**Lincoln University**

**Mr Ralph Latter**

**Dr John Shaw** *BVSc MACVSc*



*Prof. Cliff Irvine*



# GLOSSARY

## **OPENING ADDRESS:**

### **BEFORE 2000 - TROTTING IN N.Z. A RETROSPECTIVE**

The close of the millennium seems to move people to take stock (AND I DONT MEAN TO RUSTLE) and to assess where we have been and where we are going. Harness racing in New Zealand seems to have reached a crossroads and it may be particularly appropriate to look at our past to seek inspiration for the future. To do this I have used various reference books, poured through old stud books and tapped the memories of people who have been in the game for a long time.



Special Frames



# NEW ZEALAND'S FOUNDING HISTORY

Histories, if they go back far enough, began in the shrouds of legends, interlaced with fact. In the case of New Zealand, Maori legend has it that Kupe, a Polynesian explorer from the Society Islands, was the country's founding father, well over 1000 years ago.

Much more factual are the records of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, who in 1642 was the first European to see the great white rampart of the Southern Alps rising above dense, green rainforest on the west coast of the South Island. Tasman didn't set foot on the land his countrymen named New Zealand, though this was not for the lack of trying. He lost four men in a clash with Maoris in an attempt to get to shore.

Then in 1769, Captain James Cook, English hero of the high seas, sailing in the Endeavour and working from Tasman's maps rediscovered this fair and fertile land.

Europeans filtered in from this time, and in 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, whereby the Maori tribes of New Zealand ceded their sovereignty over New Zealand to Great Britain in return for guaranteed possession of their lands, forests and fishing grounds plus the rights and privileges of British subjects.

Meanwhile, following Captain Cook's first landing, New Zealand had become the home of an assortment of bold spirits of European descent, - soldiers, missionaries, explorers, adventurers seekers and idealists, traders, refugees from the tyranny of whaling ships and escaped convicts from Australia. Americans came too, to this last frontier of the New World; and while one of the earliest attractions was gold to be found in the virgin land, many stayed to farm or trade. Also there were Dalmatians, Danes and Italians, Greeks, Chinese and Indians., Giving the foundation of the population, though dominantly British a nevertheless cosmopolitan tinge.



