A Little Bit of History by Alan Parker © 2014

Trotting began to be organised in Western Australia in 1910 with the formation, on 22nd September that year, of the Western Australian Trotting Association.

Prior to that date the only organised trotting events were at the annual Perth Show, run by the Royal Agricultural Society. Since 1887 events had been included for roadsters and the first classes for trotters appeared in 1890. These first trotters appeared in a category of "Trotters by Bay Shales". Bay Shales was an English bred Norfolk Trotter imported to Western Australia in 1886 by well-known Barrack Street butcher John Liddelow.

At the 1896 Show a trotting contest was held between two former Victorian trotters in Palo Alto and Oakleigh along with a son of Childe Harold called Harold and a local horse of unknown parentage called Dick. Dick, driven by H A Hummerston won the event from Oakleigh. Mr Hummerston was later to be a founding member of the WA Trotting Association.

The number of trotters exhibited at the annual Royal Show grew slowly until by 1905 there were more than 40 horses entered in the various classes. That year saw, for the first time, the name of James Brennan among the competitors. Brennan's horse was an eight year old named Castlecomer in honour of Brennan's Irish birthplace.

By 1910 the number and quality of horses had improved to the point where it was announced, in The West Australian newspaper on 2nd September 1910, that James Brennan would guarantee prizemoney of 50 pounds for two events at that year's Show. The same paper announced the attempt to form a trotting association.

The first Committee meeting of the W.A.T.A. was chaired by Brennan with hair specialist Albert Mayor as Honorary Secretary and Messrs. George Hiscox, A E Cockram, Shirley White and C McManus as members of the Committee. The other foundation members of the WATA were A W Wallder, H A Hummerston and A A Frieee.

Hiscox owned the famed Belmont Stud Farm and was to later breed and race a number of outstanding horses while Cockram owned both the Belmont Park and Goodwood race-courses in the era of privately owned race-tracks.

The trotting events at the 1910 Perth Royal Show were run jointly by the WATA and the Royal Agricultural Society using the rules of the Victorian Trotting Association until local rules could be put in place. Among the events at the 1910 Show held at the Claremont Showgrounds, were a series of time tests for a total of 63 pounds in prizemoney.

On 3rd November 1910 Big Ben, a giant gelding of unknown pedigree, trotted a mile in 2:30 to become the State's first official Standardbred performer.

On Christmas Eve 1910 the WATA held its first race meeting at the Belmont Park racecourse. Seven events were held on a hot, humid Saturday afternoon with the first race being won by M & T Humphries' mare Princess Huon. Princess Huon was one of four horses which each had four starts that afternoon, covering a total of nearly five miles.

Also a starter that day was a mare called Princess Derby who founded a maternal family which has survived for more than 100 years and includes a couple of WA Derby winners in Wilfred and Willowcliffe and the 2007 Northam Cup winner Left Pride and the 1996 Christmas Gift winner Rudlan.

The WATA continued to conduct race-meetings on a fortnightly basis, using both Belmont Park and the Claremont Showgrounds as venues. A 25 pounds per meeting rent for the Showgrounds was placing a financial burden on the WATA and, in March 1913, an agreement was negotiated for a five year lease of a trotting track on the perimeter of the Western Australian Cricket Association Ground. Provision for night trotting was made in the agreement.

Because of the scope of this financial agreement, on 11th April 1913 Messrs James Brennan, James Nicholls and Henry A Hummerston became financial guarantors of the WATA for the five year period of the original lease.

The guarantors were given the power to appoint sufficient nominees to the Association's Committee as required to retain voting control. While it was only intended that the guarantor system would be required for a period of five years, it was to remain in place until 1946.

Three months after signing the lease agreement the WATA began racing on the WACA Ground track, on 28th June 1913 in front of a crowd of 1200 people who put 300 pounds through the on-course totalisator. The Association's timekeepers D C Braham and W McNamara had the idea of trotting under lights to avoid clashes with gallop' meetings.

On 2nd January 1914 a quote of 379 pounds, from Leo Walton's Electrical Wiring Company, was accepted for the installation of lights at the WACA track. Australia's first complete meeting under lights was held at the WACA on 24th January 1914 with the running of five races. The first event was won by Alfred Fox driving Battler 11.

The birdcage area of the WACA Ground track in 1913.

At this time there was a proliferation of privately owned race-tracks across the suburbs of Perth and both the WA Trotting Association and WA Turf Club were at loggerheads with these "unregistered" clubs racing at venues such as Goodwood, Bicton and Canning Park.

The battle for control of trotting dates had been fought from 1912 until the Premier of Western Australia assumed direct control over the allocation of racing dates with the advent of World War I in 1914.

After years of significant lobbying by both the Trotting Association and Turf Club on 1st March 1917 the Racing Restriction Act was introduced in the State's Legislative Assembly. When it was passed later that year, the Bill provided for all trotting meetings to be held under a licence issued by the WATA and thoroughbred meetings under the auspices of the WA Turf Club.

On 23rd April 1914 James Brennan reported to the WATA Committee that the WA Cricket Association was prepared to sell 17 acres of land on the northern side of their ground.

Months of negotiations followed between the WATA, WACA, Perth City Council and Land's Department and on 2nd July 1915 an agreement was signed to purchase 14 and a half acres of land for the sum of 6000 pounds on a deposit of 100 pounds. It took the WATA a further six years before they were able to purchase the last of the blocks in Waterloo Crescent to give them sufficient land to build the course later to be known as Gloucester Park.

The bulk of the land was a mosquito ridden swamp and between 1917 and 1920 the site was used as the Perth City Council's rubbish tip, with the WATA paying the wages of the tip foreman.

Architects Powell and Cameron were appointed on 6th May 1920 while A T Brine & Sons began work on the drainage of the site.

Lighting specifications were obtained from American, British, French, German and Swedish firms for a system which was to see some 750 miles of electrical wiring and 180 tonnes of equipment suspended over the track. The original installation was carried out by the local firm Brear & Doonan, who are still the electricians at the track some 90 years later.

Construction of the Gloucester Park entrance gates 1929

Stockpiling of more than 30,000 yards of shell, dredged from the Swan River, began in 1925 but, by the end of 1927, a series of inaccurate cost and quantities estimates were beginning to affect progress on the construction of the track.

At that time some 50,000 pounds had been spent on the course, and it was estimated that a similar amount would be required to complete the construction of essential facilities, such as totalisators, grandstand, offices and fences.

Twelve months later the bill had risen to 100,000 pounds and the track had still not been completed and the WATA had only six months of their lease of the WACA track remaining.

Money was looming as a major problem, as falling world prices for agricultural products, and a loss of overseas capital in Australia, was beginning to take effect. Brennan and his fellow committeemen sought the assistance of Perth businessman John P Stratton.

Stratton was able to obtain the necessary loan and, on 5th February 1929, he became one of the three guarantors which the Bank of New South Wales required. He replaced WA Smiley as Vice-President of the WATA and shortly thereafter the official architects were replaced.

A grandiose grandstand, modelled on the Addington stand in Christchurch, was replaced with a less elaborate model, similar to that at the Kings Park Tennis Club, as Stratton continued his push to have the track completed.

Members of the press and the WATA Committee inspecting Gloucester Park just prior to the opening of the track in 1929

The first race meeting at the track was held on 26th December 1929 and a crowd of some 17,000 people saw Alween, with F Mackander at the reins, win the opening event at the track named Brennan Park, in honour of the man to whom Western Australian trotting owed its very existence.

Completed at a cost of 200,000 pounds at the time of The Great Depression, the track was variously described as the best in the Southern Hemisphere and the equal of any in the World. Its first class facilities included the latest Julius "Premier" totalisator capable of handling 3000 pounds per minute in pound units. It provided 86 windows for punters and was able to automatically display win and place odds for each horse.

WATA President James Brennan with one of the Julius Totalisator ticket issuing machines at the new Brennan Park track in 1929

The course was officially opened by Perth's Lord Mayor J T Franklin on 15th March 1930 and the feature events at that night's meeting were named after Brennan and Stratton. Later that year James

Brennan resigned as a member of the WATA Committee and J P Stratton became President of the Association. It was a position which he would hold for 36 years until his death in 1966.

In 1934, at a time when James Brennan was suffering financial difficulties and had health issues, the WATA Committee made a controversial decision to drop the name Brennan Park and the track was known simply as The Perth Course.

When the Duke Of Gloucester attended a race-meeting at the track in October 1934, on his way to Melbourne to open the Shrine of Remembrance, it still had now name and public anger over the dropping of the name Brennan still bubbled in the local press.

In November 1935 the track was named Gloucester Park to mark the wedding of the Duke Of Gloucester and the debate still raged about the change from the original name. The Duke of Gloucester was to later become Governor General of Australia from 1945 until 1947.

In September 1923, at a Conference of trotting officials, James Brennan had presented the concept of an annual championship to be rotated among the Australian States, New Zealand and the United States of America. He received a lukewarm response from the other delegates, however Brennan was able to convince his fellow WATA committeemen to go it alone.

In 1925 and 1926 the WATA conducted the Australasian Trotting Championship at its WACA Ground track. New Zealand was represented by Great Hope and Taraire in 1925 and both horses came to Perth with earnings in excess of 5,000 pounds. Great Hope won the championship from the Victorian stallion Vin Direct.

Taraire was left in Perth and won the 1926 Australasian Championship from the New Zealand champion Great Bingen. Great Bingen was part-owned by Roydon Lodge Stud founder John McKenzie.

Great Bingen returned to New Zealand in 1926 where he forged a successful career at stud. The roan Taraire stood at stud in the Great Southern region of Western Australia and his descendants include the 1983 WA Oaks winner Princess Lelaine.

