

Report of the  
Heritage Working Party  
on the  
Horses of the Guy Fawkes River National Park  
to the  
Minister for the Environment  
February 2002

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in two volumes:  
Volume 1: Final Report  
Volume 2: Background Information

**Report of the**  
**HERITAGE WORKING PARTY**  
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**National Park**

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**VOLUME 1: FINAL REPORT**

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# 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key Findings From Evidence Relating to the Heritage and Historical Values of Horses in the Guy Fawkes River National Park (GFRNP)

- Having examined and documented claims made in relation to the heritage value of horses in the GFRNP, the Working Party concludes that these horses:
  - are important in the cultural history of the Guy Fawkes area
  - have a special association with a group of persons of importance in the cultural history of the Guy Fawkes area, namely the Light Horse regiments
  - have a strong association with some sections of communities in the Guy Fawkes area
  - are important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of an item of significant national cultural heritage, namely the brumby
- For these reasons, the Working Party concludes that the GFRNP horses have significant local heritage value, sufficient to warrant their being managed on this basis

## Summary of Evidence Supporting the Key Findings

- The GFRNP was established in 1972, and now constitutes more than 62,000 hectares, with a further 30,000 hectares of adjoining land having been purchased but not yet gazetted
- horses have been bred in parts of what is now the GFRNP for more than a century; some were in managed mobs; others were bred in unfenced country
- large numbers of horses were bred in the Guy Fawkes River catchment area specifically for the remount trade (Walers) from the 1890s until the early 1940s, thereby becoming part of the Waler legend
- some unclaimed horses have been sighted in various locations, but predominantly in the northern areas of what is now the GFRNP, since the 1930s
- in the area that is now the GFRNP, the first known record of capturing unclaimed horses by local residents for their own use is in 1931
- horses from the Guy Fawkes River catchment area were drafted for use by the Light Horse in the New England district during the second World War
- prior to the purchase of land by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), most unclaimed horses in the area were controlled by the property owners/lessees; however, during the wars, management became less controlled due to a shortage of labour
- as land was purchased by NPWS after 1972, management of unclaimed horses ceased until the early 1990s
- there are strong social and cultural associations with capturing and using “wild” horses from what is now the GFRNP
- Given the nature of the terrain in the GFRNP and the widespread use of horses on neighbouring grazing properties (some of which have now been incorporated into the GFRNP), the GFRNP horses represent a mixture of different breeds, with a more-or-less continual introduction of “outside” blood.
- The genetic study shows that GFRNP horses have relatively high genetic similarity with Arabian-type breeds and/or saddle and harness light horses (for example, Thoroughbreds), and are also

genetically similar to Walers, all of which is consistent with their historical origins. Being a mixture of different breeds does not diminish their heritage significance. On the contrary, it shows that GFRNP horses are a good example of the Australian “wild” horse or brumby, and thus embody the romantic notions that are associated with brumbies

- The genetic study shows that the GFRNP horses have a relatively low level of inbreeding, which is consistent with a continual introduction of “outside” blood
- The genetic study shows that the GFRNP horses are not a significant reservoir of unique genes, which is also consistent with a continual introduction of “outside” blood
- The local perception of a Guy Fawkes wild horse or brumby encompasses several aspects: there is circumstantial evidence that they are representative of the bloodlines of Saladin, a famous ancestor of local stock horses; they are representative of horse types bred for the remount trade; and some are highly regarded because of their “wild” origin, historical associations and natural ability.

## 1.2 THE WORKING PARTY AND ITS OPERATION

### 1.2.1 Introduction

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2001, the Minister for the Environment, Mr Bob Debus, announced that a study would be undertaken into the heritage value of horses in the Guy Fawkes River National Park (GFRNP). A Heritage Working Party would be established specifically for this purpose, under the chairmanship of Associate Professor Frank Nicholas, according to recommendations in a report by Associate Professor Tony English<sup>1</sup>. In the Minister's words:

The study will provide an opportunity for a thorough investigation into the view of many locals in the area that these horses are of historical significance.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2.2 Terms of Reference

The following conditions and terms of reference were provided by the Minister in his news release:

#### *Preamble*

A Heritage Working Party is to be formed to examine and document claims made that feral<sup>3</sup> horses in GFRNP have significant heritage or historical values, sufficient to warrant their being managed on this basis. Following on from the recommendations of this Report dated 6 March 2001, this would mean that any such horses would be humanely removed from the Park so that they can be managed properly in another location.

#### *Composition*

To be effective the Heritage Working Party should have at least the following composition:

- As Chairperson a suitably qualified scientist to steer the Working Party's work and provide scientific and technical advice. The Chairperson's primary task should be to identify valid methods for the investigation of possible genetic links to horses of historical significance among feral horses in GFRNP. It is recommended that this scientist be appointed from the staff of the University of Sydney's Centre for Advanced Technologies in Animal Genetics and Reproduction (REPROGEN), whose Director is Professor Herman Raadsma,
- Four local individuals with an acknowledged involvement with and an interest in the history of the feral horses in GFRNP,
- A representative from the Waler Horse Society of Australia (WWSA),
- A member appointed by NPWS<sup>4</sup> to represent the Service's knowledge and experience of these horses, and to facilitate the provision of any resources allotted to the Working Party,
- The Working Party should have the power to seek the advice of any other person who may have appropriate knowledge or experience of these horses.

#### *Resources*

The Working Party will require the allocation of resources that may be reasonably required to complete its activities. One of the first tasks of the Working Party will be to submit a budget which outlines its' anticipated requirements for funds and other resources.

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1 A Management Plan for Feral Horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park. A report to the Minister, by Associate Professor A.W. English, 6 March 2001

([http://www.npws.nsw.gov.au/news/exhibition/english\\_report/english\\_report.html](http://www.npws.nsw.gov.au/news/exhibition/english_report/english_report.html))

2 A copy of this news release is reproduced in Section 2.1 (Volume 2) of this report.

3 Members of the Working Party are acutely aware of the objections raised by many people, to the use of this word. The Working Party itself uses the word "wild", but since "feral" occurs in the terms of reference, the word has to be included in this section.

4 NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (<http://www.npws.nsw.gov.au>)

### *Timelines*

The Working Party should be formed immediately, and will be required to submit a report within 6 months of its formation. It is strongly recommended that a progress report be submitted within 3 months, with an outline of the measures being adopted to determine the heritage value of the horses. Upon submission of a final report the Working Party should be represented on any expert panel formed to determine the future management of the feral horses in GFRNP.

It must be accepted that in the event that no agreement can be reached on the heritage or other value of horses in GFRNP that the Working Party will be dissolved no later than 9 months from its establishment. There is general agreement that the feral horse population in GFRNP must not be allowed to grow again in an uncontrolled manner.

## **1.2.3 Establishment of the Working Party**

A news release was drafted following consultations between Frank Nicholas and officers of the NPWS (Alan Jeffery and Brad Nesbitt). This release was issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2001<sup>5</sup>, inviting expressions of interest from people within the local community who wished to be appointed to the Working Party. Fourteen expressions were received by the deadline of 16<sup>th</sup> May, and a further four were received after the deadline. The former were ranked by Frank Nicholas, according to the criteria listed in the terms of reference, with substantial assistance from Mr Bob Coutts, chairman of the North Coast NPWS Regional Advisory Committee. The quality of expressions of interest was very high, with many people obviously having much to contribute to the Working Party. In the end, five local individuals were selected, one more than the number recommended in the terms of reference.

## **1.2.4 Composition of the Working Party**

<b>Chair</b>	Frank Nicholas
<b>Community Representatives</b>	Graeme Baldwin Brian Fahey Les Hume Khoby Khobane <sup>6</sup> Robyn MacDougall
<b>Representative of the Waler Horse Society of Australia</b>	Velda Chaplin
<b>Member appointed by NPWS</b>	Brad Nesbitt

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5 A copy of this news release is reproduced in Section 2.2 (Volume 2) of this report

6 Due to illness, Khoby Khobane was able to attend only three meetings. The other members of the Working Party thank him for his contribution. Because he was not involved in the actual preparation of this report, and has not read the drafts, he can not be held responsible for any of its contents

## 1.2.5 Method of Operation

The first meeting of the Working Party was held in Dorrigo on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2001<sup>7</sup>. At this meeting, the Working party's method of operation was determined. In summary, it was agreed that:

1. meetings would be held monthly (24<sup>th</sup> July, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 18<sup>th</sup> December<sup>8</sup> ) in Dorrigo or in some other convenient location
2. interim report would be submitted to the Minister on 28<sup>th</sup> September
3. the final report would be submitted to the Minister on 21<sup>st</sup> December<sup>9</sup>
4. all meetings would be tape-recorded, so as to provide a permanent complete record of the Working Party's deliberations, to be made available publicly<sup>10</sup>
5. minutes would be recorded by a professional secretary employed for that purpose
6. minutes would be public documents<sup>11</sup>
7. the main initial task of the Working Party was to gather every piece of information, both oral and written, that could be relevant to the claims of heritage value. (The chairman stressed that by the time of submission of the final report, there should be no-one who can claim that they were not given an opportunity to submit relevant information.) To this end, a press release was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> July, inviting submissions to the Working Party<sup>12</sup>
8. evidence provided to the Working Party would be accepted only with the agreement of the provider that that evidence will become part of the public record of the Working Party
9. wherever possible, oral evidence would be tape-recorded and a transcript would be prepared, to be signed by the provider of the evidence as a true record of their evidence

Other key issues that have been stressed during the deliberations of the Working Party are:

1. this Working Party is NOT a committee of the NPWS. On the contrary, it has been formed by the Minister and reports to the Minister, and is guided by the conditions and terms of reference provided by the Minister<sup>13</sup>.
2. the removal of horses from the park is NOT an issue to be considered by the Working Party; as stated in the Terms of Reference endorsed by the Minister, "any such horses [found to have heritage value] would be humanely removed from the Park so that they can be managed properly in another location". It is important to note that although these words were included in the second English report and in the Minister's press release announcing the formation of the Working Party, these words were not included in the call for nominations. (Until they arrived at the first meeting, the community representatives and the representative of the Waler Horse Society of Australia were not aware that these words formed part of the Terms of Reference. At this meeting, these representatives wished it recorded that they do not agree with this policy, and that their willingness to serve on the Working Party did not involve endorsement of that policy.)
3. the Minister has imposed a moratorium on the removal of any horses from the park until the Working Party's final report has been completed

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7 Minutes of this and subsequent meetings have been deposited with the papers of the Working Party, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, and are available from <http://www.usyd.edu.au/vetfac/reprogen/guyfawkes>

8 It turned out to be necessary to hold additional meetings on 5 December 2001 and 15 January 2002

9 Because of the volume of material that had to be evaluated, it became impossible for the Working Party to meet this deadline; this Final Report was actually submitted in February 2002

10 The original tapes have been deposited with the papers of the Working Party, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Copies are available from the State Library

11 See footnote 7

12 A copy of this news release is reproduced in Section 2.3 (Volume 2) of this report

13 As reproduced in Section 1.2 of this report



## 1.2.6 Criteria for Heritage Value

The Working party became aware of several important sources of information on the issue of what constitutes heritage value. These are:

1. World Heritage Convention, administered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) [<http://www.unesco.org/whc/intro-en.htm>]
2. Australian Heritage Commission [<http://www.ahc.gov.au/heritage/>]
3. Australian Heritage Directory [<http://www.heritage.gov.au>], which provides, among other things, links to each of the state authorities responsible for heritage issues
4. New South Wales (NSW) Heritage Office [<http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/>], which, among other things, provides administrative support and advice for the Heritage Council, which was established under the Heritage Act 1997 (amended 1999).

Since the GFRNP is administered by an agency of the NSW Government, it was evident that the deliberations of the Working Party should be guided primarily by the heritage criteria determined by the NSW Heritage Office. These criteria are reproduced in Box 1.

**Criterion (a)** – an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

**Criterion (b)** – an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

**Criterion (c)** – an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area);

**Criterion (d)** – an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

**Criterion (e)** – an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

**Criterion (f)** – an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

**Criterion (g)** – an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.

(or a class of the local area’s

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.)

An item is not to be excluded from the Register on the ground that items with similar characteristics have already been listed on the Register.

Source: Anon. (2000) *Assessing Heritage Significance* [a NSW Heritage Manual Update], NSW Heritage Office, Sydney [ISBN 1 876415 26 6], Section 4.

*Box 1. NSW heritage assessment criteria (from Assessing Heritage Significance: a NSW Heritage Manual update. NSW Heritage Office, Sydney, 2000)*

The NSW Heritage Office has issued a number of relevant publications, details of which are available from their web site given above. The most relevant of these is the NSW Heritage Manual, which explains that the NSW Heritage Management System comprises three steps:

1. investigate significance
2. assess significance
3. manage significance

The Working Party followed the *NSW Heritage Manual* processes and guidelines in its deliberations to examine and document claims that the horses in the GFRNP have heritage value.

The Working Party collected a wealth of information, and wishes to record its gratitude to the many people who devoted considerable effort to providing information<sup>14</sup>. The Working Party is particularly grateful to those persons who provided verbal presentations or who agreed to be interviewed by the Working Party, and to those who provided statements and correspondence; all of these people are individually acknowledged in Volume 2. Some of the information submitted to the Working Party concerned wild horses in general, as distinct from wild horses in the GFRNP. Whilst this information is important in its own right, the Working Party realised that it is only indirectly relevant to the terms of reference. This material has been summarised in the following section, as a means of setting the scene for information about the wild horses in the GFRNP.

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<sup>14</sup> Information obtained by members of the Working Party and provided by members of the public is listed in Volume 2 of this report

## 1.3 THE HISTORICAL STATUS OF AUSTRALIAN HORSES<sup>15</sup>

Horses first came to Australia with the First Fleet in 1788. They were brought on board the ships with the rest of the livestock (cattle, sheep etc) at Cape Town, South Africa. They are believed to have been Cape horses or Barbs, and were seven in number, comprising three mares, a stallion, a colt and two fillies. Lieutenant King recorded in his diary that they had received better care than the human cargo.

Subsequently, a steady stream of horses arrived in the fledgling colony. The breeds were of whichever type was needed in the colony to assist in its development. These included Draft horses, Coaching breeds, Ponies, Riding horses, Thoroughbreds and Arabians. As the sea voyage was hazardous and took 6 to 9 months in total, the ones that arrived were obviously good survivors.

In a short time, the different breeds were mixed to produce horses suited to the needs of the individual. In many cases the family would use the same horse for riding, pulling the plough, and for taking the family to town in the buggy for provisions. So, what evolved was a strong versatile horse that could thrive on the natural grasses, go all day and come back the next, a horse of quiet temperament with good flowing movement that made for an easy ride over long distances. What developed was a horse that could endure hard work in this harsh country.

These horses played a vital role in the exploration and development of the colony. The Government encouraged horse breeding, and the horse-breeding industry grew. Without horses the vast distances of this land could not have been traversed or settled in such a relatively short time. Explorers found land to expand the settlement and the European population steadily moved north, south and west. