

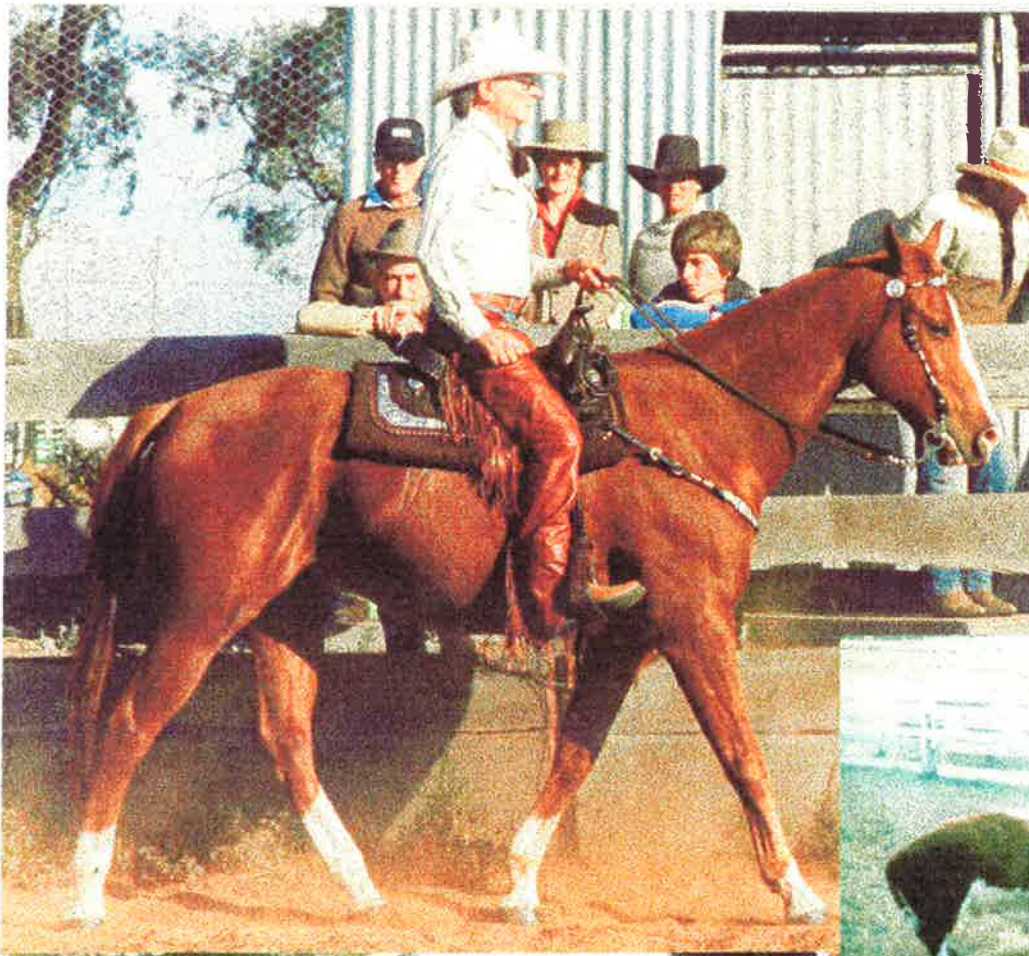


HUGH SAWREY

CBE



- A Passion For
Art + A Passion
For Quarter
Horses!



At Left: Hugh at Swan Hill - One of his proudest moments - 2nd in the Western Pleasure in a large quality class. Hugh's first love was cutting, however he competed in many performance classes.

Below: On *Elgrando* at Bangtail, Boonah, Qld



Above: Gill with the Bangtail Boonah bredmare band - LtoR - *Warlet**, *Topper Sally*, *Rues Mischief**, *Magic Eye**, *Yarrowonga Mirth*, & *Miss Council**



NCGA Finals Goondiwindi - late '70's



At Right: Youth riders & judge at one of the Kelly Country Youth Series held in the Bangtail arena at Lurg.