Brennan's idea of an annual Championship attracting the best horses from both countries was ahead of its time however, and as finances were tight, the concept was dropped and all but forgotten until fellow Western Australian J P Stratton resurrected the idea at a meeting of trotting administrators in Sydney in 1935.

JP Stratton – WATA President 1930 - 1966

The first Inter Dominion Championship was allocated to Perth and was held at Gloucester Park on 8th, 12th, 15th and 19th February 1936. While the administrators of the time deserve plaudits for the Inter Dominion concept, they deserve censure for the points system they devised to determine the Grand Champion.

Realising the inadequacies of asking top horses to concede handicaps to other top horses in champion-class races, they had devised a scheme whereby the placegetters in each heat and the final received 3, 2 or 1 point. In addition the three fastest horses in each heat received 3, 2 and 1 point. Logan Derby went through the Championship undefeated and earned a total of 18 points. The mare Evicus finished second in each of her four starts and earned 20 points to be declared Grand Champion.

In its first season of operation at Gloucester Park, the WATA held 52 meetings and paid 33,365 pounds in stakes. By 1940 the figures had increased to 53 meetings for 122,289 pounds in stakes as the Association continued its steady progress despite the interruption of World War II. In 2013 meetings at Gloucester Park distributed nearly $13 million in stakes.

During World War II racing was held on Saturday afternoons and at times only held fortnightly, due to a sharing agreement over dates with the WA Turf Club which raced alternate Saturdays. Night racing was banned due to fear of air attack by the Japanese.

As early as 1919 a trotting club had been talked about in Fremantle but it wasn't until 1928 that it became a reality with the registration of the Fremantle Trotting Club and the running of the first race-meeting.

The Fremantle Club raced once a month which provided a break for maintenance of the track in Perth although they went into recess during WWII and racing in the port city didn't resume until 1949. Racing ceased permanently at Richmond Raceway in 1991 with the Fremantle club conducting their meetings at Gloucester Park.

The Fremantle Harness Racing Club and Western Australian Trotting Association merged in 2011 to form Gloucester Park Harness Racing.

Technological change in society has also been reflected in the many changes made at Gloucester Park over the years.

Photo finish facilities were introduced to Gloucester Park in August 1949, and used for the first time to decide the outcome of a race on 20th August 1949.

Fair Lily was declared the winner from Sheikson, Redfred and Mardon Girl. The first dead-heat declared after the introduction of a photo finish came about on 2nd September 1950, when the photo showed that Attaboy (Charlie Allen) and Step Lad (Fred Hough) could not be separated.

On 15th November 1930 Gloucester Park patrons witnessed the first triple dead-heat when the judge was unable to separate Ella Derby (Harry Moran), Red Derby (Stan Woodworth) and Nelson McCormack (Jim Morgan). It is pure conjecture whether the judge would have come up with the same result had there been photo finish facilities.

Currently Gloucester Park races feature a mix of standing and mobile starts. The rubber strand method of starting horses from a stand was brought to Western Australia in 1935 by a seventy year old Victorian called H Brenning. Previously races had been started by pistol shot.

Legend has it that the champion pacer of the thirties, Adonaldson, used to watch the starter's pistol and start on the appearance of smoke from the muzzle. This gave him a split-second advantage on those who waited for the sound of the pistol shot to carry. Adonaldson lost that advantage when the starter stood on his mechanical release after 1935.

A mobile barrier was used at Gloucester Park for the first time on 24th May 1958. The winner of the race was the notoriously unruly Edward Scott. The machine was consigned to the scrap-heap after a short period of use and was not re-introduced until January 1972 when Roscott won that year's Mount Eden Mile.

Television came to Perth in the late 1950's and on November 4, 1960 the 5000 pound Anniversary Cup was replayed to Perth television audiences on the ABC's Sports Cavalcade programme. The champion Sydney pacer Apmat, with legendary horseman Bert Alley at the reins, won the race from the locals Defiance and Kiwi Dillon.

A decade later, on February 28, 1970, the WATA held a seven race programme at Gloucester Park but only six were run in Perth. The seventh race was a live telecast of the Inter Dominion Final from Melbourne featuring the Western Australia's idol Dainty's Daughter.
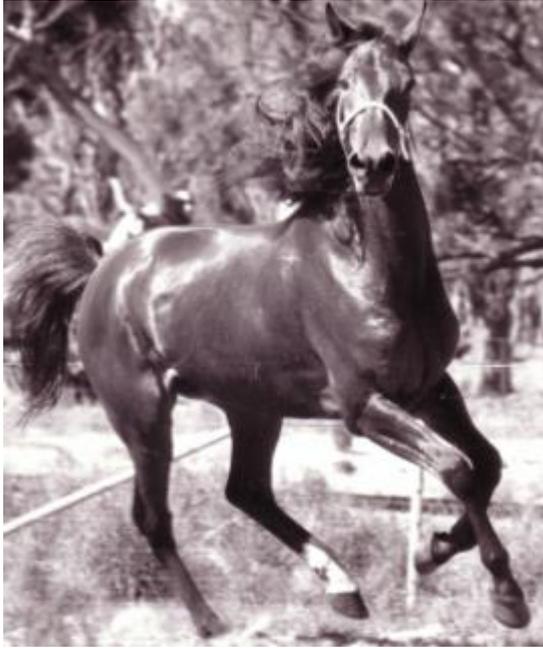
The champion mare Dainty's Daughter pictured at the stables of her trainer Bernie Cushing. She set two world records and her 33 wins at Gloucester Park is a record for a mare. She was inducted into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall of Fame in 2010.

