



Australian Heritage Database

Places for Decision

Class : Historic

Item: 2

Identification

List: National Heritage List
Name of Place: Flemington Racecourse
Other Names:
Place ID: 105922
File No: 2/11/033/0682
Primary Nominator:
Nomination Date:
Principal Group: Recreation and Entertainment

Status

Legal Status: 30/05/2006 - Assessment initiated by AHC
Admin Status: 30/05/2006 - Under assessment by AHC--Australian place

Assessment

Recommendation: Place meets one or more NHL criteria
Assessor's Comments:
Other Assessments: :

Location

Nearest Town: Flemington
Distance from town (km):
Direction from town:
Area (ha): 128
Address: 448 Epsom Rd, Flemington, VIC 3031
LGA: Melbourne City VIC

Location/Boundaries:

About 128ha, 448 Epsom Road, Flemington, comprising an area bounded by a line commencing at Hill Gate, then westerly via the southern boundary of the car park to its intersection with the eastern road reserve boundary of Fisher Parade, then southerly via the road reserve boundary to its intersection with the left bank of the Maribyrnong River, then easterly via the left bank to its intersection with the north western road reserve boundary of Smithfield Road, then north easterly via the road reserve boundary to its intersection with the southern most point of Lot CM

PS409463, then north westerly via the western boundary of Lot CM PS409463 to its intersection with the south western road reserve boundary of Epsom Road, then north westerly via the road reserve boundary to its intersection with the southern railway reserve boundary (approximate MGA point 316270mE 5815980mN), then south westerly via the south eastern railway reserve boundary to its intersection with the southern boundary and its alignment of the car park at Hill Gate, then westerly via that alignment to the point of commencement. Excluded are Flemington Railway Station and all railway reserve land.

Assessor's Summary of Significance:

Flemington Racecourse has importance in the cultural history of Australia because of its development into one of the Australia's premier racecourses. During the more than one hundred and sixty years since the flats beside the Saltwater River were first used for racing, Flemington has been transformed from uneven, heavily thicketed, rough paddocks into a richly grassed acreage supporting one of the finest racing surfaces in the world. The circumference of the Flemington track at 2,312 metres and the advantage of the Straight Six make it one of the great racecourses of Australia.

Flemington Racecourse is also important as the site of the continuous running of the Melbourne Cup from its inception in 1861 to the present day. On the first Tuesday in November it is the race that stops the nation. Flemington Racecourse has a special association with the people of Australia as the venue of some of the country's greatest horseraces, and in particular the Melbourne Cup which each year captures the imagination of the country and brings it to a standstill. The Cup has been a stimulus for the arts, including literature, painting, drama and ballet. As a spectator sport, racing has one of the highest participation rates in Australia, and the Melbourne Cup and the cult of the turf have become part of the national psyche.

Flemington Racecourse has also become an important venue for Australian fashion. The Melbourne Cup spring racing carnival is a major part of the fashion industry's year. 'Oaks Day' of the spring carnival was developed as a 'ladies day' in 1885, and within two years had become the fashion event of the Melbourne year.

Draft Values:

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>Rating</i>
A Events, Processes	<p>Flemington Racecourse has importance in the cultural history of Australia because of its development into one of the Australia's premier racecourses. During the more than one hundred and sixty years since the flats beside the Saltwater River were first used for racing, Flemington has been transformed into a richly grassed acreage supporting one of the finest racing surfaces in the world. The circumference of the Flemington track at 2,312 metres and the advantage of the Straight Six make it one of the great racecourses of Australia.</p> <p>Flemington Racecourse is also important as the site of the continuous running of the Melbourne Cup from its inception in 1861 to the present day. On the first Tuesday in November it is the race that stops the nation.</p>	MRT

G Social value Flemington Racecourse has a special association with the people of Australia as the venue of some of the country's greatest horseraces, and in particular the Melbourne Cup which each year captures the imagination of the country and brings it to a standstill. The Cup has been a stimulus for the arts, including literature, painting, drama and ballet. As a spectator sport, racing has one of the highest participation rates in Australia, and the Melbourne Cup and the cult of the turf have become part of the national psyche. MRT

Flemington Racecourse has also become an important venue for Australian fashion. The Melbourne Cup spring racing carnival is a major part of the fashion industry's year. 'Oaks Day' of the spring carnival was developed as a 'ladies day' in 1885, and within two years had become the fashion event of the Melbourne year.

Historic Themes:

Group: 08 Developing Australia's cultural life

Themes: 08.01 Organising recreation

Sub-Themes: 08.01.01 Playing and watching organised sports

Group: 08 Developing Australia's cultural life

Themes: 08.01 Organising recreation

Sub-Themes: 08.01.02 Betting

Group: 08 Developing Australia's cultural life

Themes: 08.01 Organising recreation

Sub-Themes:

Nominator's Summary of Significance:

Description:

Analysis:

CRITERION (a) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history. During the more than one hundred and sixty years since the flats beside the Saltwater River were first used for racing, Flemington has been transformed from uneven, heavily thicketed, rough paddocks into a richly grassed acreage supporting one of the finest racing surfaces in the world (Pacini 1988: p.506). Set on 125 hectares of river flats it is one of the biggest racecourses in Australia. The circumference of the Flemington track at 2,312 metres makes it one of the longest in Australia, in comparison with Royal Randwick at 2,213 metres (AJC 2006b). The original straight, down past the grandstand to the river turn, which was originally lengthened as a result of the accident in the first Melbourne Cup, was further lengthened to become the world famous 'Straight Six' – the six furlong (1200 metre) length of straight track that makes Flemington ideal for sprint races. A favourite with both Australian and international jockeys, the long run down the Straight Six gives horses a chance to come from well back in the field to make it first past the post*

(ARM no date: p.4).

In 1922, Flemington underwent redevelopment when changes were made to the Lawns and Birdcage areas, and a new Members' stand was constructed. The present 'Hill' Stand was opened in 1977 and covers most of the original area. Its clever construction was designed specifically to allow it to nestle into the natural form of the original hill. In 2000 the members grandstand was again re-developed at a cost of \$41.5 million and has redefined the Australian racing experience. Avenues of mature trees, some of them planted by the first Secretary of the VRC, Robert Bagot, provide Flemington with abundant shade. Today, the banks of tens of thousands of roses, the plantings of which were commenced in 1881 by the second VRC Secretary, Byron Moore, have become an internationally acclaimed Flemington trademark. Today the Flemington Racecourse logo is derived from the rose garden, the design representing a dynamic visual expression of rose petals flooded in dappled sunlight against a background of the greens of the lawns and the famous track. It is unique as a racing club logo.

Flemington Racecourse has importance in the cultural history of Australia as it is inextricably bound up in the minds of most Australians with the annual running of the Melbourne Cup. Run every year since 1861, the Cup is recognised as being Australia's premier horse race and, along with the English Derby, its American counterpart the Kentucky Derby, and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. It is one of the world's great horse races.

No other horse race in the world arouses the high pitch of national excitement, or can boast a history as event filled or fascinating, as the Melbourne Cup. It is unique in that it is the race that 'stops a nation', and even those who know nothing about horses, racing, or betting, will have a bet on the Cup. In workplaces around Australia, sweeps and Calcuttas are run on Cup day. In 2005, \$356.1 million was wagered nationally on the Melbourne Cup both on course and through the TAB (VRC 2005b: p.19, and personal communication Mr Simon Wheeler, Chief Financial Officer, ACTTAB). More than a hundred thousand people attend Flemington Racecourse to see the running of the Cup, and a further 14 million people watch it on television.