## THE FOUNDING SETTLERS

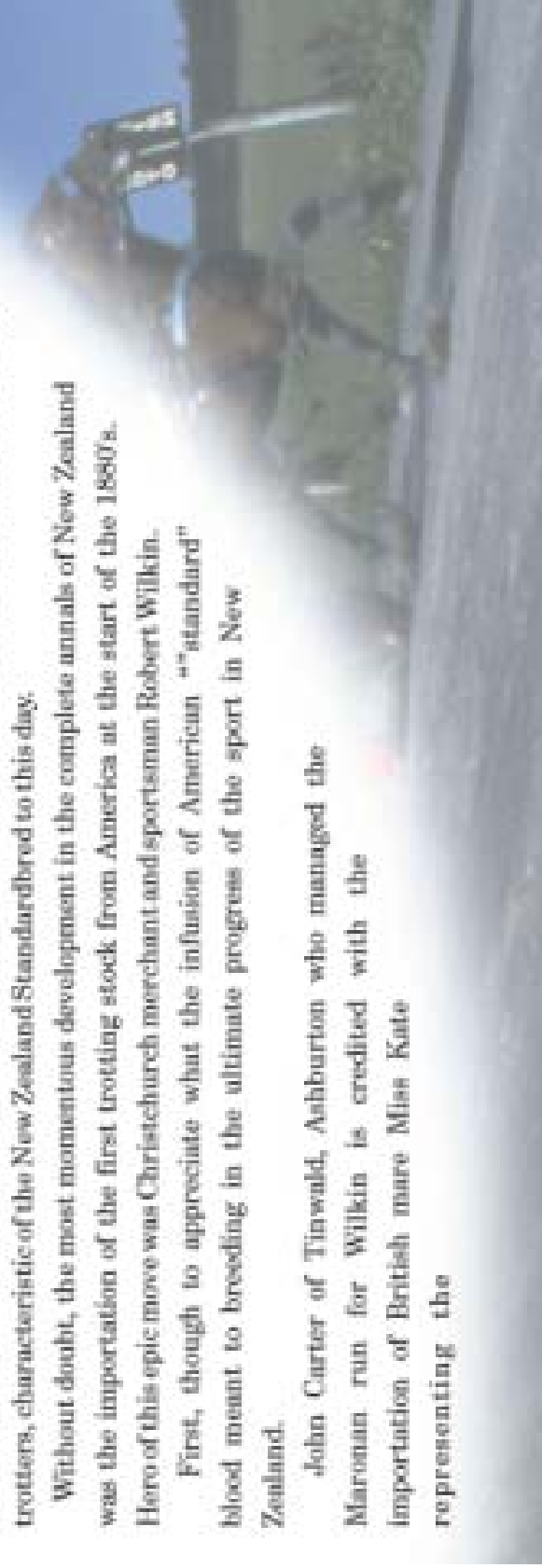
The colonists brought with them a love of horse racing which impelled them to establish the sport as soon as they were settled in the new country. The first horses recorded arrived in New Zealand on the brigantine "Active" in 1814. These horses were work horses imported by the missionary Samuel Marsden, but it wasn't long before local people than Marsden were racing their horses after the days work was done. There is some dispute about when the first organised trotting race was held in New Zealand. Clearly by 1864, trotting races were included at galloping meetings at Invercargill and Queenstown- at the bottom of the South Island. These horses were straight out trotters generally with some thoroughbred blood and had been imported to work on the Otago goldfields, as shepherd's hacks or to provide a source of transport or gambling. The horses were ridden not driven, carried at least 70kgs and races were usually over 3 miles. Match races were also popular and could be marathons. One famous example covered the 12 miles of rough terrain between Dunstan and Cromwell. The excuse for the beaten horse was that he had travelled 40 miles to reach the starting post the previous day and it had taken the edge off him. This points out the toughness of these early trotters, characteristic of the New Zealand Standardbred to this day.

Without doubt, the most momentous development in the complete annals of New Zealand was the importation of the first trotting stock from America at the start of the 1860's.

Hero of this epic move was Christchurch merchant and sportsman Robert Wilkin.

First, though to appreciate what the infusion of American "standard" blood meant to breeding in the ultimate progress of the sport in New Zealand.

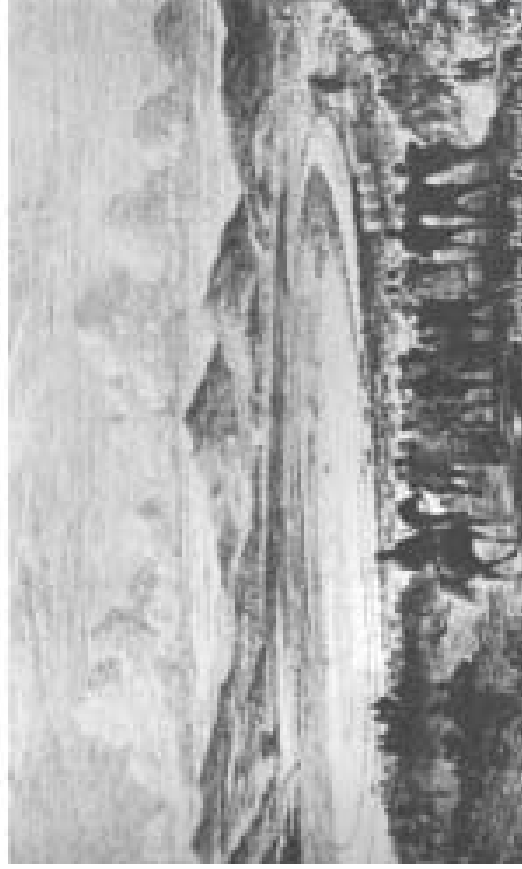
John Carter of Tinwald, Ashburton who managed the Maroman run for Wilkin is credited with the importation of British mare Miss Kate representing the