Television came to the assistance of stewards on October 1, 1971 with the introduction of race patrol films. A little over a year later, on October 21, 1972, metric race distances were introduced to Gloucester Park. The WATA resisted the dropping of mile rates and for a period both mile rates and kilometre rates were used. When the Metric Conversion Board went into mothballs, so too did kilometre rates.

On May 3, 1985 the Gloucester Park track changed dramatically when the old circuit was torn up and a new 804.5 metre oval was put in its place. Not that the old track was slow. In fact on March 11, 1983 it had become the nation's first 1:55 track with the 1:54.9 time trial of the four-year-old stallion Classic Garry.

Classic Garry is just one of a host of outstanding champions who have raced at Gloucester Park and the list is not restricted to those who competed in Inter Dominions.

When trotting began in Perth in 1910 it didn't take long for the appearance of the first of a long line of champions and crowd favourites to emerge. Hector Mac was the first public idol. So much so that when he died in 1929 his bones were laid to rest under the winning post of the Gloucester Park track. In 1997 the ashes of the 1967 Inter Dominion champion Binshaw were also laid to rest under the Gloucester Park winning post.

Hector Mac raced at the WACA, as did other champions of that era including Kola Girl, Princess Wilkes, Cole Queen, Earl Derby, Great Bingen and Craboon. Kola Girl was the standout pacer of that era and her wins included a 25 yard thrashing of the 1918 WA Pacing Cup field and a win from a handicap of 95 yards in the 1921 Easter Cup which carried a stake of 500 sovereigns.

The first of the public idols at Gloucester Park was the black stallion Adonaldson who won the 1934 Gloucester Cup. By the sensational sire Alfred Donald, he was one of a number of outstanding racehorses produced by his dam which went by the simple title of Jill.

In 1937 Kolect wrote his name into the record books when he won the WA Cup from a backmark of 108 yards.

Kolect's dam Kola Girl was born in New Zealand in 1911 and began racing in Perth as a 4yo in 1915. She won 19 races in Perth and a number of others on Eastern States tracks where she beat the likes of Globe Derby.

Kola Girl was the first Western Australian horse to hold the Australian Mile Record (Mount Eden was the only other WA holder of the title) and she held it from 1923 to 1931. She held the Australian Mares Mile Record from 1923 to 1945.

Her 19 wins in Perth included a WA Pacing Cup and in 1925 as a 14yo she won two heats of the inaugural Australasian Championship (fore-runner of the Inter Dominion).

Kola Girl remains the only WA Pacing Cup winner to produce a WA Pacing Cup winner at stud. She is pictured here with her trainer/driver Tom Foy

Kolect's son Kolrock won the 1940 WA Cup from the champion mare Queen's Gift who reversed the result in 1941. Both horses were champions and crowd favourites at a time when war clouds preoccupied the minds of those who watched racing at the track.

Dark David, a black son of Storm Cloud, won the WA Cup in 1947. That year the stallion Don Sebastian was mated with a mare called Nellie's Vin. The resultant foal was the sensational Beau Don which won the WA Cup in 1952 and 1953 and established a trend for crowd popularity that was later matched by only the likes of Mount Eden, Pure Steel, Village Kid and Im Themightyquinn.

Such was the adulation afforded Beau Don that when he fell in a heat of the 1952 Inter Dominion, the crowd were close to rioting, based on the level of vitriol hurled at New South Wales reinsmen Perc Hall and Harry Mazoudier. The crowd thought that they had been at fault in causing the fall.

Beau Don was trained and driven by Bill Foy and after winning the WA Derby as a 3yo he became the first horse to win two WA Pacing Cups and the bulk of his 35 wins came from massive handicap marks and endeared him to fans at Gloucester Park

A champion in every sense of the word, Frosty Nelson won a string of races at Gloucester Park in the 1950's he never got under the skin of the fans in the way that Beau Don did. Frosty Nelson retired to stud with a remarkable 52 wins from 104 starts.

In the 1960's crowds thrilled to the clashes between Radiant Oro, Dainty's Daughter, Binshaw, Blue Pennant and Renaud. Never in 100 years of trotting in this State has there been a depth of fast class talent to match that of the years 1967 - 1970. The track's first 2:00 mile was recorded in this period along with a number of World Records.

To that pool of fast-class talent was added the sensational speed machine Mount Eden. A horse that was years ahead of his time, Mount Eden remains the fastest horse seen in Australia. The times that he recorded in 1971 gave him the status of the best pacer in the World and crowds flocked to see him.

Mount Eden and his trainer/driver Jack Miles

Prior to his leaving Perth for the 1971 Miracle Mile, 5000 attended his trial at Gloucester Park. There will never be another to grab the imagination of people quite like Mount Eden.

In 1975 the WA Derby was won by a nuggetty colt whose name was probably the most fitting ever given to a champion horse.

Pure Steel was exactly that and he forged a reputation as the toughest stayer seen in Australia. His four successive WA Pacing Cups is legendary, although he was never able to win an Inter Dominion Championship. He was twice placed in the final of the Inter Dominion and ranks as the greatest horse never to win the event.

Pure Steel parades before his legion of fans at Gloucester Park

The Gloucester Park track witnessed a host of champion local horses in the 1980's and 1990's, including the likes of Satinover, San Simeon, Preux Chevalier, Black Irish and Jack Morris to name but a few.

One horse has stood out however. Village Kid won four WA Cups to go with nine other Group One wins on his way to Australian Record earnings of $2,117,870. He ranked as the World's Richest Pacing

Gelding and, at the age of 13, he set a World Record for a horse of his age when he time trialled in 1:55.1.

Village Kid attracted fans to the track like no other horse since the great Mount Eden.

The longevity of his race track career contributed to this, as did his period of dominance of Australian harness racing, his racing for the children from the Make A Wish Foundation and the special affinity between the horse and his trainer Bill Horn.

The 1981 Australian Harness Horse of the Year San Simeon still holds the Australian Record for any breed of race-horse for consecutive wins after winning his first 29 race starts as a 2yo, 3yo and 4yo.

San Simeon retired to stud with a career record of 33 wins and four places in his 42 starts and his wins included the 1981 Inter Dominion final in Hobart, a WA Pacing Cup, Australian Derby and WA Derby.

Trained and driven by Lou Austin, San Simeon was voted Australian 2yo Pacer of the Year in 1979 and followed that up a year later with the Australian 3yo Pacer of the Year title ahead of the likes of Popular Alm and Gammalite.

Trainer/driver Lou Austin with the legendary San Simeon whose 29 consecutive wins from debut has never been surpassed by any other Australian horse of any breed

Binshaw earned a special place in WA Harness Racing as the first WA Bred winner of the Inter Dominion when he won in 1967 at Gloucester Park.

Despite an injury interrupted career he won 24 races in Perth including an Easter Cup and a Fremantle Members Sprint at his last start as a 14yo.

Binshaw died in 1996 at the age of 35 and his remains are placed at the Gloucester Park winning post.

Binshaw and trainer/driver Phil Coulson after the 1967 Inter Dominion final win at Gloucester Park

Preux Chevalier's star burned bright for an 18 month period in the mid-eighties as he and his trainer/driver Barry Perkins dominated Australian racing winning at Group One level in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and New Zealand and was declared Australian Harness Horse of the Year in 1985.

Preux Chevalier won an Inter Dominion in Melbourne, a WA Pacing Cup in Perth and a New Zealand Free-For-All in Christchurch and his clashes with the rising star Village Kid drew crowds across the country.

The 1985 Australian Harness Horse of the Year Preux Chevalier

Since Alfred Fox and Henry Hummerston shared the first Perth Drivers Premiership and the first Perth Trainers Premiership harness racing in Perth in 1910/11 this city has seen an array of talented horsemen the equal of any in the world.

Not only did the Gloucester Park track open for business in 1929 but that year saw the arrival in Perth from South Australia of the Kersley family.

Patriarch F J "Pop" Kersley moved his family west per medium of a car trip across the Nullarbor Plain. His sons Frank, Fred, Keith and Ron all became successful trainers and drivers in Perth.

Frank Kersley won seven Perth Trainers Premierships and 11 Perth Drivers Premierships and he was regarded by his peers across the country as the finest driver in Australia. He was an inaugural inductee into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall of Fame in 2007.

Frank Kersley's achievements as a trainer and a driver were recognised in the best possible way on 2nd September 1987, when he was inducted into the Western Australian Institute's Hall of Champions.

The Hall of Champions numbered just 36 elite sportsmen and women at that time, after it was inaugurated in 1985, and with his nephew Fred R Kersley and Jim Schrader he shares the honour of the only harness racing identities to have been accorded the ultimate sporting honour in Western Australia.

Tennessee Sky's victory in the 1954 Adelaide Inter Dominion, with its masterly display of reinsmanship, set the seal on Frank Kersley's national reputation as a driver.

From that point the press referred to him as Australia's best reinsman.

Frank Kersley's brother Fred established himself as one of the State's outstanding horsemen winning the Perth trainers title four times and the Drivers Premiership four times.

He won the WA Derby a record six times, the WA Easter Cup on four occasions and heats of Inter Dominions behind Kellett and Magic Flute.

He finished his driving career with a win behind James Eden in the 1972 WA Pacing Cup.

In 1954 Fred Kersley was introduced to a youthful Queen Elizabeth when he won the 1954 Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Gloucester Park before a crowd in excess of 45,000.

On 9th October 1972 Fred Kersley came close to meeting the Queen's sister when he finished second on Stitchintime to Bangalore in the Princess Margaret Cup.

Fred Kersley's son Fred R Kersley was born in 1939 and has won more Perth Driver's Premierships (17) than any other driver in the 97 year history of harness racing in Perth. His uncle Frank Kersley previously held the record with 11 Perth Premierships.

In addition Fred has topped the Perth Trainer's Premiership on 14 occasions.

Fred was the first Australian Driver to drive 100 Metropolitan Winners in a season (113 in 1984/85). Like his uncle Frank, Fred R Kersley was an inaugural inductee into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall of Fame in 2007 and like his uncle he too is a member of the WAIS Hall of Champions.

Fred R Kersley has been in the Top 10 Australian Drivers (wins) on 12 occasions and became one of only four Western Australians to win this title when he tied with Gavin Lang in 1986/87 with 131 winners.

Fred was leading driver in Australia (points) in 1983, 1985, 1986 and 1988.

He drove five winners at a Metropolitan meeting in Perth on four occasions and topped the 100 winners in a season mark on five occasions.

Fred represented Australia in the 1991 World Driver's Championship and finished a close second to New Zealand's Maurice McKendry in the battle for recognition as the World's Best Reinsman.

Fred's achievements in harness racing were recognised nationally in 1993 when the Australian Harness Racing Council awarded him their Distinguished National Service Award.

In 1968 Jim Schrader was the nation's leading driver with 99 winners to narrowly miss becoming the first Australian driver to drive a century of winners in a season (that honour went to Vic Frost who drove 106 winners in 1970).

In 1969 he was again the leading driver in Australia with 93 winners and in 1979 became the first Western Australian based driver to drive 100 winners in a season when he drove 103 winners to finish 4th nationally to Ted Demmler (115).

Jim remains the only Western Australian reinsman to top the national list on more than one occasion and he finished in the top ten drivers nationally on six occasions.

On 9th November 1968 Jim won with his only five drives on a seven event programme at Gloucester Park to become the first Western Australian and only second Australian to drive five winners at a metropolitan meeting.

After commencing in the stables of his father Harry, Jim spent time with Frank Kersley as a stable-hand in company with Kevin Newman, Alan Woodworth and Bernie Cushing. When Kersley retired in 1954 to become a steward, Cushing set up his own stables and was joined by Schrader and Newman.

When it came to getting a horse across the line in a tight finish there was none better than Jim Schrader at cajoling, lifting or kidding a horse to the finish. He was an inaugural inductee into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall of Fame in 2007.

Jim Schrader built a special sulky that was about two inches narrower than the normal cart used in Perth so that he could take a narrower opening than his rivals.

He also experimented with different wheel bearings in an endeavour to reduce the resistance factor.

His desperation to win often saw him carpeted by stewards and he drove in very few Pacing Cups as he was invariably suspended at the time of the State's biggest race.

Phil Coulson went through the Perth Reinsman's School under the tutelage of Frank Kersley and drove his first Perth winner at Richmond Raceway with Tiny Tax on 30th June 1951 as an 18 year old.

It was the first of 810 Perth winners and when Coulson retired from race driving in 1999 only Fred R Kersley, Chris Lewis and Trevor Warwick had won more races in Perth.

Coulson topped the Perth Driver's Premiership five times and won the trainer's title on six occasions. Only Fred R Kersley (11 titles) and Frank Kersley (7 titles) have won the Perth Trainer's Premiership more often than Phil Coulson.

No other trainer/reinsman has yet approached Coulson's record in the WA Pacing Cup where he has trained a total of five winners in Hy Craft (1964), Lord Mina (1965), Color Glo (1966) and Pure Steel (1977 & 1978).

In addition he drove seven winners in Lord Mina (1965), Color Glo (1966), Pure Steel (1977, 1978 & 1979), Gammalite (1982) and Village Kid (1985).

He was an inaugural inductee into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall Of Fame in 2007.

Cliff Clarke was born in Devonshire, England in 1894 and after a period working in the WA pearling industry he became involved in harness racing in the latter half of 1923.

His impact as a trainer/driver was immediate as he topped both the Perth Reinsman's Premiership and Perth Trainer's Premiership in his first season.

He headed the 1923/24 Driver's List with 18 winners 11 seconds and 10 thirds to finish three winners clear of Harry Moran and Charlie Thomas. Clarke also topped the Perth Trainers List with 18 winners - five clear of Moran.

No other driver in the 83 subsequent seasons has headed the Perth Premierships in their first season as a trainer/driver.