Because of its important association with the running of the Melbourne Cup, Flemington Racecourse has outstanding heritage values to the nation under Criterion (a).

CRITERION (b) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.* While widely regarded as one of Australia's the world's great racecourses, Flemington is only one of Australia's premier racecourses. However, no comparative study has been made of Australian racecourses, and it is not possible at this stage to ascertain whether or not Flemington has nationally significant heritage values that are rare or uncommon.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

CRITERION (c) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of*

the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history. The history of Flemington and its development, together with that of the VRC, is well documented.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

CRITERION (d) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.* While the course at Flemington was substantially altered in 1922, a new hill Stand Built in 1997, and the new Members Stand in 2000, no comparative study has been made of the history of development of Australian racecourses, and it is not possible at this stage to ascertain whether or not Flemington has nationally significant heritage values that demonstrate the principal characteristics of racecourses as a class of cultural place.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

CRITERION (e) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.* While the natural geographical advantages of the site as a racecourse might contribute to its aesthetic characteristics, and these advantages have been developed into the course as we know it today, there is no evidence that Flemington is valued by any community or cultural group primarily for its aesthetic values in a way that would be nationally significant.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

CRITERION (f) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.* No comparative study has been made of Australian racecourses, and as a result it is not possible to ascertain whether or not Flemington Racecourse exhibits a high degree of creative or technical achievement that is nationally significant. **Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.**

CRITERION (g) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.* Flemington Racecourse has a special association with the people of Australia as the venue of some of the country's greatest horseraces, and in particular the Melbourne Cup which each year captures the imagination of the country and brings it to a standstill. Melbourne Cup Day is Australia's most famous Tuesday, and at 3.00pm AEST on the first Tuesday in November Australians everywhere stop for the race. Even people who don't usually bet, have been known to 'have a flutter' on 'the Cup'. In factories and offices around Australia the majority of people get involved in a Melbourne Cup sweep.

The Cup has provided a stream of stimulation for Australian creativity. Poets such as C J Dennis, Henry Kendal and A B (Banjo) Paterson have written about the

Melbourne Cup. Scenes of Flemington, the Cup, and Cup winners have been painted by Australian artists for over a century, including by Carl Kahler, Martin Stainforth, Frederick Woodhouse and Mark Gawen. Sir Daryl Lindsay painted *Phar Lap* following his win in the Melbourne Cup. The Melbourne Cup has also been the subject of a number of popular plays and variety acts in Australian theatres. In 1962 English choreographer, Rex Reid, created the 'Melbourne Cup' ballet for the inaugural programme of the Australian Ballet Company. The first cinematographic newsreel film shot in Australia was taken at Flemington on Cup day in 1896.

The Melbourne Cup is also a major venue, and stimulus, for Australian fashion. For One hundred and fifty years women have made fashion a talking point at the VRC Spring Carnival. The tradition of Oaks Day as 'ladies day' originated in 1885, when a group of fashionably dressed ladies complained of the damage that had been done to their elegant gowns by the crush of people on Cup day. Within two years, Oaks Day had become the fashion event of the Melbourne year. By 2005 visitors to Flemington for the Spring Carnival and the Melbourne Cup spent more than \$20.1 million on fashion purchases in Victoria. The Australian millinery industry also depends heavily on the Melbourne Cup trade.

Because of the unique place the Melbourne Cup has in the sporting and cultural life of Australia, Flemington Racecourse has outstanding heritage values to the nation under Criterion (g).

CRITERION (h) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.* Flemington Racecourse has an association with many notable Australian horse owners, breeders, and trainers. Owners such as John Tait, Hurtle Fisher and Donald Wallace have all owned horses which went on to win the Cup. Many Cup winners have been trained and prepared by great trainers such as Walter Higginbotham, Richard Bradfield and Bart Cummings, and ridden to victory by such legendary jockeys as Tom Hales, Jim and Darbie Munro, Billy Duncan, Bobbie Lewis, Daren Beadman, and Shane Dye. It also has an important association with some of Australia's and the world's greatest race horses. While many of Australia's greats have won the Cup, including *Carbine* (1890) and the legendary *Phar Lap* (1930) whose bronze statue now graces the entrance to the course, five have won it more than once: *Archer* in 1861 and 1862; *Peter Pan* in 1932 and 1933; *Rain Lover* in 1969 and 1970; *Think Big* in 1974 and 1975; with only one of them winning the Cup three times, *Makybe Diva* in 2003, 2004 and 2005. No comparative study has been made of Australian racecourses, however, and as a result it is difficult to assess how important these individuals and horses were to the development of the racing industry in Australia, the importance of Flemington in their lives and work, and whether or not these characteristics are of national significance.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

CRITERION (i) *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous traditions.*

There is no evidence to suggest that Flemington racecourse has an importance as part of Indigenous traditions that are nationally significant.

Flemington Racecourse does not have outstanding heritage value to the nation under this criterion.

History:

The commencement of racing in Australia.

Although horse racing had developed into a popular pastime in Britain during the 18th century, there were two reasons why it was slow to develop in the infant colony of New South Wales. First the colony was intended as a prison and it was the intention of the authorities to punish the convicts, not to amuse them. Second, there were few horses in the colony and they were needed for practical tasks rather than for sport. Only seven horses arrived with the First Fleet, all of them acquired at the Cape of Good Hope. These included a stallion and two mares belonging to the government and another mare, a colt and two fillies that were the personal property of Arthur Phillip (Painter & Waterhouse 1992: p.2). These were not thoroughbreds but work horses, intended for use in ploughing and carting. From 1790 to 1810 the small-scale importation of horses into the colony continued and the new arrivals tended to come from better stock than those imported with the First Fleet. By 1810 the number of horses in the colony totalled 1,114 (Painter & Waterhouse 1992: p.2).

Military officers were the main importers of horses into the colony and it was the officers of the 73rd Regiment who organised the first official race meeting at Hyde Park in October 1810, also inviting Macquarie to act as patron. Two races were run. The first, the 'Ladies Plate', was won by Captain Ritchie on his grey gelding, 'Chase'. The second race, with a large prize of sixty guineas, was won by William Charles Wentworth on 'Gig' (Bernstein 1969: p.2). The racecourse at Hyde Park continued in use until the 73rd Regiment was transferred to Ceylon.

Drunkenness and unruly behaviour marked the race meetings and when an informal meeting organised by D'Arcy Wentworth was marred by dissipation and brawling, Macquarie banned further race meetings. No officially sanctioned races were to occur again until 1819 when Macquarie again allowed them to take place.