Hugh David Sawrey CBE

Born: 3.3.1919 Died: 10.6.1999

Hugh Sawrey's involvement with the Quarter Horse goes back to when the first Quarter Horse hoofprints landed in this country. He too like so many other Aussie rural folk may have doubted the breed's ability to handle the vast areas of mustering and cattle work, but he obviously gained respect for the animal for he finished up as one of our early breeders

Cutting for Hugh Sawrey started not in the competition pen but in the outback. "*We didn't have Quarter Horses then, just what we call Camp horses, but the job was the same. You'd be working herds of 1500, 2000 head of cattle, great big mobs and a fine old mixture of brands and owners. It was our job to get in there, spot anything with our station brand or ear mark on and get it out.*" At night he would sketch by the light of the campfire, using the charcoal if he didn't have any paints in the swag. He progressed to painting the bush, the horses and life he knew and made the decision to become a painter full-time but he still hung on to rural interests. He met Gill, married and together they raised two fine sons - Jon and Tony. They set up the Bangtail stud at Boonah in Queensland's south and stood *Clover Crackerjack* and *San Leo Joe** by *Leo San*, the sire of *Mr San Peppy & Peppy San*. The excitement of the sport of cutting had them hooked. In 1975 they loaded up and traveled from Roma in Queensland to Albury on the Victorian border and competed in every cutting they could. An eleven year old Jon was showing talent and that year he won the NCHA High Point Youth Under 12 Years. He also took out the title of the Youth Cutting at the AQHA Championship Show. Hugh was a proud dad and when he took Jon to the USA later that year the youngster scored the highest overall in some competitive events in Virginia after taking out the youth event. Hugh won his event too.

In 1978 the Sawreys went south again, but this time with 21 horses to relocate their stud at Lurg near Benalla. The broodmare band was made up of *King*, *Waggoner & Old Poco Bueno* bloodlines mingling with some nice local bloodlines. They added mares by *Flappers Breeze**, *Elgrando*, *Mr War Cutter** and *Hank Man Leo** and Gill carefully planned all the matings to produce offspring that came up with the goods. The Sawreys built an indoor arena and combining with the McTaggarts (their next door neighbour), Kelly Country became 'Cuttin Horse Country'. Many of today's successful trainers and competitors owe their start to those wonderful days at Bangtail. Those remarkable schoolmasters carried many a youth to success. The Sawreys and the McTaggarts allowed these youngsters to compete on their top horses and the memory pictures of those little cowboys with oxbow length not even reaching the edge of the saddle flap, hats bouncing down over their eyes, and a grin as big as Texas, will not be forgotten.

When not in the studio, or on "Walkabout" (Hugh often returned to the bush that he was very much a part of), he was in the saddle. *Elgrando* was one of his early mounts. By *Mescal** a son of *Wimpy P1* and out of a thoroughbred mare, *Elgrando* was bred by Sam Hordern and purchased as a yearling by Max McTaggart. Max had taken out the High

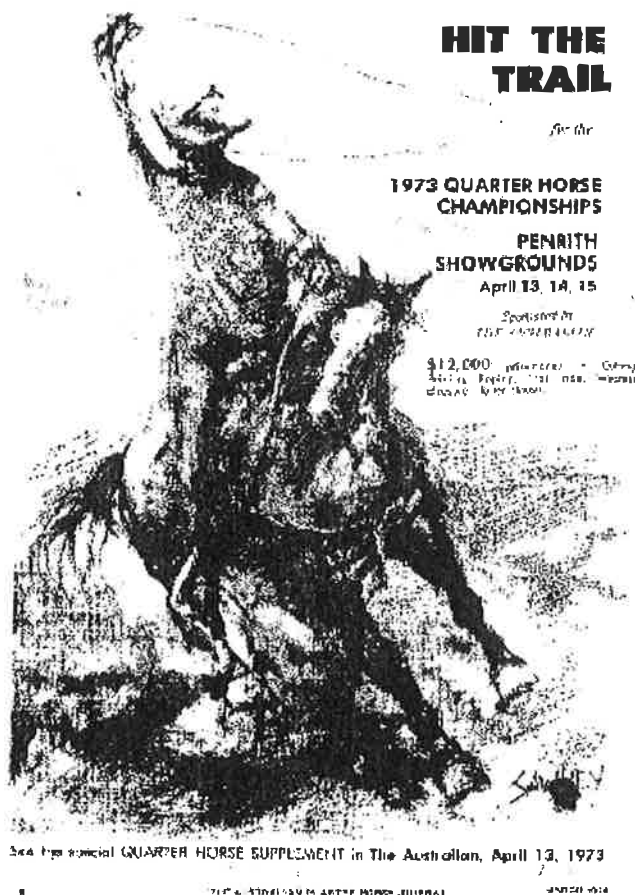
Point Cutting Horse Award for five consecutive years and in 1976 Hugh brought him. Max would travel to Boonah for lesson times.

For the past 8 years the Sawreys stood *Bomber Doc* (*Poco Peppy Doc* x *Delta Flight* by *Delta Leo*) and the breeding program continues at Bangtail still under the watchful eye of Gill. From 'helping' in the practice pen, Gill had also been infected with the competition bug so they shared their interest together. Tony also started competing in the closing part of 1978 so the entire family were involved.

It was two Sawrey paintings that opened up the AQHA building account. Both were on 30X40 canvas. The first was called "*New Arrivals*" and depicted the American Quarter Horses, walking off the boat to be the foundation of the breed in this country. The second was titled "*Following Tracks*" and was of a mounted stockman. "*Following Tracks*" was purchased by Sir Rupert & Lady Clark, the whereabouts of "*New Arrivals*" is unknown.

The first ever NCHA Affiliated Non Pro Cutting event was held at Boonah in 1975 and

the complete program was Sawrey sponsored. (By the way it was won by Billie Maundrell). Many a good cutting competition and featured program was hosted by the Sawreys. Hugh's encouragement, financial support (often through his donation of paintings), & the provision of top horses for those starting out, has played a major part in the establishment and growth of the sport today.



Bangatil also held other events of interest to QH breeders. The Bangtail Futurities of 1979 were hailed as a new event. The two prestigious events were: The Yearling Futurity won by *Warradale Red River* with *Walla Olita* as the best opposite sex; & the 2 Year Old Gelding Futurity won by *Star Wars*.

Sawrey artwork featured for advertising the 1973 Quarter Horse Championships held at Penrith Showgrounds.

The late Bill Verdugo hung his Sawrey with pride - a gift to an American judge who officiated at one of the first major exhibitions of Quarter Horses in this country.



His high profile as a renowned artist drew attention to the Quarter Horse and went a long way to gaining sponsorship.

In 1980 The Kelly Country Selected Quarter Horse Sale was organised to solely cater for Working bred horses. A star studded lineup from yearlings to seasoned cutting horses with strings of wins to their credit.

The Sale was followed by the annual Bangtail Futurities Feature Show.

The Sawreys were progressive in their thinking and played a huge part in the advancement of the Quarter Horse breed in Australia. Their arena gates were opened to events, sponsorship kicked in, support as competitors, Hugh was a Patron and sponsor to youth and served the AQHA. He was honoured with Life Membership. Bangtail Stud was based on a solid foundation of worthy bloodlines as a foundation for the Australian Quarter Horse. Hugh Sawrey was a proud Australian and eager to keep alive the part that the horse and the horseman, pioneering men and women & pastoralists played in developing livestock and pastoral industries. But, more importantly he appreciated and respected the Quarter Horse!



The Opening of the AQHA Office Building in Darling Street, Tamworth - The Building Account being opened in 1973 with two *Sawreys*.

OBITUARY • Hugh David Sawrey CBE • Painter of the outback

He was a true Australian bushman, dedicated to capturing the spirit of the outback and its people. Fierce red landscapes and solitary riders are among his classic images, but his art touched every phase of bush life and often charged what had seemed ordinary with the heroic.