## THE FOUNDING SETTLERS Cont.

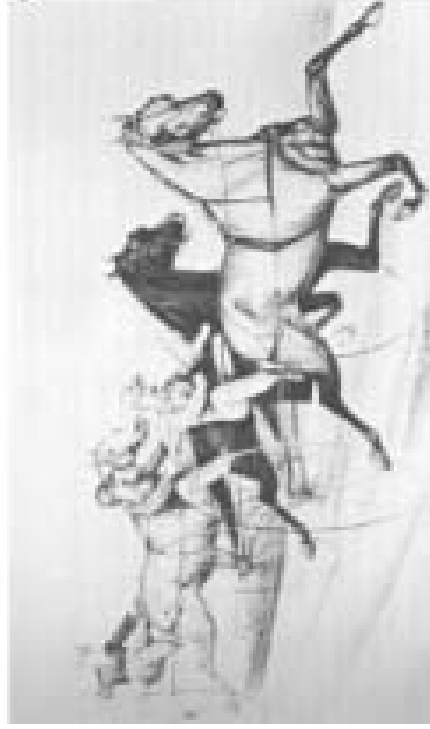
direct male line of Godolphin to become the ancestress of two of the most famous thoroughbred horses in New Zealand - Phar Lap and Kindergarten . The discerning Robert Wilkin having appraised the steady trickle of news from America of the new breed of speed trotters there, decided that New Zealand must share in this innovation.

He commissioned Carter the acknowledged authority of stud stock to go to the United States in 1882 and obtain a couple of stallions and a half dozen mares. A year earlier Wilkin had secured from wealthy Scottish ironmaker John Hendri the American bred Berlin. Wilkin was unable to persuade Hendrie to sell his other American stallion Childo Harold a son of Hambletonian 10 horse Harold. During his 7 years at stud Childo Harold did service that led him to become hailed as the Hambletonian 10 of Australasia. Sydney's Harold Park perpetuates his name. New Zealand was eventually to be repaid for Robert Wilkin's contribution to the Childo Harold saga by the great horses siring son Rothschild crossing the Tasman.



## PIONEERING HORSE RACING

The decade of the 1880's saw a move toward unified control of the sport. By 1883, the New Zealand Racing Association had been founded giving birth to our present non-proprietary racing operation with its stake allocation allotment system. The NZ. trotting conference came in to existence in 1900. The gaming lotteries act of 1881 did not prohibit book-making until the development of the totalisator and greater commissions to clubs led to the licensing of bookmakers in 1907. In 1945 it was estimated that illegal bookmakers had an annual turnover of 24million pounds leading to a national referendum that led to the establishment of the TAB whose betting system began in March 1951.



