



APRIL 2009



WIRRAGULLA  
POLO CLUB DUNGOB

# NEWSLETTER

## From the Presidents' Desk

The 2008 season proved to be another successful year for the club and its players with wonderful support from members and sponsors.

Wirragulla Polo Club is in a sound position going into 2009 and we look forward to an active year of polo at Tabbil Creek.

Following the cancellation of the 2007 Tournament due to the equine influenza outbreak, setting up the 2008 Tournament was double the usual effort. We experienced an exceptionally wet winter and early spring necessitating the postponement of the scheduled Tournament in September and then the scramble to arrange sponsors, teams, caterers, hired facilities and publicity for the new date of October 31/November 1. The Committee worked extremely hard to ensure that everything was in place for the new date and I thank them all for their efforts. As a result we had a very successful and enjoyable two days of polo. Congratulations to Ellerston who outplayed Wirragulla A in the final to take home the Austcorp Hunter Polo Challenge and the Mackay Cup for 2008. See separate report on the polo.

The Saturday night dinner and auction was enjoyed by some 180 including players and grooms, the swinging music from the live band encouraging many onto the floor and

the comment was heard on Sunday that the Tulloch red was a great aid to increased mobility on the dance floor! The Ladies Committee are to be congratulated on organising this enjoyable evening.

We are fortunate having loyal sponsors for without them the many costs involved cannot be met and on behalf of the Committee our thanks to the Austcorp Group, Tulloch Wines, Barrington Veterinary Group, Macquarie Group, Prydes Feeds, Maitland and Port Stephens Toyota, Addison Partners, Dillon and Sons, Hunter Rural, Maitland Mutual, Paradesha Homestyle Cooking and Catering, NBNTV, 2HD, Newcastle Herald and Dungog Chronicle. The Club thanks you all for your contributions and we hope you will be with us in 2009.

Following the Tournament we were able to donate \$4,000 to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

Prior to the 2008 Tournament the Committee approved the purchase of a new "finishing mower" and with its continued use the ground will be in better shape than ever. It is one of the best playing surfaces in NSW providing quality polo with a high standard of safety for both players and horses.



Photo: Julie Hartigan



Photo: Julie Hartigan

After many discussions with NSW Polo Assn. in order to set a mutually agreeable date for our 2009 Tournament I can confirm that it will be on October 24/25. Finding a suitable date in the polo calendar is not easy which is a sign of the growing popularity of the game.

A new addition to the polo scene in the Hunter will be the "Wirragulla Wine Country Polo" carnival to be held on Sunday September 6, 2009 at the Tatler Vineyard, Lovedale. The group running this event has successfully staged the Lovedale Long Lunch over the years and under the sanction of the Wirragulla Polo Club will put together a day of polo, 3 players per team at an impressive venue. Please note that financial members of Wirragulla polo Club will be given free admission.

We must now focus on running the Tournament later this year and ensuring everything is in place to make it a success, especially in a time when many businesses are experiencing tough and uncertain conditions.

*Jim Martin, President*

## 2008 Tournament Raffle

A valuable contribution to Club funds is the annual raffle and thank you to all those who supported it and to our generous sponsors; Peppers Guest House Hunter Valley, Renee Coppin International, Peters of Kensington, the Vibe Hotel and Ensemble Theatre, House of Tar10, Chill Billies and Cangon Stud. The lucky winners were M.Peper, K.Osborne, N.Wilson, D.Samways, P.Auld, B.Bell and C.Blundell.



## Austcorp Hunter Polo Challenge 2008

With ideal weather for polo, the Tournament was played on the weekend of October 31/November 1 with six teams competing for the impressive trophies on offer.

On Saturday the many spectators saw some excellent polo with the close scores indicative of hard fought points to determine the teams for the finals on Sunday.

First to saddle up on Sunday were Wirragulla B and Scone B playing for the Alison Cup with Scone victorious, 9 goals to 5. This was followed with Scone A defeating Adelaide 9 1/2 to 2 goals earning them the Skene Cup. With the home team, Wirragulla A in the final for the Austcorp Hunter Polo Challenge and the Mackay Cup against Ellerston the crowd were hoping for the home team to win, however they were outplayed by Ellerston 10 goals to 1. The strong Ellerston team had Matt Grimes (capt.) who collected the prize for the best team of ponies, Tom Beim who was awarded the most valuable player, Tony Johnson and Max Hutchison, well done boys. The difficult task of judging the ponies was handled professionally by Tim Capp who had to make some hard choices.

