

The Hong Kong Jockey Club

ARCHIVES

Others

A Historical Album - September 2010

Another twelve photos were put up inside the lifts of the Jockey Club Headquarters building on 3 September 2010 to provide a window to our history. Below are the photos and a more detailed description of each.



<<< Scenes at the Happy Valley Racecourse, 1881 and 1889

In the 2009/10 racing season, the Club conducted a record 83 race meetings as compared to the 19th century where there was just one race meeting annually held over a four-day carnival-like event at Happy Valley. Two published pieces of artwork from 1881 and 1889 in the newspaper *The Graphic* gives us an interesting insight into the activities that took place at the racecourse in that era.

In the 1881 artwork, a clown appears to be hosting a game that has attracted a large following amongst locals and foreigners, adults and children alike against the backdrop of the carnival-like infield. Here, racegoers and visitors from all over the world have assembled in the infield and some seized the opportunity to conduct businesses that ranged from hosting gambling games to selling merchandise like race books and food.

The latter artwork by illustrator Mr. Charles Eldred depicts five scenes from the February 1889 annual race meeting. In the centre visual, the illustrator highlights the colourful mix of racegoers



represented by Sikh policemen, English soldiers and sailors, and Chinese women with their children, at that race meeting.

Apart from the races, racegoers also enjoyed many other forms of entertainment at the meeting, the most impressive being a show inside a matshed stand entitled "A Big Tiger". Admission to this show was just three cents. This artwork also captured scenes of a hawker selling wares and various gambling games, the immense popularity of a private gambling table and another gambling table attracting a pair of Chinese man and child. While most might assume that children at the racecourse were mere spectators, the artwork clearly reveals that young Chinese boys participated in the entertainment by staking their money at the gambling table.

>>> Arrival of the 1974 subscription griffins, 1973

Every summer between 1970 and 1974, the Club received hundreds of new, trained griffins **by air** from the Cockram family of Arundel Farm in Australia. The breeder received the Club's order as early as late 1972 and began preparing the griffins with training, supplementary feeding and parasite control over the course of the year. Meanwhile in Hong Kong, applications from Members for 1974 griffins commenced in March 1973 and the final draw was held on 31 July.



Between 20 and 27 July 1973, a total of 102 subscription griffins were transported in three batches by flights to Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong from Melbourne, Australia. Upon arrival, the 102 griffins were transported by trucks to the Shan Kwong Road Stables where they lived for a number of years.

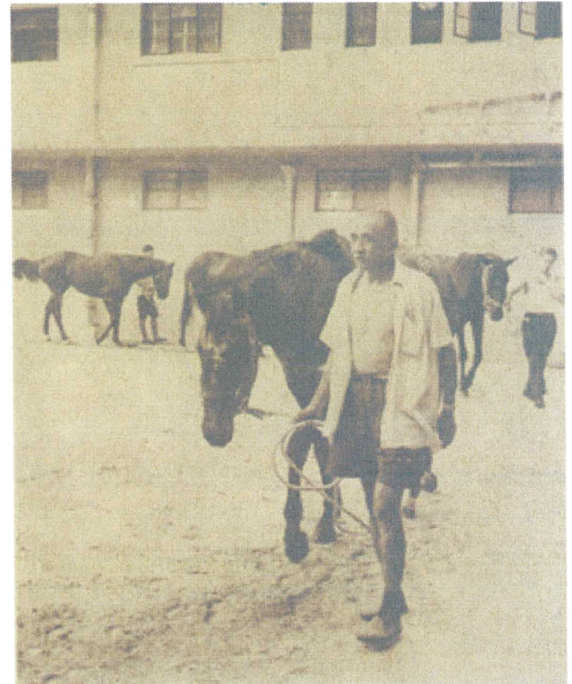
Before being transferred to the Club's

trainers, these young horses were broken in and received basic training from two Australian horsemen, Mr. Bill Smith and his assistant Mr. Con Conway.

After the breaking process, the griffins were subjected to light exercises under the order of the Club's trainers at the stable paddocks until morning trackwork began in late August.

These griffins were first raced in the 1973/74 racing season, the season the Club commenced **night races** at Happy Valley .

Photos selected from Archives' Newspaper Clippings Collection.