Cliff Clarke headed the Perth Drivers List on four occasions in 1923/24, 1926/27, 1931/32 and 1940/41 on his way to a tally of 341 Perth wins as a driver. That total still ranks Clarke in the Top 20 drivers of all-time in Perth.

As a trainer Cliff Clarke had no peer as he headed the Perth Trainers List six times between 1923/24 and 1951/52. Only Fred R Kersley (14) and Frank Kersley (7) have won more Perth Trainers Premierships than Clarke.

He was inducted into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall Of Fame in 2010.

Chris Lewis is the most successful driver in the history of Western Australian harness racing having driven more than 4500 winners.

Born in Adelaide, Lewis became the youngest driver of an Inter Dominion winner when he was successful in his then home-town of Adelaide in the 1976 final behind Carclew which was trained by his father Allen. Carclew upset a massive betting plunge on the WA trained Pure Steel, which finished second.

Impressed with the state of harness racing in Western Australia, after competing in the inaugural Australian Young Drivers Championship in June 1976, the Lewis family moved to Perth in 1979.

Lewis won a second Inter Dominion in 1986 in Brisbane with the legendary Western Australian pacer Village Kid and he is the only Western Australian driver to have won the pinnacle race in Australian harness racing twice.

Chris Lewis has driven more than 2300 winners in Perth and more than 2200 at other tracks across Australia.

In 1995 he drove three winners at Menangle (NSW) at the final meeting of the season to win Australian Drivers Premiership with a then Australian Record of 211 winners.

He was inducted into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall Of Fame in 2010.

Bill Johnson won the Perth Trainers Premiership on five occasions between 1950 and 1963 and trained 474 winners in Perth and in excess of 700 state-wide. He was also runner-up on the Trainers Premiership on six occasions.

In three of those premierships Bill's son Max headed the Perth Reinsman's Premiership to create a family double.

Bill Johnson controlled the State's biggest stable between 1950 and 1965 and at a time when most of the leading trainers had between 12 and 15 horses in work, Bill Johnson's stable was closer to 35 and the horses were worked by Bill and his sons Max and Bob.

Bill trained a WA Pacing Cup winner with Royal Shadow which took out the 1951 Cup after having finished a well-beaten second to the New Zealand champion Single Direct the previous year when the race carried a stake of 5000 pounds to celebrate the jubilee of Federation.

He trained a second WA Pacing Cup winner in 1963 when ace Victorian reinsman piloted the Victorian owned Heroic Action to victory over Sparkling Pilade and King Capri.

Bill Johnson was inducted into The West Australian Racing Industry Hall of Fame in 2010.

Commencing with Perth in 1957 Pop Johnson started horses at seven consecutive Inter Dominion Championships including Adelaide in 1958, Melbourne 1959, Sydney 1960, Christchurch 1961, Perth 1962 and Adelaide 1963.

His stable star Kiwi Dillon qualified for four Inter Dominion finals (1958,1960, 1962 and 1963) and may well have equalled the five finals record of Caduceus had the gelding handled the travel to Christchurch in 1961.

Even more remarkable is the primitive travel arrangements for Inter Dominion horses at the time whereby a combination of air, sea, road and rail was the norm to get from State to State and New Zealand.

Bill Johnson's contribution to the Inter Dominion was recognised nationally in 2010 with an Inter Dominion Distinguished Service Award issued by Harness Racing Australia

Max Johnson joined his father Bill as a Hall Of Fame inductee on the back of four Perth Drivers Premierships in the fifties and his win in the 1951/52 season came before he reached his 22nd birthday. Max Johnson remains the youngest driver to win the Perth Premiership.

As the stable driver for his father Bill, the pair helped establish the Inter Dominion as the pacing championship of Australia by travelling the length and breadth of the country to compete each year.

While the bulk of Max's successes came in the fifties and sixties he burst back into the spotlight in the seventies as the driver of champion Satinover when the pair combined to win 19 successive races including the 1979 Australian Pacing Championship.

Max Johnson (left) with fellow young reinsman Phil Coulson. Both horsemen went on to be inducted into the WA Racing Industry Hall of Fame

Gary Hal Snr has trained more than 2237 winners with more than 1580 of that total in Perth resulting in him heading the Perth Trainers Premiership on eight occasions. Only fellow Hall of Fame inductees Frank Kersley and Cliff Clarke have won more Perth premierships.

Gary is the most successful Western Australian trainer in the history of the Inter Dominion having won the race on three occasions with Im Themightyquinn.

He is also the most successful trainer in more than 101 editions of the WA Pacing Cup having trained the winner of the State's biggest trotting race on eight occasions.

Gary Hall with his champion triple Inter Dominion winner Im Themightyquinn shares a laugh with fellow Racing Industry Hall of Fame inductee Fred Kersley

Alan Woodworth was regarded as one of the all-time great judges of pace and most skilful drivers ever seen in Perth and his 907 winners as a driver with 561 in Perth is testament to that.

He won the Perth Driver's Premiership three times and while his reputation lay as a driver he also trained 304 winners with 172 of that tally coming in Perth.