Governor Brisbane arrived in the Colony in 1821 charged with carrying out the recommendations of Commissioner Bigge, which were designed to return order and discipline to New South Wales and re-align it with its original design as a penal colony. Racing was again banned and it was not until 1825 that Brisbane allowed the annual Hyde Park races to resume. On 18 March 1825, following the first successful day of racing, a number of colonial gentlemen gathered at Sir John Jamison's George Street house for the purpose of forming the Colony's first racing club, the original Sydney Turf Club (Painter & Waterhouse 1992: p.6). The club proposed to host spring and autumn meetings, and races were to be conducted under English Jockey Club rules. In April 1826 the club conducted a meeting on a rough course that had developed opposite Captain John Piper's 'Bellevue' property in South Head Road, and another in September on the Hyde Park course. Both venues proved to be unsatisfactory, and in 1826 the Turf Club decided to establish a new course at Grose Farm at Camperdown on land belonging to Governor Bligh's son-in-law, Sir Maurice O'Connell (Painter & Waterhouse 1992: p.6). This too proved to be unsatisfactory. Racing struggled on, hampered by poor bloodstock and substandard courses until

1832 when a group of enthusiasts petitioned Governor Bourke for a portion of land in the vicinity of Sydney on which to construct a racecourse. The 82 hectares of land subsequently assigned grew to become the Royal Randwick Racecourse (Painter & Waterhouse 1992: p.10).

Racing in Victoria.

The first horse race in Victoria had been held on 8 February 1837 on flats beside 'She Oak Hill' (on the site of the present Spencer Street Station) just four weeks before Governor Bourke visited to bestow on the village the name of the British Prime Minister of the day, Lord Melbourne (Bernstein 1969: p.2). Only one race was held, between horses owned by Dr Cotter and Mr Brown (with Mr Brown's horse winning), but most of the settlement's population of two hundred turned out to see the contest (Bernstein 1969: p.2). On 15 January 1838, a group of Melbourne gentlemen met to foster further race meetings and formed an informal club, the 'Melbourne Race Club'. This club held subsequent race meetings at the She Oak Hill course on 6 and 7 March 1838 and on 15 and 16 March 1839. The 1840 meeting was planned for March, on a course to be determined. Some time previously a private match race had been held on river flats beside the 'Saltwater' (later Maribynong) River four miles from the fledgling township at the site of today's Flemington Racecourse, and the superiority of the place for racing was so evident that the Melbourne Race Club decided on it as the site of future race meetings (Bernstein 1969: pp.6-7).

Accordingly, in 1840 just five years after Melbourne was founded, a racecourse was laid out and a rough grandstand constructed at Flemington on the swampy banks of the river, (ARM nd: p.1). The land on which the course was laid out was owned by two brothers, William and Thomas Lang, who granted permission for the club to hold its meetings there. The first races were held at the site on 3 March 1840, and on this day the jockeys wore racing silks in Australia for the first time (Bernstein 1969: p.8).

On 12 December 1840, a meeting was held to establish annual race meetings to be run by a club yet to be formed for the purpose. The unofficial 'Melbourne Race Club' was replaced by the Port Philip Turf Club, formed on 2 January 1841 (Bernstein 1969: pp.8-9). After a decade this club gave way to two clubs, the Victoria Turf Club and the Victoria Jockey Club (Pacini 1988: p.4).

1859 saw the running of the Australian Championship Sweepstakes at Flemington. An inter-colonial event involving horses from New Zealand, Tasmania, and Sydney as well as Melbourne, the newspapers reported that between 30,000 and 40,000 people saw the race. It was the first time that the result of an Australian sporting event was reported by the electric telegraph, when the result was telegraphed to Sydney. It also sparked interest in the establishment of an annual handicap race capable of attracting a quality inter-colonial field.

For some it became an act of heroism simply to reach Melbourne for the Sweepstakes. The South Australian owner, Hurtle Fisher, decided to send his horse *The Barber* from Adelaide to Melbourne for the race, onboard the steamer *Admella*. The *Admella* sailed from Adelaide with 107 passengers and crew, along with several horses including *The Barber* on board. On an uninhabited stretch of the South Australian coast, the *Admella* struck a reef too far off shore to be noticed from the land. The vessel began to break up and many passengers drowned. With all the ships boats and provisions lost other passengers and crew were doomed to die on the reef of

exposure and thirst. It took days before two of the survivors were finally able to reach land and by the time rescue could be organised only 25 people had survived. Hurtle Fisher later reported that:

“When I left Adelaide my normal walking weight was 9 stone 7 pounds; when I landed in Victoria I scaled at exactly 5 stone 12 pounds. We were on that wreck eight days without bite or sup.”

Most of the horses on board perished in the wreck, but not *The Barber*. He swam more than two miles to shore and was then walked across country to Geelong, from where he was taken the final fifty miles to Melbourne by train, apparently unharmed by his experience (Lemon 1987: p.240).

The commencement of the ‘Melbourne Cup’.

In 1861, the Victoria Turf Club voted to establish a handicap race to be known as the ‘Melbourne Cup’ to be decided over a distance of two miles, and to be run at the Club’s proposed October meeting. The move appears to have been made to counter the activities of the rival Victoria Jockey Club, which, following the English tradition, had sponsored a race to be known as the ‘Two Thousand Guineas’. The Victoria Turf Club allotted 200 guineas to the new Melbourne Cup race, but in addition, stipulated that the owner of each starting horse must provide five sovereigns as first forfeit. Withdrawal of a horse would be penalised by a forfeit of ten sovereigns, and an additional sum of twenty sovereigns was to be paid by the owner of each horse on final acceptance. At the conclusion of the race the owner of the winning horse would take both the Club’s 200 guinea prize and all additional monies raised from owners (Ahern 1982: p.1). The resultant total prize monies amounted to £710 all of which went to the winner as there was no prize for second or third place (Bernstein 1969: p.15). Nominations for the race opened on 1 May 1861, and 57 horses from Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia were entered (Bernstein 1969: p.13). The first Melbourne Cup was run on the first day of the Club’s three day meeting on Thursday, 7 November 1861. Six days earlier the news of the disastrous fate of the Bourke and Wills expedition had reached Melbourne. The city was draped in mourning and the general atmosphere of gloom predicated against a large turnout for the race. For the 1861 Spring meeting, racegoers were able to travel for the first time by train direct from Spencer Street to Flemington (Bernstein 1969: p.13), and in the event, 4,000 people were present to see the race.

A horse by the name of *Mormon* was the first favourite for a Melbourne Cup. He had just won the Victoria Jockey Club’s ‘Two Thousand Guineas’ race, a win which earned him a weight penalty of 5lb in the Melbourne Cup in which he carried a total weight of 10st.1lb (Bernstein 1969: p.14). But the locals were prepared to back him against all comers at 4 to 1. The New South Wales horse, *Archer*, relatively unknown south of the border, was at odds of 8 to 1, a fact taken advantage of by his trainer, Etienne de Mestre. *Archer* had recently won in NSW and as a result earned a 3lb penalty for the Cup to carry a total of 9st.7lb (Bernstein 1969: p.14). It has been generally believed that *Archer* walked from de Mestre’s property at Nowra the 550 miles (885 kilometres) to Melbourne for the race (Ahern 1982: p.2). However, research done by Lemon shows that *Bell’s Life in Sydney*, the leading sporting newspaper of its day in NSW, carried a report for 21 September 1861 indicating that on the previous Wednesday de Mestre had shipped three horses to Melbourne on the *City of Sydney*. Both the names of both de Mestre and his Melbourne Cup jockey, John Cutts, appear on the passenger manifest of the ship along with several prominent

bookmakers and other racing men. The Melbourne *Argus* reported the arrival of the ship at Port Melbourne on Saturday 21 September 1861. Again de Mestre and Cutts are listed as passengers. The ship's cargo is also listed, including four horses (Lemon 1990: p.267).