Polo playing families over the years have contributed a great deal to the sport and we had the pleasure of seeing Jim and Sam Gunn supported by Wil and Peter White making up the Scone A team and for Wirragulla A, Jaime and Jock Mackay with Beau Blundell and Scott McCreery. The latter two showing great improvement this season and contributing to the success of the Club. Martin Gostelow made a welcome return to playing following an injury some years ago and we can expect to see more of him. Other Wirragulla players who have not only built our numbers but improved greatly are Steve Wildman moving from -2 to 0 and Angus Scott who presently is on 2 but expect this to go up judging by the way he is playing. Angus captained Wirragulla B team with Danny Kerr, Andrew Badgery and Martin Gostelow.

For the first time ever, Wirragulla Club fielded two full teams made up of playing members which shows the growing interest and involvement in polo and for the Club.

## Wirragulla Hosts Visitor from Singapore

During last November the Club played host to the Singapore polo player and businessman, Yeo Kuo Lee and his son Keith who came out at the invitation of Anna and Scott McCreery, formerly of Singapore and now residents of the Dungog district. Kuo Lee and Keith after spending the best part of the weeks visit playing polo were impressed by the Tabbil Creek ground and its facilities and with their mounts provided by Jock and Jaime Mackay and Beau Blundell. The improvement in their games was evident after private tuition from Jock and they returned home not only better players but with five new ponies and great memories. It is hoped that this is a precedent for other players from Asia to follow.

Prior to leaving, Kuo Lee invited Jock and Beau to Singapore to help him prepare for the Thailand Open Tournament in January.



Photo: Simone Martin

## Wirragulla Represented in Thailand Open, 2009

Before flying to Thailand to play in Kuo Lees' team the Headhunters Jock had to be in South Africa for a test match, which Australia won.

Polo in Thailand has been growing to a point where there are three main polo centres each with about 50 players. Clubs would have close to 150 horses each with club houses and facilities of the highest standard. The horse feed is imported from Australia and the horses, trainers, vets and support teams are all imported.

Kuo Lees' horses left by plane on Jan.4, 2009 in time to be ready to play on Jan.10. They had been well prepared and were accompanied by Steve Wildman who's job was to see that they arrived on time and ready to play. Steve did such a good job, maybe he should have also been in

Singapore to "manage" Jock and Beau who spent a couple of days there before flying to Bangkok! Our spies there tell us that both players were doing the night shift!

Eight teams were entered including teams from Malaysia, Thailand, India and Singapore. The Headhunter team progressed to the semifinals, only to lose in extra time on day one. The final day saw fast, exciting polo in front of a crowd of about 6,000 people. Headhunters played the other losing semifinalist, Royal Pahang from Malaysia. In a close game Headhunters won in extra time giving Kuo Lee his first victory over Royal Pahang. Throughout the ten days of polo the local Australian ponies were a standout, attracting a great deal of interest due to their greater speed and ability, in particular the mare Rocket, bred and trained by member Beau Blundell and played by Jock. Well done Beau and keep them coming.

### Diary dates for 2009

2009 Annual General Meeting, 6.00pm on April 24, at the Dungog RSL  
Wirragulla Wine Country Polo, Sept 6

**Wirragulla Polo Annual Tournament Oct 24 / 25**

*For all information on polo you can visit the NSW Polo Assn. at [www.australianpolo.com.au](http://www.australianpolo.com.au)*

### Wirragulla Polo Club – Annual Subscriptions 2009

Membership subscriptions are due and payable by July 31st, 2009. Please attach this section with your cheque payable to Wirragulla Polo Club and post to: Wirragulla Polo Club c/- PO Box 15, East Gresford NSW 2311

Membership 2009 \$77.00 (incl. GST) per couple or \$38.50 (incl. GST) per person

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Non-playing members of the club receive:

- Complimentary passes to both days of the club's Annual Tournament and free parking. Also free admissions to any other club events held during the year. Includes Wirragulla Wine Country Polo, Sept.6.
- Periodic newsletters each year updating members of Wirragulla Club team results and other Polo happenings.
- \$11.50 of each Membership Subscription goes to supporting the club's insurance premium as required by the NSW Polo Association's insurance underwriter. Your subscription will therefore help materially in enabling Wirragulla to hold its Tournaments and encourage young players.