His win with Bintravis in the 1949 WA Pacing at the age of 20 years 296 days gave him the honour of the youngest driver to win the State's premier race and he held that honour until 2002.

Apart from the WA Cup, Woodworth's biggest successes came in the £5000 South Australian Jubilee Cup with Bintravis, a couple of WA Derbies with Marine Dealer and Bin Oro and a trio of Fremantle Cups with Silver Mari, Flashing Ardri and Sign Again. Bin Oro also won two heats of the 1964 Adelaide Inter Dominion.

As a highly popular Mayor of Bunbury Ern Manea's views on politics and planning were frequently sought by various Premiers and Ministers of the State Government, including on the many issues that affected his beloved sport of harness racing.

Between 1979 and 1987 Dr Manea was President of the WATA which later led to Presidency of the Australian Harness Racing Council (1984-2000) and the Inter Dominion Harness Racing Council (1987-2000).

He served a term as President of the International Trotting Association (1991-1993) and was made a Life Member of that body in 1997.

In 1992 the AHRC acknowledged Dr Manea with its Stratton Award for his contribution on a national and international level.

In 2000, on completion of his Presidency the IDHRC awarded him its Gold Medal, and renamed the award the "Ern Manea Inter Dominion Gold Medal".

One of the many tributes at the time of Dr Manea's retirement from harness racing administration came from The US Trotting Association:

"Dr Manea has not only been a leader in Australia, but is equally respected and recognised on a world-wide level. Ern Manea IS harness racing around the world."

While renowned as a brilliant orator, Ern Manea's great ability was to foster progress and development, in an era of great technological change, culminating in major advances and a more truly national philosophy.

His contribution to the community and local Government was recognized in 1985 when he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1998.

Dr Manea died in October 2013.

Ken Casellas has been an active member of the Western Australian trotting media for nigh on 60 years having begun as trotting correspondent for The West Australian in 1955.

It was in the late 1950s that Casellas broadened his involvement in the sport and began broadcasting, calling one or two races on the seven-event programs at Gloucester Park for radio station 6KY.

He covered Inter Dominion Championships in Perth (1957), Adelaide (1958) and Melbourne (1959) before leaving Perth to work overseas for two years, covering a variety of sports, including thoroughbred racing in England, athletics, swimming, boxing, cricket and tennis.

Late in 1960 Casellas resumed as The West Australian's chief harness racing writer and for several years during this era, had his own 15-minute segment on Channel Seven's World of Sport program on Sundays, 'Spotlight On Trotting'.

He was the WA correspondent for the national monthly publication Australasian Harness Horse from its inception in 1972 until the pressure of covering international cricket forced his retirement from that role in 1983.

For several years in the 1970s Casellas was the editor and sole author of the WATA's monthly publication, The Pacer. In 1982, fresh ground was broken when Casellas was used to do on-track interviews at Gloucester Park.

Ken Casellas was the driving force behind the establishment of the WA Trotting Media Guild in 1977 and was that organisation's inaugural president, a position he held for many years. The guild was formed to publicise and help to promote the sport of harness racing.

He is a life member of the guild, and two years ago he received the James Brennan award for his services to the harness racing industry.

He was awarded the Australian Harness Racing's Joseph Coulter award for the best historical feature in 1991 and in 2006 was honoured with the Joseph Coulter media award for meritorious service and career achievements in the harness racing media in Western Australia.

Ray Holloway began work with the South Australian Trotting League on 17th March 1947 and he worked for that organisation in various roles including Deputy Handicapper, Stipendiary Steward, Assistant Secretary and as that body's first full-time Secretary/Manager in 1968.

He commenced working for the WA Trotting Association on 28th February 1972 as Secretary and filled a role as the Association's Promotions Manager.

He oversaw the introduction of the re-vamped Western Australian Summer Carnival which now features the Western Australian Pacing Cup, Australian Pacing Championship and Fremantle Pacing Cup.

He was also responsible for the successful introduction of the inaugural Australian Young Drivers Championship which has grown into the Australasian Young Drivers Championship along with the inauguration of the Australian Pacing Derby which brought the best three-years-olds in Australia to Perth

He also arranged three Royal Visits to Gloucester Park in 1972 (Princess Margaret & Lord Snowden), 1974 (Duke of Edinburgh) and 1977 (Her Majesty the Queen & the Duke of Edinburgh).

With the appointment of a full-time Promotions Manager in 1977 Holloway then filled the role of WATA Racing Manager from 1978 until his retirement in 1991.

In 1989 Holloway acted as secretary for the Ellis Review Committee, which was to advise the Western Australian Government on a business plan for the harness racing industry. In its report to the government the Committee commended Holloway for his contribution to the final report.

In 2003 Ray Holloway was presented with the AHRC JP Stratton Award for Significant Achievement, Leadership, Distinction, Eminence, Repute, Renown, Foresight, Initiative, Innovation, and Creativity on an International or National Basis over a significant period of time.