Born: 3.3.1919

Died: 10.6.1999

By **ALEX MCPHEE**

"I think this is my idea of heaven right now — green grass, and nice water and blue hills and all that goes with it. This is certainly the land of milk and honey."

That is how Hugh Sawrey — stockman, shearer, sole founder of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, poet and gentleman, but above all, Australia's finest outback artist — described his "Bangtail" stud in Boonah, southern Queensland.

His love of this country is in every painting and drawing he has put down on canvas and paper. From his beautiful portrait of Taba-Tabo of the Pintubi tribe, to sheep crossing the Condamine River, to a two-up game in a side lane.

His specialty was his horses. Station horses, brumbies, a Cobb and Co team galloping through Cunningham's Gap with their hooves flying and raising the red dust to darken the vivid blue skies for which he was famous.

He was arguably one of the best painters of horses in the world, and his paintings are a visual record of the way the outback was before they were replaced by machinery.



"He was arguably one of the best painters of horses in the world, and his paintings are a visual record of the way the outback was before they were replaced by machinery."

Born in Forest Glen, near Mount Buderim in Queensland, Hugh started drawing as a child with a piece of charcoal from the camp fire of mustering camps. He would draw on anything he could find, including the camp shovel.

It was while shearing wethers at Binde-Bango in 1960 that he made the decision to try painting as a full-time job. He went to Brisbane and set up a studio in a balcony room of the Royal Hotel, and he would sell his paintings for 10 to 15 guineas each.

It wasn't long before he was asked to supply a small gallery with his bush scenes, because these were

the ones that sold. It was something he knew so well — a stockman mustering out past the Cooper and Diamantina as far west as the Western Australian border. He painted the bush scenes because he wanted to show the city dweller what it was really like. To show how one man could drive a mob of 400 or 500 head of cattle and think nothing of it. To him that was Australia.

He was often heard saying "there's a bit of me in every painting" — something that he would have witnessed or experienced and stored away in his mind's eye until he decided to put it

down in oil, watercolor or charcoal.

It was in 1974, while sitting around the kitchen table with his wife, Gill, and two friends, that the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame idea was born. Soon he did a painting of his local pub, The Dugandon, which was auctioned for \$4500 and the Hall of Fame was up and running.

Hugh was a very generous man, quietly donating to various charities, such as the Flying Doctor Service, hospital, church and flood appeals.

Then there was the story of the man who stole some of Hugh's paintings and when asked why, he said he liked them. Hugh was quite chuffed with this, thinking the thief had good taste. So he wrote him a letter and sent a small painting to him at his new abode at Boggo Road Jail.