As the horses turned for home during the first Melbourne Cup race, a horse called *Twilight* hit one of the posts marking the way into the straight and collided with two other entries, *Medora* and *Despatch*. All three horses fell, hindering the following horses including *Mormon*. *Archer* beat *Mormon* by six lengths, and a 20 to 1 chance, *Prince*, took third place behind *Mormon*. In the fall, *Despatch*'s jockey, Joe Morrison, broke his arm, and the following day both *Medora* and *Despatch* had to be destroyed as a result of injuries sustained in the fall (Ahern 1982: p.2).

In 1862, *Archer* again travelled by ship from Nowra to Melbourne to compete in the Cup, this time as 2 to 1 favourite even though he carried 10st.2lb. Prize money for the 1862 Cup totalled £810. With the fall that had marred the first Cup in mind, the Victoria Turf Club moved the starting post back into what had been a training ground, to give the horses a straight run of four furlongs before they had to make the river turn. In front of a crowd of 7,000 people, *Archer* again beat *Mormon*, this time by eight lengths, the only time in Cup history that the same two horses came first and second in successive Cups (Bernstein 1969: p.19). By now the Melbourne Cup was proving to be one of the highlights of the Victorian racing calendar.

In 1863 the Cup was contested by the smallest field ever to line up for the race, and the winner carried the lightest weight ever borne to victory. There were no interstate horses entered in the race. These factors were symptomatic of the unhealthy state of racing in Melbourne at the time (Bernstein 1969: p.20). Lack of competent management and competition between the two rival racing clubs, led to the degeneration of racing in general and unethical practices had evolved – sabotaging of the track, nobbling, and owners being paid appearance money to enter their horses exclusively with one club or the other. Little attention was being paid to racing for racing's sake, and the sport entered a period of deep malaise (Pacini 1988: p.5). Moreover, both clubs were deeply in debt (Bernstein 1969: p.20).

By 1864, *Bell's Life in Victoria*, the Colony's leading sporting newspaper, had been able to say 'the Melbourne Cup has now become firmly established as the race par excellence of the Australian colonies.' (Lemon 1990: p.293). Of the ingredients that went into making the fame of the Melbourne Cup, two were of importance. The first was the money and thought lavished on improving the course at Flemington and the other was the most important of all, the phenomenal rise of gambling on the Cup (Lemon 1990: p.298).

The establishment and growth of the Victoria Racing Club.

On 9 March 1864, a group of gentlemen led by Henry Creswick (after whom the township of Creswick in Victoria is named), all concerned at the depths to which Victorian racing had plunged, met at Scott's Hotel with a view to forming a new racing club which would take over the two existing clubs, including their financial liabilities. The Victoria Racing Club (VRC) was born. Applications for membership in the new club came flooding in, around 300 for the first year, and within two years the club was to provide the sport of racing in Victoria with a new image (Pacini 1988:

p.10). It quickly established a set of 'Rules and Regulations' designed to control racing in Victoria. The primary aim was to ensure that racing ran cleanly, and the 'Rules' made provision for no less than five Stewards to control race meetings. They assumed control over each meeting a week before it took place and for a week after it was over. The Stewards' authority over the conduct of races was supreme and in all cases their decisions were final. The new club also appointed a Secretary, Robert Cooper Bagot, at an annual salary of £150 and established its first office in a room in a villa adjoining Menzies Hotel (Pacini 1988: p.16).

The VRC took over both Flemington Racecourse and the Melbourne Cup as part of the takeover of the old Victorian Turf Club. The land on which the racecourse was laid out was eventually resumed by the Victorian Government and re-zoned as public parkland. While the VRC had exclusive right to lease the land at Flemington, and despite having invested thousands of pounds in improvements to the facilities at the course, the club felt that it had no guarantee of tenure to protect its investment. The matter was taken up directly with the Government and in 1871 the *VRC Act* was passed. This legislation had two important results. It granted trusteeship of the Flemington parklands to the Committee of the VRC, formally giving them control of the racecourse. It also enabled the VRC to introduce by-laws, to be approved by the Governor in Council, that would improve the conduct of racing in Melbourne and, indirectly, throughout Victoria (Pacini 1988: p.52).

In the ensuing century, the VRC was to establish its control over the running of horse races throughout Victoria, and to influence the administration of racing in other Colonies. In 1881, the VRC established the still existent "VRC Calendar". Published monthly, it included forthcoming meetings of all racing clubs in Victoria. Horses running at meetings not advertised in the Calendar would not be accepted for meetings conducted by the VRC at Flemington. Additionally, all meetings advertised in the Calendar had to be run in accordance with VRC Rules. The Calendar also included the results of all meetings, details of any disqualifications, and the names of registered trainers and jockeys. Victorian clubs had not asked the VRC to assume the mantle of control, and many took umbrage at what they saw as the VRC's autocratic move, but their hands were tied. The VRC had simply decided to make full use of the terminology of the *VRC Act* and assume the administrative direction of racing in Victoria. It was the aim of all owners and trainers to see their horses start at Flemington, and they wouldn't risk that chance by having their horses run at unregistered meetings. A few months later, the VRC Committee contacted their counterparts in the Australian Jockey Club in NSW and the South Australian Jockey Club, who as a result also established Calendars in their Colonies applying the same rules as the VRC. The move eventually led to a formal 'Principal Clubs' liaison which was to see disqualifications and penalties applied by one club being upheld by the clubs of the other Colonies, and the benefits of the wider establishment of standardised rules and administration in racing in Australia (Pacini 1988: pp.101-2)

Racing in Victoria during the 19th and 20th centuries.

As racing developed in Victoria during the 19th century, the course at Flemington was the venue for many famous race victories and was associated with some of the greatest owners, trainers and jockeys in Australian racing history.

Few horse owners in racing history have approached the records of John Tait with his

many Melbourne Cup, Derby, St Leger, Champions Race and Town Plate wins amassed from the 1840s until his death in 1888. By the beginnings of the 1880s his estimated race winnings totalled more than £30,000 (more than \$3 million today) (Lemon 1990: p.276).

Hurtle Fisher, owner of *The Barber*, moved to Melbourne and established the Maribynong Stud Farm in 1863. He was also owner of the imported English stallion, *Fisherman*, which in just four seasons at stud was to have a permanent effect on Australian thoroughbred breeding, with many of his progeny great successes both on the field and at stud (Lemon 1990: pp. 296-7).

Peter St Albans, who rode for the Geelong trainer James Wilson, was a prominent jockey during the 1870s. He was only a thirteen year old apprentice when he won the Melbourne Cup in 1876 on *Briseis*, and in succeeding years won the 1880 VRC St Leger, and the 1881 Sires Produce, Ascot Vale Stakes and Geelong Cup (Lemon 1990: p.303).

Tom Hales was described in 1888 as 'A model horseman, of great nerve; a keen judge of pace, possessing the best of heads and hands, and an enthusiastic love of his profession'. Born in 1847 he began his racing career in South Australia, but moved to Melbourne in 1872 where he soon became the leading jockey. He rode Gran Flaneur to victory in the 1880 Melbourne Cup and for most of the 1880s was unbeatable, especially when he was riding horses owned by James White (Lemon 1990: p.381).