*Grand circuit posing in the 1880's*



*Robert Walker,  
supported the first American manufactured blood*

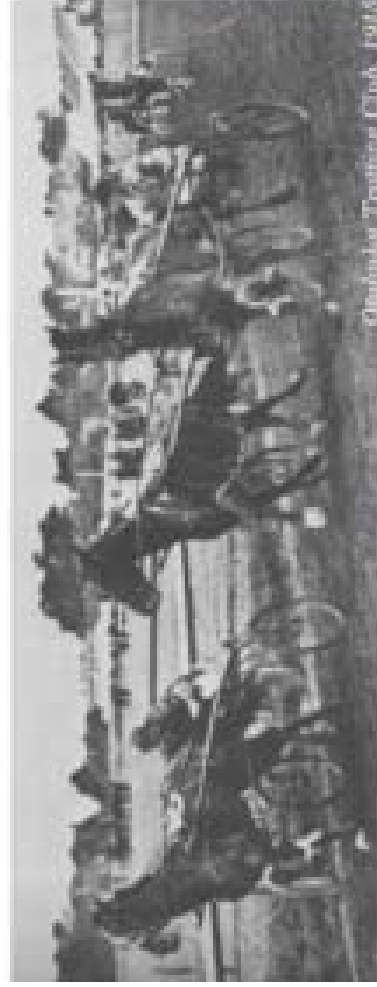




## 1900 - 1920

It was the trotter Monte Carlo who mostly endeared himself to the fans of this country when he won the 1<sup>st</sup> NZ cup at 14 years of age in 1904. His trainer Bert Edwards was the outstanding horseman of his era. He rode the 1<sup>st</sup> horse in NZ to get within American standard time. - Yum Yum who won by 15 lengths pulling up in 2:27 and a half. The NZ trotting association formulated a NZ trotting and pacing standard. Trotter 1 mile- 2:30 2 miles - 5:00 Pacer 1 mile - 2:25 2 miles - 4:50

The 1910's saw the record books change fairly often. Revenus set the Australasian trotting record of 2:11 and four fifths and Dan Patch set an Australasian grass track record, representing the dominance of Rothschild who dominated the Australasian trotting scene to such an extent that by 1912 Rothschild's progeny held 9 of the 14 Australasian records, and was replaced at the head of the sires list by American stallion Harold Dillon towards 1918. From 1915, Scoteman James Bryce launched a rampage of NZ's feature races, and for 7 consecutive seasons was the leading trainer. Bryce, who won 5 NZ cups considered Cathedral Chimes, the greatest horse he ever drove, and winner of the 1916 NZ cup, a descendant of Electioneer, 1 of Hamblotnian's 10 most famous sons, which is the prime source of pacing speed producing the sires Hal Dale, Adios and Meadow Skipper.



Quindow Trotting Club 1916



## 1920 - 1940

NZ was invaded in the 1920's by a procession of horses and men from Australia. The major attraction of NZ trotting was its lucrative spoils in comparison to Australia's then pitiful prize-money. It was an era in which the sport developed greatly in status and class. Names associated included F.J. Smith, J.J. Kennerly, W.J. Tomkinson.

The end of the second decade of the century brought to prominence the great Fres man Holmes. His judgement of horseflesh was uncanny. On his first trip to America in 1915 to select new strains of pucing and trotting blood, he acquired Logan Pointer, Bonilene and Trix Pointer; and all three exerted everlasting influence on the sport in New Zealand. Later Holmes's judgement was vindicated when importing Estella Amos the dam of 1930's champion Indianapolis and prolific families of Tondeleyo to the present day Garry Rowan Classic Garry

Economically the N.Z. pound was worth 1.10 to the Australian pound

J.R. McKenzie (later Sir John) who had moved across a decade earlier did as with everything else he touched made his participation in trotting a lasting one. In 1927 he established Roydon Lodge recognised for years to come as NZ's leading nursery. His stallion imports including U. Scott nine times leading sire Light Brigade 4 times Scottish Hanover 1 Leading sires of Broodmare 14 times etc

The 1930's also brought many new personalities into the limelight such as outstanding

horsemen Maurice Holmes, Cecil Donald, Jack Shaw, Roy Berry, Allan Holmes and Doug

Watts. The decade saw American stallions Rey De Oro, Wrack and Jack Potts, rising

to the top of the sires lists, and taking over from Logan Pointer and Bingen.

With the advent of the depression which hit hard in the early 1930's stakes

fell back but trot fans continued to support the sport they loved.



## 1940 - 1960

Hit by the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and its effects in trying to recover from the depression, trotting was drastically curtailed for a good part of the 1940's. Paradoxically, despite the problems all around, this was a decade that produced outstanding racing. Firstly from the likes of Haughty and Gold Bar who became NZ's homebred 2 minute horses, and then from the mighty Highland Fling who was the first horse to make people in this part of the world think of measuring up to the best standardbred champions in America. On the trotting front, Cartissimus swept all before him. At the end of the 1940's Jack Potts great reign as a sire came to an end, as his outstanding compatriots Dillon Hall and U Scott took over.

An official embargo clamped on importations from America for health reasons would see the American speed supply cut off for some 15 years. This was at the stage when thanks to several enterprising breeders, several importations most worthy of the task of looking after NZ's needs were on hand. With a handful of strong sires to boost it, our breed appeared to improve greatly in calibre within a few years; in all probability a much swifter advancement than would have been the case breeding scene good and bad. The fifties formed the era that marked the most important milestones for New Zealand trotting since the 1880's

Major factors that combined for rapid development were:

- The easing in 1955 of import restrictions since 1940
- The introduction of night trotting meetings
- The beginnings of mobile starting
- Trail blazers to the U.S
- Legalised off-course betting
- Routine swabbing



## 1940 - 1960 Cont.

At this point the sport was being transformed to an industry and racing was becoming more sophisticated. Breeding more standardbreds than we needed improved our racing. Virtually eradicating the incidence of not trying. With handicapping rules now so stringent embodying no relief by demotion, no matter how poor the horses form, trotting was now becoming a venture only for the wealthy. Many a good man was being forced out through lack of opportunity and results. Racing was still greatly exciting, but logistically it looked to be on the threshold of disaster. It was saved by the American market for our standardbred product that developed following the successes at the end of this decade of some of our best performers in the hard grind of North American competition. Since then many thousands of standardbreds have been snapped up by American buyers. Caduceus became the 1<sup>st</sup> down under horse to compete against North America's best. This was the result of Noel Simpson egging on Marty Tanunbaum who was President of Yonkers raceway to create a 3 race international competition to give a boost to the sport. He was 4<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and dead-hunted for 1<sup>st</sup> in the final. By 1961 Charles S. Thomas who was president of the NZ trotting conference addressing the 1961 AGM stated "never has trotting been in a better state".



*New Zealand Cup 1945*



## 1960 - 1980

In so far as NZ harness racing was concerned the 1960's belonged very much to Cardigan Bay . NZ's greatest racehorse - standardbred or thoroughbred put his homeland on the map as he returned from a devastating injury to sweep all before him in the Australasian scene and then star in the arena of fierce international competition in New York. So good was Cardigan Bay that Yonkers raceway -then the world's leading light harness racing plant - was forced to get special permission from higher authorities to ban him from the betting. The impact made by the likes of Caduceus , False Step, Cardigan Bay, Cardinal King and others gave a tremendous boost to the American demand for our standardbreds. By 1969 some 200 pacers and trotters each year were being flown across the Pacific. In 1967 NZ trotters and pacers had won more than US\$1,500,000 . Yonkers chief Martin Tamunbaum began in 1960 buying top performed stallions to lease in NZ to boost the supply of horses for his horse hungry raceway.

While horses like Lordship, Jay Ar, Garry Dillon etc. drew the crowds in NZ, Cardigan Bay was wowing them in America. At this stage the newest sensation 4 year old Bret Hanover 47 wins and 3 seconds from 50 starts, was pitted against the 10 year old Cardigan Bay in what was called "the pace of the century". While 7000 fans were turned away Cardigan Bay beat Bret Hanover by a length in 2 minutes flat. Bret's 1<sup>st</sup> defeat in 19 starts. As a 12 year old, Cardigan Bay had his last campaign on the tracks and became the 1<sup>st</sup> horse to win a \$ 1,000,000. He became Australasia's best known horse since Phar Lap and became the best ambassador NZ has ever sent abroad.

Horses through this era included Lordship, with his 37<sup>th</sup> victory pushed his earnings to 48, 170 pounds, 5000 pounds more than any standardbred or thoroughbred raced solely in NZ. Yonkers officials pleaded year by year to let Lordship go to New York but this never happened.