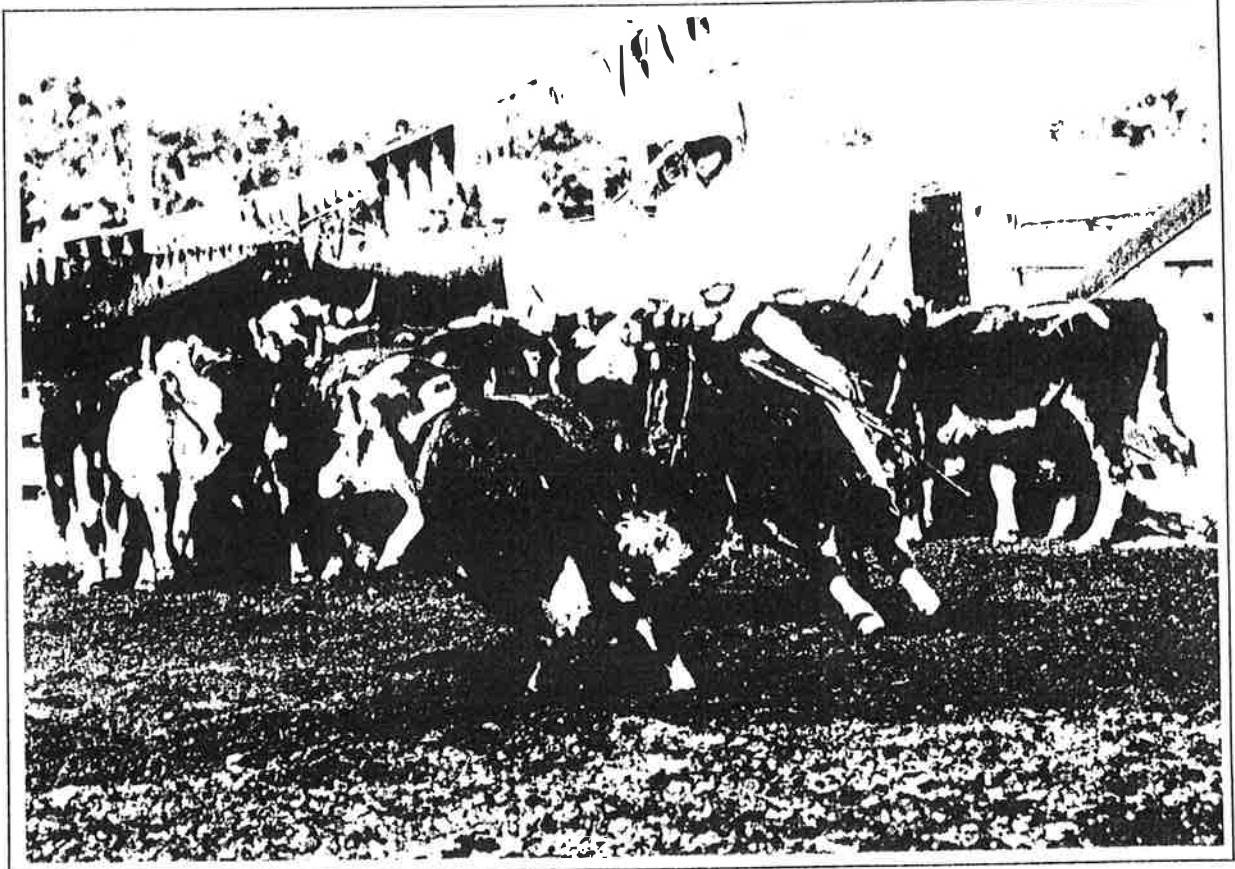
I bought my first Sawrey painting 20 years ago and was introduced to Hugh two years later by Iris Harvey, the owner of a gallery in Alice Springs.

Gill, Hugh and I became close friends and I would often sit with him and his dog, Nifty, in his studio while he worked and listen to him describe a mountain range of mauve and blue with a touch of crimson, or the Channel Country with its blood-red sandhills. Nifty and I would hang on every word.

In 1994 Hugh worked with me on a film for the Argyle Diamond Mine. We spent two wonderful days in the Kimberleys where he did rough sketches, then a week in his studio putting the mine down on canvas.

It was one of the most inspirational experiences to see a large white canvas transform into a picture with all the color that only he could blend into another masterpiece. Then his famous orange signature and finally his trademark, his red thumbprint.

Hugh is survived by Gill and sons Jon and Tony, and three grandsons. Alex McPhee, ACS, is a freelance cinematographer.