In 1890 *Carbine*'s win in the Melbourne Cup was greeted with unprecedented euphoria, and provoked Henry Varley, Melbourne's most vehement moralist and leader of the Anti-Gambling League, to publish a pamphlet called *Melbourne's Idol: Lord Carbine*. Coming to Australia unbeaten in New Zealand races, *Carbine* was a horse at the peak of his greatness when he ran the Cup. Bought for 3,000 guineas by Donald Wallace, who had already had success in the 1888 Melbourne Cup with *Mentor*, *Carbine* quickly recouped his owner's outlay. Trained by Walter Higginbotham, who was well established as a leading trainer, he was ridden to victory by Mick O'Brien, one of the finest jockeys of his time (Lemon 1999: p.377).

Walter Higginbotham was regarded as the greatest trainer during the period from 1888 to 1905. He started his career as a jockey in Sydney, Melbourne, and Tasmania. As a trainer he formed an association with Donald Wallace and trained Wallace's winners including *Mentor*, which won the 1888 Melbourne Cup, and *Carbine*, which won in 1890. Higginbotham also trained another two Melbourne Cup winners, *Newhaven* which won in 1896, and *Blue Spec* which won in 1905 (Lemon 1990: p. 384). He was succeeded in the 20th century by James Scobie, who trained three Melbourne Cup winners in the 1920s, *King Ingoda*, *Bitalli* and *Trivalve* (Lemon 1990: p.384)

Frank Bullock was one of the first Australian jockeys to make a reputation overseas. He rode with success in England from 1903 for expatriate Australian owner, J E Brewer. He revisited Australia in 1905 and won the Melbourne Cup on *Blue Spec* trained by Walter Higginbotham (Lemon 1990: p.466).

Jim Munro and his brother David, universally known as 'Darbie' succeeded one

another as Australia's leading jockeys from the 1920s until Darbie's retirement in 1955. Jim won the 1925 Melbourne Cup on *Windbag* before he turned twenty one, and a second time in 1928 on *Statesman*. Darbie was eight years his junior and virtually took over when Jim left off. Darbie was to win three Melbourne Cups on *Peter Pan* in 1934, *Sirius* in 1944 and *Russia* in 1946. He was also successful in five AJC Derbies, five Victoria Derbies, the Doncaster, Cox Plate, and the C B Fisher Plate (Lemon 1990: p.470).

Also active at Flemington during the 1920s and 30s were three of Australia's great jockeys. William (Billy) Duncan was to win the 1918 Cup on *Night Watch*, and again in 1932 on *Peter Pan*. Bobbie Lewis achieved legendary status in a career that spanned fifty years. His first Melbourne Cup win came on *The Victory* in 1902, and he went on to win the race three more times on *Patrobus* in 1915, *Artilleryman* in 1919, and *Trivalve* in 1927. Frank Dempsy made a brilliant start to his career with three wins in the Caulfield Cup before the age of 21. He was the regular rider of *Eurythmic* who was almost unbeatable during the 1921 and 1922 seasons. Between 1923 and 1939 he rode four winners of the VRC Oaks at Flemington (Lemon 1990: p.473).

During the decades that spanned the turn of the 19th century, three great trainers dominated Melbourne racing. Richard Bradfield trained four winners of the Melbourne Cup in a career that spanned more than thirty years. Cecil Godfrey was a successful but controversial trainer during the 1920s and 30s. Although he trained three Caulfield Cup winners, however he never trained a Melbourne Cup winner. As a result of a twelve month disqualification, *Heroic*, a likely Cup prospect was withdrawn from his stable. Jack Holt was consistently the leading trainer during the 1920s and 30s. He won the Melbourne Cup with *Hall Mark* in 1933, he was also to win three Caulfield Cups.

Phar Lap's jockey, Jim Pike, had an outstanding record in the saddle over three decades. Based in Sydney, Pike rode the winners of almost all the big Melbourne races, including six Victoria Derbies. He was also to win a second Melbourne Cup on *Peter Pan* in 1932.

In the modern era, the trainer Bart Cummings today holds the record for having trained eleven Melbourne Cup winners, and Lee Freedman has trained five Cup winners. The race is also associated with some of today's greatest jockeys, including Daren Beadman, Glenn Boss, Damien Oliver, and Shane Dye (VRC 2005a).

Development of Flemington Racecourse.

During the more than one hundred and sixty years since the flats beside the Saltwater River were first used for racing, Flemington has been transformed from uneven, heavily thicketed, rough paddocks into a richly grassed acreage supporting one of the finest racing surfaces in the world (Pacini 1988: p.506). Set on 125 hectares of river flats it is one of the biggest racecourses in Australia. Royal Randwick Racecourse in Sydney, in comparison, stands on only 82 hectares of land (AJC 2006b), while Morphettville Racecourse, home of the South Australian Jockey Club stands on 61 hectares. The circumference of the Flemington track at 2,312 metres makes it one of the longest in Australia, in comparison with Royal Randwick at 2,213 metres (AJC 2006b) and Eagle Farm in Brisbane at 2,027 metres (Queensland Racing 2006). The

original straight, down past the grandstand to the river turn, which was originally lengthened as a result of the accident in the first Melbourne Cup, was further lengthened to become the world famous 'Straight Six' – the six furlong (1200 metre) length of straight track that makes Flemington ideal for sprint races. In comparison the longest straight at Randwick is only 410 metres and that at Eagle Farm is 435 metres. A favourite with both Australian and international jockeys, the long run down the Strait Six gives horses a chance to come from well back in the field to make it first past the post (ARM no date: p.4).

Development of the public facilities at Flemington commenced almost as soon as the VRC took over the track. The security of tenure resulting from the passage of the *VRC Act* also enabled the Club to develop facilities at the course. One of the worries that had induced the Committee to approach the Victorian Government in 1871 had been that their need to invest in facilities for the public at the course was endangered by the fact that their lease could be terminated at any time and they would then face the expensive need to start again on another site.

Although racing had been conducted at the site for more than 30 years, little development had taken place. As a first step following passage of the Act, the Committee set about defining what were still regarded as simply 'Flemington paddocks'. It allocated one paddock to members with provision for their carriages and horses. The weighing yard, Stewards' stand, Judges' box and saddling paddock, were designated as 'official areas'. The high paddock became known as the 'Hill', and the remainder of the course, including the 'Flat' was designated as the 'residue'. Official areas were not open to the general public, but they were to be admitted free of charge to the 'residue', requiring appropriate tickets for other areas (Pacini 1988: pp.52-3). The Lawns were graded flat and provided with seats for the ladies, and a new grandstand started in anticipation of a crowd of 10,000 people expected for the running of the 1873 Melbourne Cup. Known as the 'Cowshed', part of the bluestone foundations of the original grandstand can still be seen today. The horse stalls, or 'Birdcage' were enlarged and improved. At the rear of Stall 90 is *Carbine's* stall. Restored and relocated to mark the centenary of *Carbine's* great win in the 1890 Melbourne Cup, it pays tribute to one of the greatest horses the world has ever seen (ARM no date: p.4). Carbine made turf history in Australia with his extraordinary Melbourne Cup win. A record weight, a record time, a record prize, a record field, a fast pace and a brilliant ride, were all ingredients of a race that stayed in the memory of those who witnessed it (Lemon 1990: p.383). The track itself was improved and the straight lengthened to the now world famous 'Straight Six'.