<<< Weighing room at the Happy Valley Racecourse, 1974

Taken at the weighing room of the Happy Valley Racecourse in 1974, the weighing room is where jockeys are weighed before and after they dismount at the end of a race. These procedures known as "weight-out" and "weight-in" respectively are important to ensure fairness in handicapping races.

In the background of the top photo, a jockey is clearly seen being weighed while other jockeys seated on a bench to wait their turn. All have their complete riding gear with them like the saddle and the helm as the handicapping weight comprises of the weight of the jockey and his riding gear. If the total weight of the jockey and his equipment is underweight, the weight is adjusted by adding lead plates to the inside bags attached to the saddle.

The second photo from this series shows Jockey Geoff Lane (蘭尼) preparing for a



weight-out. In 1974, a dial scale with a round-shaped dial platform and measurement indicator in kilograms and pounds was used to weigh the jockeys. This was subsequently replaced by an electronic scale in 1985. However you can still see the original dial scale in the Racing Museum.

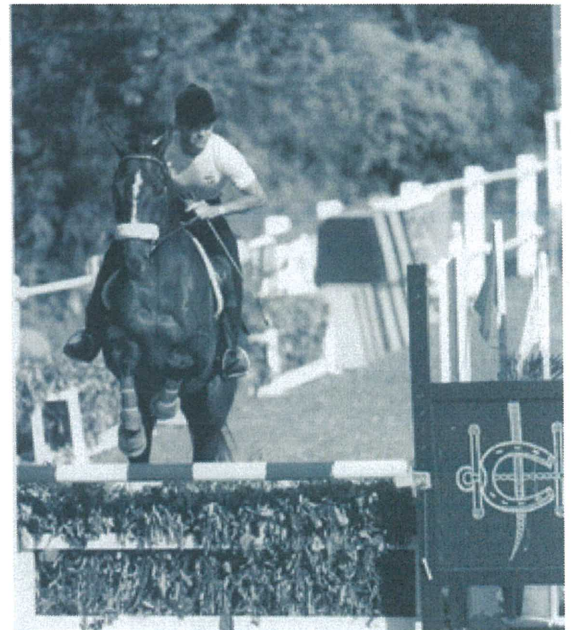
Clerks of the Scales seated at wooden tables were responsible for monitoring the weighing process and recording the information. These positions were originally acted by the Club's Voting Members but were subsequently transferred to the Club's officials in the 1978/79 racing season, during which Mr. S K Wan (尹兆坤) assumed the position of Clerk of the Scales. The Voting Members have served as honorary officials in race meetings since that period.

>>> Centenary Horse Show, Beas River, 1984

To celebrate its centenary, the Club organised the Centenary Horse Show at the Beas River Country Club so guests and Club Members could enjoy a rest in between the Centenary races and celebrations. The horse show was a series of equestrian events and performances that took place on 2, 8 and 9 December 1984.

Twenty Club trainers and jockeys were invited to join a knock-out speed event at the Jockeys and Trainers Charity Event on Sunday, 9 December. Over a twenty-obstacle course, former race horses on Hong Kong turf who had been re-trained as equestrian horses at Beas River, adjusted their stride at each fence and distance to complete the course.

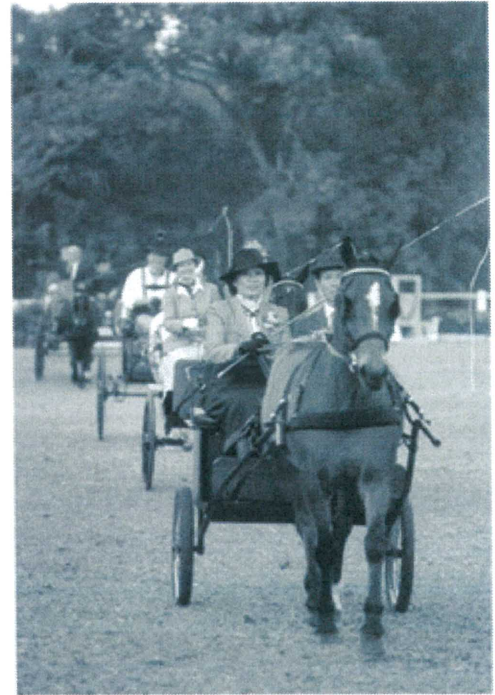
A prize money of HK\$20,000 was awarded to the winners and subsequently donated to the charitable



organisations nominated by the winners. Terry Lip (聶永廣), a graduate of **the Apprentice Jockeys' School**, and his partner MONEY COUNTS (先得), formerly raced by Club Steward Mr. Eric Cumine (甘銘), earned the highest scores to win the prize money of HK\$9,000.