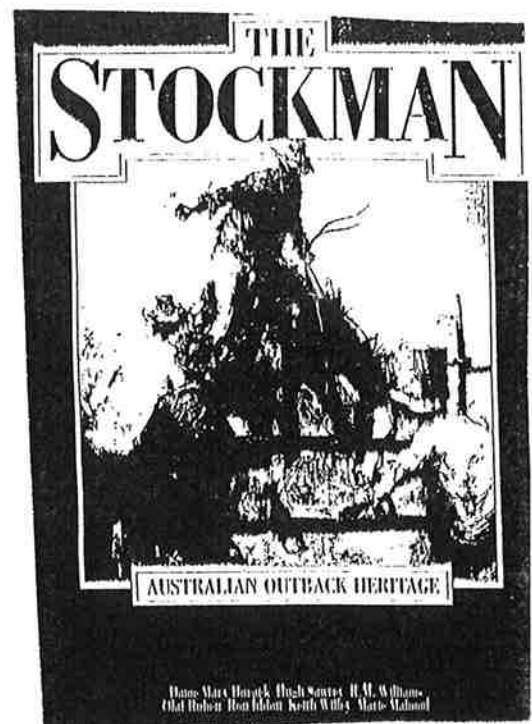
Glenelg River district of Western Australia in 1837, were mounted on Timor ponies. Timor ponies were important in Western Australia, and the first race meeting there was a pony meeting. Banjo Paterson refers to the breed in 'The Man from Snowy River':

*And one was there a stripling on a small and weedy beast;
He was something like a racehorse undersized,
With a touch of Timor pony — three parts thoroughbred at least —
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.*

The Quarter Horse The Quarter Horse was not introduced to Australia until the 1950s, but since that time has played an important role in breeding good Stockhorses. Quarter Horses are spectacular in their movements, in the way they work stock at close quarters. With their hind legs bent and placed well underneath them, they turn and move very fast. However, they are, typically, placid. Even stallions have this characteristic, and it is one of the Quarter Horse's more winning attributes. The early Quarter Horses imported to Australia were very short in the legs, in comparison with their deep bodies. They were very muscular — extremely powerful in the shoulders — big in the thighs, and big bodied. They had sloping withers, but they always carried a lot of flesh in working condition. Later importations have been less stocky, but all have been speedy.

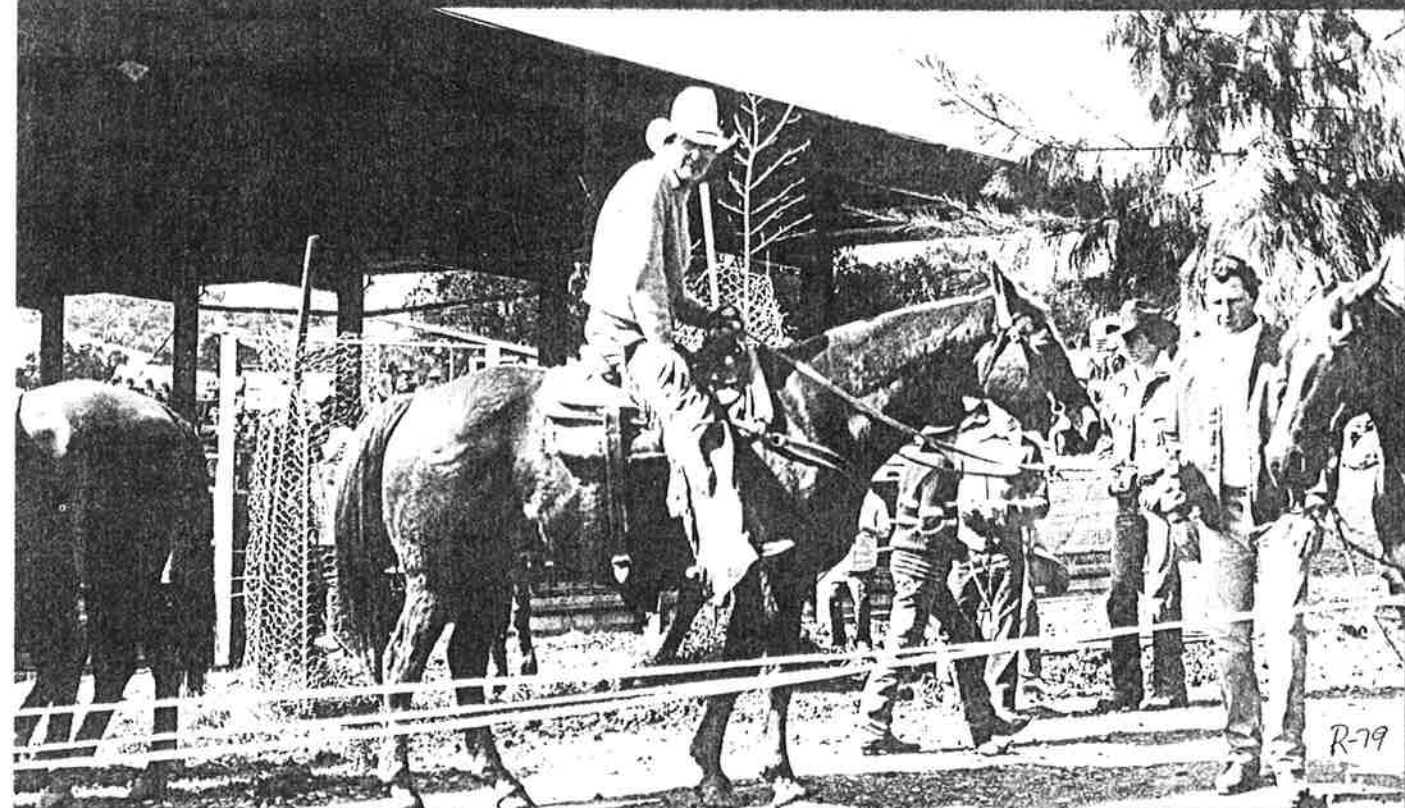
Today, as at any time in our history, a good Stockhorse is a good Stockhorse, regardless of appearance or breeding. And it is likely that the