By 1888, when the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition was held, the VRC hosted all the Colonial Governors and their wives at Flemington for the running of the VRC Grand National meeting (Lemon 1990: p.381).

During the 1890s, the Hill was redeveloped, with a new stand being constructed and other facilities being provided for ordinary racegoers. For a small admission fee, patrons could enjoy the comforts of the stand and the entertainment that traditionally took place on the Hill. Brass bands, side shows and carnival rides provided amusement, and refreshments were available from the 'Temperance pagoda', Swiss chalet, or Chinese teahouse. The Hill was also famous for its wonderful gardens. Originally, the winning post was located on the far river side of the track, but by the

late 1860s the Hill had become so popular that the VRC relocated the winning post in front of it. In doing so, they also repositioned the original 'distance' post. Originating in England at the time of Charles II, the 'distance' is measured at 240 yards (approximately 200 metres) from the finish line. Horses that 'couldn't go the distance' were disqualified. Flemington's distance post remains the oldest object on the course (ARM no date: p.5).

The motor car was becoming increasingly common, parked in amongst the horse-drawn carriages, but it was still a novelty. The Automobile Club of Victoria had its first 'automobile gymkhana' at Maribyrnong racecourse in 1904 and, ironically, attracted a larger crowd there than the horse races had ever managed to do. In 1910, the VRC set out an enlarged 'members' motor paddock at Flemington, and formed a similar reserve for non-members. Naturally the car was the preserve of the wealthy who, with a few notable exceptions, embraced the new status symbol in a headlong rush. A large public grandstand was built on the lawn reserve in 1912 and was designed with the car in mind. The new stand, described as 'a massive structure, and most attractive in appearance, with balustrade and friezes of artistic wrought-iron work' was a double-decker with terrace in front, and was designed to accommodate 10,000 people (Lemon 1990: p.392).

Mass plantings were made at the course, both of trees and flower gardens. The area still called 'The Elms' was planted by the first Secretary of the VRC, Robert Bagot, and by 1895 the shade of the maturing trees became the venue for grand Melbourne Cup parties by Melbourne's elite. Following the 1922 redevelopment, the Elms was regarded as now being too far from the Members stand, and the tradition of race day luncheons in the Member's car park began. The second Secretary of the VRC, Byron Moore, who was a keen gardener, initiated the rose gardens at Flemington. Today, tens of thousands of rose plants flower during the Spring Carnival and have become renowned as Flemington's international trademark.

The betting ring was established. Australia is one of the few remaining countries in the world to allow on-course bookmakers. Initially anyone could be a 'bookmaker' and at Flemington they roamed the course shouting odds to people to entice them to wager. Little cash changed hands on course, with bets being settled at an inn or club at the end of the day. In 1882, bookmaking changed forever on Australian racecourses, when the VRC Committee introduced strict controls and licensing fees for bookmakers. These licences allowed them still to roam, but only on either the Flat, the Hill, the Elms, the Ring or the Rails. The same year saw the first modern bookmaker appear at Flemington. A young Englishman, Robert Siever, set up a stand in the same spot where he remained all day, calling out the odds and accepting cash wagers. He carried a large black bag containing enough money to cover winning bets, and punters were given written receipts as a receipt of their wager. These traditions are still followed by bookmakers today (ARM no date: p.10)

During the course of the century, improvements were also made to the surface of the track itself and to the training areas. The siting of the course on the river flats had always meant that some areas were swampy, and indeed on a number of occasions the Maribyrnong River overflowed and flooded the course. In 1911, the Autumn Carnival at Flemington was washed out when the Maribyrnong River overflowed its banks. Consequent on this the VRC, Railways Department, Harbour Trust, Melbourne City

Council and Flemington and Essendon Councils pooled their engineering resources to devise ways of stopping the river from overflowing (Pacini 1988: p.206). Swampy areas of the track itself were drained and raised to improve the standard of the track. Today's track has a circumference of 2,312 metres, is 30 metres wide (ARM no date: p.5), and is regarded by jockeys as one of the best in the world (Pacini 1988: p.506).

In 1922, Flemington underwent redevelopment when changes were made to the Lawns and Birdcage areas, and a new Members' stand was constructed. In 2000 the members grandstand was again re-developed at a cost of \$41.5 million and has redefined the Australian racing experience. The facility provides world-class entertainment amenities within a flexible design, which meets the needs and expectations of members in the new millennium. The five-tiered stand includes approximately 6900 viewing seats, a state-of-the-art betting lounge and a member's level with a unique glazed atrium space with spectacular trackside views. The 'Hill' enclosure originally established on the amphitheatre shaped ridge overlooking the track and which contributed to Flemington's original attraction as a natural site for a racecourse, has been developed, following the early VRC policy, to retain its panoramic view of the course for the average racegoer and has no equal at any racecourse in the world.

The Hill area was subsequently re-developed in 1997 at a cost of \$8.5 million, when the VRC constructed its largest grandstand to date. Located opposite the winning post, it is for many racegoers the best place to watch the races (ARM no date: p.8). The present 'Hill' Stand covers most of the area of the original stand, and its clever construction was designed specifically to allow it to nestle into the natural form of the hill (ARM no date: p.7). The stand is open to the public and has all facilities, including bookmaker's stands, tote, and bars. It is also home to the race callers' boxes and includes exclusive restaurants, 'The Terrace', 'Skyline' and 'Panorama'. Additionally, the new members grandstand completed in 2000 has redefined the Australian racing experience. The \$41.5M facility provides world-class entertainment amenities within a flexible design, which meets the needs and expectations of members in the new millennium. The five-tiered stand includes approximately 6900 viewing seats, a state-of-the-art betting lounge and a member's level with a unique glazed atrium space with spectacular trackside views. Today the course provided facilities for patrons that are widely regarded as being amongst the best in Australia, and Flemington is acknowledged as being one of the finest natural racecourses in the world (Bernstein 1969: Intro.).

Avenues of mature trees, some of them planted by the first Secretary of the VRC, Robert Bagot, provide Flemington with abundant shade. Today, the banks of tens of thousands of roses which were originated in 1881 by the second VRC Secretary, Byron Moore, have become an internationally acclaimed Flemington trademark (Morphettville, in comparison, grows only 1,700). Today the Flemington Racecourse logo is derived from the rose garden, the design representing a dynamic visual expression of rose petals flooded in dappled sunlight against a background of the greens of the lawns and the famous track. It is unique as a racing club logo (VRC 2006a).

In 1993 the Melbourne Cup was won for the first time by a foreign horse, *Vintage Crop* trained by Dermot Weld of Ireland, which stimulated interest in international

racetracks. In addition to the Melbourne Cup, Flemington Racecourse today hosts many of Australia's top races, including the VRC Derby, VRC Oaks, MacKinnon Stakes, Newmarket Handicap, Australian Cup and Lightning Stakes.

Flemington, the VRC and the First World War.

World War I had a profound impact on Australia. Australia lost nearly 60,000 young men, of the more than 300,000 troops and service personnel she sent overseas. If a sense of nationhood was won, it was won at a terrible price. Much that was fine and good was lost for ever, including more than 120,000 Australian horses which were also sent to the war in Egypt and Palestine. The horses which survived the perils of war were not allowed to come home. Quarantine laws and the sheer cost prevented it. Many were shot at the request of their Australian handlers, who preferred that to abandoning the horses in the Middle East (Lemon 1990: p.465).

For the sport of horse racing in Victoria, the war left its indelible mark in three significant ways. Firstly, it tightened the control exercised by the VRC over the conduct of the sport, and set the private racecourses on the path to extinction. Secondly, it signalled the beginning of direct government intervention in the administration of the sport. Finally, in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia, it prompted the importation of a substantial number of English racehorses. On one hand this enriched both competition and the breed of thoroughbred horses in Australia, while on the other, they almost destroyed the market for Australian stallions for many years (Lemon 1990: p.465).

In England, racing during the war was very hastily curtailed by government decree. It only escaped a complete ban because such an extreme measure risked irreparable damage to the British bloodstock industry. For several lengthy periods there was no racing, while at others it was restricted entirely to Newmarket (Lemon 1990: p.465).

In Australia, where the emergency was not so pressing, horse racing continued with little debate until the winter of 1915. It was at this time that the true extent of Australian war casualties at Gallipoli was becoming clear, and the cost of the war in financial and human terms was beginning to show. Already the government was expressing the need for more volunteers for the armed services, and since spectator sports in this era were almost exclusively played by young men, it seemed incongruous to allow these sports to continue while active soldiers were needed abroad. The VRC approached the Victorian government to argue that racing was different from other sports and should not be curtailed, but that if it were to be reduced, then it should not be reduced at Flemington. Jockeys, unlike the average cricketer or footballer, were generally too small to meet the original physical requirements for army recruits, although many of them were just as tough as the larger sportsmen. The VRC argued that drastic restriction of racing would simply lead to unemployment and an unwanted drain on the public purse. The club further pledged that its entire profits for the duration of the War would be directed towards patriotic funds (Lemon 1990: p.465).

For the government, this was an enticing proposition. The Victorian government was under the control of Sir Alexander Peacock, who was pressed to support the Federal government's push for more men and money for the war effort. Sir Alexander decided that racing should be cut back but not eliminated. Flemington and Caulfield

came through unscathed, but the privately owned courses were hardest hit and this generally led to their closure and extinction. Further cuts in racing were made in 1916 and again in 1917, but the industry remained active compared with its counterpart in England (Lemon 1990: p.466).

The social value of the Melbourne Cup.

Almost two million people, or 12.9 % of the national population (ABS 2003), attended horse racing events in Australia in the year 2002 (the last year for which ABS figures are available). It had the second highest national sporting attendance rate after AFL, which had 2.5 million attendees or 17.1% (ABS 2003). Figures for the period indicate that Victoria had the second highest per capita State attendance rate at horse races at 15.8 % of the State population, after the Northern Territory with a per capita attendance rate of 16.3% of the population. More than 154,000 people over the age of 18 are actively involved nationally in the racing industry (ABS 1999).

The Melbourne Cup is one of the world's most challenging horse races, and one of the richest with a total prize money for 2005 of \$5.1 million (CRP: no date). Even people who don't usually bet, have been known to 'have a flutter' on 'the Cup'. Melbourne Cup Day is Australia's most famous Tuesday, and at 3.00pm AEST on the first Tuesday in November Australians everywhere stop for one of the world's most famous horse races. It's a day when even the Parliament stops to listen to the race call or to watch the race on TV. In 2005, 106,479 people attended Flemington for Melbourne Cup day (VRC 2005: p. 24) and more than 14 million Australians (85% of the population) watched the Melbourne Cup on television live or replayed (Morgan 2005), and more than 80,000 overseas visitors attended the race. It attracts people from all walks of life, even those without much knowledge of horse flesh, and in factories and offices around Australia the majority of people get involved in a Melbourne Cup sweep or Calcutta. In 2005, \$356.1 million was wagered nationally on the Melbourne Cup both on course and through the TAB (VRC 2005b: p.19, and personal communication Mr Simon Wheeler, Chief Financial Officer, ACTTAB). American writer, Mark Twain, said of a visit to the Melbourne Cup in 1895: *Nowhere in the world have I encountered a festival of people that has such a magnificent appeal to the whole nation. The Cup astonishes me.* (CRP: no date)

In 2002, the VRC initiated the Melbourne Cup tour, during which the Cup itself is toured around Australia and visits 30 destinations around the world, including New York, London, Manchester, and Singapore. The tour has further stimulated international interest in the race. Australians around the world have always been interested in the results of the race. As early as WWII, Australian troops in Papua New Guinea picked up a broadcast of the race. Today it is broadcast internationally, including for the first time in 2005 to troops in Afghanistan.

The Cup has provided a stream of stimulation for Australian creativity, not only in art and literature but also in fashion.

C J Dennis wrote of the Cup, and the poet Henry Kendal wrote 'How the Melbourne Cup was Won'. A B (Banjo) Paterson's 'A Dream of the Melbourne Cup' was published in the *Bulletin* just prior to the running of the 1886 Melbourne Cup. All the horses referred to in Paterson's poem, with the exception of *Acme*, started in the race, which was won by *Arsenal*. Adam Lindsay Gordon was not only one of Australia's

great 19th century poets, he was also one of the most romantic figures ever to appear on the Australian turf, where he attracted admiration for his courage, vitality and poetic soul (Lemon 1990: p.304). His poetry first achieved popularity when it was published in *Bell's Life in Victoria*, the Colony's leading sporting newspaper. In the late 1860s he won a number of races at Flemington, including on 10 October 1868 riding the famous 'treble' – the Metropolitan, the Selling Steeplechase and the Hunt. In 1868 he also won the VRC Steeplechase at the Melbourne Cup carnival (Lemon 1990: p.304). One of Australia's great crime writers, Arthur Upfield, wrote 'The Great Melbourne Cup Mystery'. Written in 1933, the year after *Phar Lap*'s mysterious death, it details the death of a Cup favourite on the eve of the race and is regarded as one of the 'lost' classics of Australian crime writing.

Scenes of Flemington, the Cup, and Cup winners have been painted by Australian artists for over a century, including the famous series of paintings of the 1887 Cup carnival by Carl Kahler, and the series of paintings of Cup winners by Martin Stainforth, regarded widely as Australia's greatest equestrian artist. Frederick Woodhouse painted both the start of the 1862 Cup and also *Archer* following his win. The winner of the 1890 Cup, the great *Carbine*, was painted by Mark Gawen and the painting presented to the VRC by the Duke of Portland in 1895. Sir Daryl Lindsay painted *Phar Lap* following his win in the Melbourne Cup, and also *Contadore* following his win of the Windsor Steeplechase in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1963. Harold Freeman's murals of the history of thoroughbred racing in Australia now decorate the 1978 Hill Stand at Flemington.