The obstacle speed event was followed by the horse and carriage parade, as shown in the photo below. Members attired in period riding fashion rode in two-seater and four-seater open carriages provided by the Club.

Following the open carriage parade, a group of fifty riders that included children, the disabled and the elderly dressed as Robin Hood or in ancient warrior costumes joined the parade on horses and ponies. To complete the weekend of equestrian fun and leisure at Beas River, a Gurkha regiment staged a memorable music performance.



<<< Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School, 1957 and 1960s

There were few educational opportunities for the youth of the 1950s. As a result, the Club built a five-storey school block next to Mafoo's Quarters at Blue Pool Road to educate the children of its employees. Named the Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School (香港馬會小學), the school was established in 1955 with about 160 students and ten teaching staff. On 31 July 1957, the first 18 students graduated and commemorated the event with a group photo of themselves with their teachers at the rooftop of the school.

In another historical photo from the 1960s, about 30 pupils were captured mastering the art of Chinese calligraphy. Over time, the school grew in size and educated some 800 pupils annually. It was also recognised for its academic



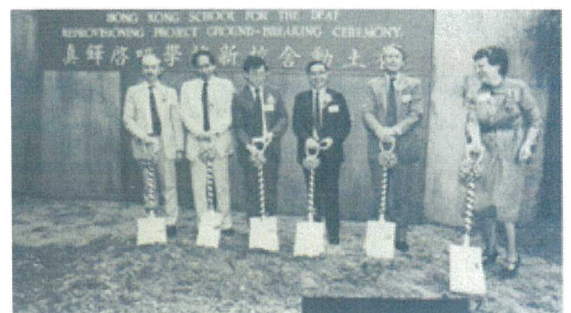
excellence, with students producing outstanding results in the Joint Primary Six Examination (香港小學會考) and Secondary School Entrance Examination (香港中學入學考試). In addition to providing primary level education, the school also offered evening English classes to the employees and family members of the Club.

In 1971, six-year free primary education was made available to every child in Hong Kong by the Government. This resulted in a significant decline in number of students enrolled in the Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School. The school was eventually closed on 31 January 1977 in recognition of the success of government schools and government-aided schools in providing primary education to all Hong Kong children. Till today, the school building continues to serve the community and currently houses the offices of the Hong Kong Committee for United Nations Children's Fund (聯合國兒童基金香港委員會) and The Hong Kong Ballet (香港芭蕾舞團).

Photos provided by Mr. Choi Chee Cheong (蔡熾昌) and a group of alumni of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School.

>>> Club's charitable work – Hong Kong School for the Deaf, 1987

Before the war, social and educational care for the deaf in Hong Kong was greatly neglected. There were few schools or training centres that could educate or provide language training to the deaf. It was not until 1935 that the Hong Kong School for the Deaf (真鐸啓喑學校) was established to provide formal education and language training to deaf children.



The Hong Kong School for the Deaf

(later renamed Chun Tok School, 真鐸學校) was founded by three missionaries.

Just six students attended the first site of the school comprising of the female dormitories at The University of Hong Kong at Babington Path, Sai Ying Pun. The school was later moved to Kowloon City, but was closed down during the Japanese Occupation.

With the assistance of the community and the support of the principal Li Luk Wa (李綠華), a new school building was completed at Diamond Hill in 1948. In its new location, the Hong Kong School for the Deaf continued to provide preparatory, primary and secondary education services to deaf children. To encourage social integration with the non-deaf, the school held lip-reading and speech training classes for its deaf students.

The Club's commitment to the school can be traced back as far as 1947.

Apart from contributing to the annual operation of the school, the Club donated HK\$1.6 million towards the construction of a new wing block in 1950, and another HK\$6.15 million in 1991 to redevelop the school and construct a gymnasium block. The photos show Club's Chief Executive Major General Guy Watkins (韋敬誠將軍) attending the ground breaking ceremony of the redevelopment project of the school in 1987.



Photo selected from Archives' Newspaper Clippings Collection.

Acknowledgement:

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5. Mr. Terence Wan, Racing Registry Department, The Hong Kong Jockey Club

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