A Quarterhorse in action.



Hugh Sawrey always made sure that the Australian Quarter Horse received recognition.

BANGTAIL FUTURITIES - 1979 - BENALLA



Above — Hugh Sawrey on Elgrando, outside his new Bangtail arena, making sure everything is running to plan.

Below — Paul Farrell (left) and Mick Dunn arrive to do battle at the Bangtail Futurities.

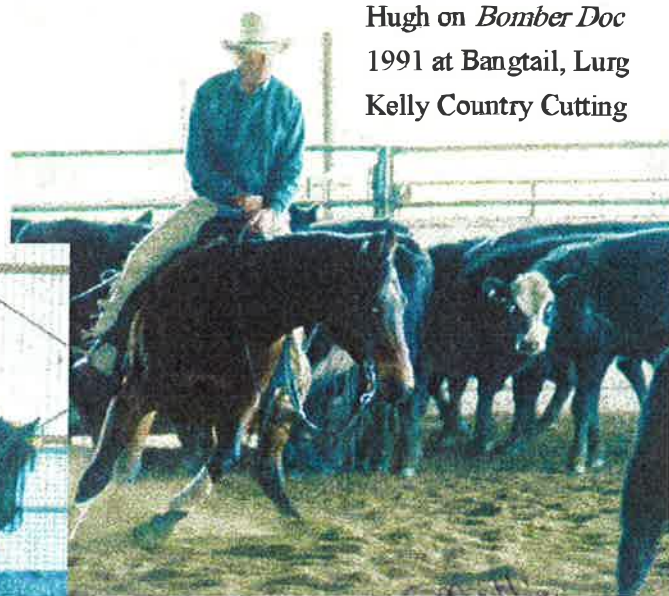


At Right: Hugh at the QH Championships in Melbourne - 1978.

Tony on *Del Cisco*
Below: One of the Sawrey's daughters of King. *Magic Eye* (imp) with *Bangtail Magic* (IIIU) by Mr *Blackburn 39* (Imp) at foot.



Hugh on *Bomber Doc*
1991 at Bangtail, Lurg
Kelly Country Cutting



Above: A 'Hugh' class of Rookie Cutters at a Kelly Country Cutting Show, Bantail, Lurg 1989

At Right: A typical beginner youth of "Cowboys / Girls included" at Bangtail. Three of the Good Ol' Boys - *Wagga*, *Dan's Chic* & *Prince Maclay* loaned by Sawreys.