The Melbourne Cup has also been the subject of a number of popular plays and variety acts in Australian theatres. In 1887, Dion Boucicault's drama, *The Flying Scud* was performed at the Nugget Theatre, and during the race scene a live horse was bought on to the stage to the 'special approbation of the audience'. In 1893 the Alhambra Palace of Varieties featured a program that included Miss Florrie Ford riding the winner of the Melbourne Cup across the stage. The seamy side of racing was portrayed in *Rogues of the Turf* at the new Bijou Theatre in 1907. The entrepreneur, Bland Holt, presented a number of plays set around the Melbourne Cup, starting with *Sporting Life* produced at the Theatre Royal in 1898, during which the favourite *Lady Love* wins the race in full view of the audience (Bernstein 1969: p.81), and in 1905 *The Betting Book* at the Theatre Royal. In 1909 he presented *Flood Tide*, with 'real' racehorses ridden by 'real' jockeys. Mr Holt packed them in! He was the supreme showman and actor of his day, and the most dramatic of all these spectacular presentations was *The County Fair* staged by him in the late nineties. Dame Mabel Brookes, one of Melbourne's leading society hostesses of the day, remembered the occasion:

'Bland Holt was the children's delight, and he put on a melodrama that was centred on the Melbourne Cup. He had a treadmill working on the stage for the horses to run on. Real jockeys were used to gallop the horses up a lane, turn them into the stage door onto a ramp up which they galloped madly, and so on to the treadmill which went madly too - in the reverse direction. The cheers were deafening - you could have no idea what went on! With the finish of the race the horses and riders went out the other side. By this time the audience was completely spent with excitement. On one occasion there was great consternation when the mechanism failed and the wrong horse won. However, it was all quite wonderful! (quoted in Bernstein 1969: p.82).

In 1962 English choreographer, Rex Reid, created the 'Melbourne Cup' ballet for the inaugural programme of the Australian Ballet Company, based on popular music of the 1860s chosen by Australian musician, Harold Badger, and orchestrated by Charles (now Sir Charles) Mackerras. Based on *Archer*'s winning of the first Cup, the ballet has toured the world and been performed more than any other ballet created in Australia (Bernstein 1969: pp.82-3). When the work was performed at Covent Garden in London during the Australian Ballet's first tour in 1965, it was received with a tumultuous ovation, and was outstandingly praised when the Company subsequently toured South America in 1968. In 1966 'Melbourne Cup' was televised by ABV Channel 2, Melbourne, in the program 'Robert Helpmann introduces the Australian Ballet' (Bernstein 1969: p.83).

The first cinematographic newsreel film shot in Australia was taken at Flemington on Cup day in 1896, when 95,000 people saw *Newhaven* win the Cup. The film was shot by Maurice Sestier a cameraman for the Lumiere brothers of Paris, who invented the 'motion picture'. The film stock of the day was too slow to take satisfactory pictures of galloping horses passing the post, but the clip shows a priceless archival record of the arrival of Lord Brassey, the Governor of Victoria; the bookmakers; saddling paddock; the crowds; and most importantly the fashionable ladies parading up and down the Lawns. The original of the film is in the Paris archive of the Cinemathèque Française, and is described as being "as fragile as old lace and more precious than gold". In 1969 a print of the film was placed in the National Library of Australia by the then French Cultural Counsellor in Australia, M. Henri Souillac (Bernstein 1969: pp.56-9).

The Melbourne Cup is also the venue for the display of Australian fashion. The spring racing carnival is a major part of the fashion industry's year. The part women played in the growing prestige of the VRC in the nineteenth century was incalculable. 'If they made no other contribution,' said the *Age*, 'the colour and interest they have given the Flemington scene with their dressing would be sufficient.' From the early days when their long skirts rustled across the famous Lawn, and their dainty parasols shaded delicate complexions, women have made fashion a talking point at VRC meetings. From the latter part of the last century through the Edwardian era, the chronicling of the frocks and their wearers seen on the Lawn at Flemington on Cup Day was as important as a description of the big race. An *Argus* fashion writer wound up a description of the Cup day's activities by stating: 'I understand there was also some racing.' (Bernstein 1969: p.61) In 1882 when *The Assyrian* won the Cup, a sudden downpour was said to have ruined thousands of pounds worth of elegant and expensive dresses (Lemon 1990: p.312). The tradition of Oaks Day as the ladies day of the Spring Carnival originated in 1885, when the VRC Secretary Byron Moore overheard a group of fashionably dressed ladies complaining of the damage that had been done to their elegant gowns by the crush of people on Cup day. Less crowded than the public holiday on the Cup day, Oaks Day allowed the ladies to parade their fashionable finery on the Lawn, and had another advantage in that the principal race of the day, the Oaks, was for fillies. Within two years, Oaks Day had become the fashion event of the Melbourne year (ARM no date: p.6, Pacini 1988: pp.115-6).

From Jean Shrimpton's famous mini-skirt in 1965 to Australian supermodel Megan Gale's appearance in 2005, fashion has always made as many headlines as hemlines at the Melbourne Cup. In 2005 visitors to Flemington for the Spring Carnival and the

Melbourne Cup spent more than \$20.1 million on fashion purchases in Victoria (VRC 2005: p.7). The Australian millinery trade, which now exports internationally, depends on the Melbourne Cup trade and young milliners develop their creative skills in supplying exotic hats to ladies for the Cup carnival.

Condition:

Bibliographic References:

ABS (1999) *4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 1999*. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/1bd41c44da09fe66ca2570ec0011493b!OpenDocument>.

ABS (2003) *4174.0 - Sports Attendance, Australia, 2002* Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/e8ae5488b598839cca25682000131612/1f8fac9c2c7b1623ca2568a900139417!OpenDocument>

ABS (2006) *4156.0 - Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 2006*. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/e05f764b9231b546ca25718e0018e796!OpenDocument>

Ahern, Bill (1982) *A Century of Winners: the saga of 121 Melbourne Cups*. Boolarong Publications, Brisbane.

AJC (2006a) *Royal Randwick Racecourse*. Australian Jockey Club.

<http://www.ajc.org.au/trackmap.htm>

AJC (2006b) *The Sydney Cup: Royal Randwick Racecourse*. Australian Jockey Club.

<http://www.sydneycup.com.au/royal-randwick.php>

ARM (no date) *The Spirit of Racing: heritage trail – Flemington Racecourse*. Australian Racing Museum, Caulfield, Vic.

Bernstein, D L (1969) *First Tuesday in November: the story of the Melbourne Cup*. Heinemann, Clayton, Vic.

Breen, Marcus (1989) *People, Cows and Cars: the changing face of Flemington*. Melbourne City Council, Melbourne.

CRP (no date) *Melbourne Cup*. Department of Communications, Information Technology, Sports and the Arts: Culture and Recreation Portal, Canberra.

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/melbournecup/>

Morgan (2005) *The Race That Stops A Nation*. Roy Morgan Research, Melbourne.

<http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2005/3926/>

Pacini, John (1988) *A Century Galloped By: the first hundred years of the Victoria*

Racing Club. Victoria Racing Club, Melbourne.

Painter, Martin & Waterhouse, Richard (1992) *The Principal Club: a history of the Australian Jockey Club*. Allen & Unwin, North Sydney.

Queensland Racing (2006) *History of Racing in Queensland*.
https://www.queenslandracing.com.au/get_involved/rich_history.asp

RCC (2006) *Horses and Courses: Racing in Randwick*. Randwick City Council.
<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/default.php?id+138>

SAJC (2006) *A History of the South Australian Jockey Club*. South Australian Jockey Club. Morphetville SA.
<http://www.sajc.com.au/index.php/selectedContent/2123006629>

VRC (2005a) *Racing Information: all Melbourne Cup results*.
http://www.vrc.net.au/cpa/htm/htm_flemington_content.asp?page_id=120

VRC (2005b) *2005 Spring Racing Carnival – Economic Benefits*. Victoria Racing Club, Melbourne.
<http://www.springracingcarnival.com.au/media/documents.SRceco.pdf>