

Memories of Foundation Braford Members



John Onley 1931 – 2006

John Onley was born near Parramatta in 1931 to parents who owned a farm. He was educated at Hawkesbury Agricultural College where he graduated with Honours and later at the University of Queensland where he gained a Bachelor of Economics degree.

After a stint jackerooing, John joined the fledgling Queensland Department of Primary Industries Cattle Husbandry Branch and was posted to the Bureau of Tropical Agriculture at South Johnstone near Innisfail. The position entailed the running of grazing trials, animal behavioural studies and beef and dairy advisory work from Tully River to the Peninsula.

In 1959, he married teacher Jill O'Loughlin and the pair had stints in Miles and Oakey, where grain fattening was being introduced. In 1960 they moved to Mackay. The local beef cattle industry was going through enormous change at this time with the large scale development of Brigalow country and the introduction of *Bos indicus* cattle.

In 1964, with a partner and friendly bank manager, John bought "Hamilton Park" and "Spring Creek", 33 000 acres of mixed country in the Nebo district. The 1965 drought highlighted the deficiencies in Hereford cattle so gradually Brahman bulls were introduced. The first Braford cattle were classified by Jack Angel in 1970. The "Hamilton Park" stud was registered and upgrading continued. It was found that between 5/8 and 3/4 Brahman blood gave the best results in the Nebo area.

From 1973 the Onley family showed cattle throughout Central Queensland, with successes including Senior and Grand Champion Bull and Cow at Rockhampton and Mackay Shows. Several championships and placing were won by Hamilton Park Brafords at the Mackay Show carcass competitions.

John served as President of the Australian Braford Society from 1982 – 1985 and was a Director for 15 years. He compiled "The Australian Braford" book for the Society and was a proud Life Member.

John, Jill and Anna relocated the family Romagnola stud operation to two Roma properties in 1998. There John continued to breed good cattle, improve country and never considered retirement!

John had honesty, integrity and decency and was above all a gentleman and loving husband and father.

He is survived by wife Jill, sons Nigel, Andrew and Tony and daughter Anna.

Alan Shannon 1925 – 2006

Alan Shannon was a foundation member of the Braford Society in 1962. He was elected to the Board of the Australian Braford Society in the 1970's and was a member of the Board for twenty years as the breed became accepted throughout Australia.

After many years of his Grandfather, Father and he developing quality Hereford bloodlines, he decided that the speargrass, tick and seasonal issues demanded a change.

So, in 1963, Alan began to infuse Brahman content into the herd. He was impressed by the results of the crossbreeding programme. Alan selected carefully on the basis of fertility, mothering, growth rate, carcass suitability and the ability to survive and thrive. Ever the keen observer of his stock and somewhat the scientist, Alan undertook a programme of performance enhancements which included pregnancy testing and specific nutrition of breeders (which, he observed, produced desirable earlier calving). The focus shifted from calving rates to branding rates.

Alan pioneered the practice of culling for faults through speying and castration.

Another insight which developed was that tick resistance was a heritable characteristic, so "Cardowan" dipped no more after 1988. As quality young bulls were produced, Alan and Jean began to growth rate them and established the first on-property bull sales in the area at "Cardowan", and these were to continue annually for 18 years.

The record price of \$15,000 fetched by "Cardowan Ironman" at one such sale was to stand for 14 years. It was one of the great joys of Alan's later years to hear from the Flohrs that "Ironman's" semen had been exported around the world. This somewhat softened the anguish of having to disperse his cherished "Cardowan" stud herd in 1988/89.

Getting animals to market was always a challenge, but, when the road over White Pinch was sealed and semi-trailers became available, beef cattle became more lucrative. Alan had always wished to see the on-the-hook results for his stock. He started the Beef Cattle Section at Mackay Show and took great pride in having exhibited for 50 years, always believing the producer needed to be in touch with consumer needs. In 2005, he and Jean attended his 60th Mackay Show, a milestone he was determined to achieve!

Alan was a great believer in the Braford breed and was known to travel far and wide to Braford events. Old friends from Braford circles kept in touch with him right to the end of his days, a fact which he really enjoyed and appreciated. He is dearly missed by Jean and his family.



Bill Tennent 1914 – 2006

Mr. Bill Tennent passed away on the 14th of October at the age of 92. He was one of the first Braford breeders leading the way in a Hereford dominated world, when he used to buy steers for fattening on the renowned Central Queensland property, "Doonside". He found that the early, cross bred Hereford steers did much better on the coastal country, handling conditions well and finishing at an earlier age. It is from there that Bill and his wife Mavis, decided to begin the Doonside Braford stud. His forward thinking and will to improve the breed made him the first president of the newly formed Braford society. They had a terrific team in those early days with cattlemen such as Harry Hinz, Adam and

Bill Rea just to mention a few. These forward thinking Braford breeders sure made an impact back in those early times producing and showing cattlemen what the Braford breed could offer them. They took the Brafords which were nearly unheard of and turned them into probably one of the most sought after breeds of that time.

With his wife, Mavis by his side and children Kay and Barry they bred quality Braford cattle which they showed and sold at all major venues from Rockhampton to Brisbane. Mr. Gordon Kime helped a lot with the stud as well, always having the cattle looking well and shown properly. There was great competition back then in the show ring but it seemed Doonside was always hard to beat, coming away from shows nearly always with broad ribbons.

The stud was then passed onto his daughter Kay who was always very keen on the Braford cattle. Her and her husband, Bill Geddes then carried on breeding quality Braford cattle at Doonside and then went on to having an on property sale. Bill and Mavis always attended the Doonside sale and continued also attending shows, sales and dinners with the Braford society even after their retirement to Zilzie. Everybody said his passion was Braford cattle and of course his beloved racehorses which he always put great thought and time into.

Grandad was a very forward thinking business man who seemed to understand and could see the benefits in the cattle from straight British breed to cross bred. He respected all cattle and the benefits they have to offer to the Beef Industry and for that he was a well respected cattelman. Along with all the great things he achieved in his life, he was a great family man, supporting and showing interest in all the family did. We, as his family, were very proud of him and will miss him dearly.

Written by his Granddaughter Jane Saunders.

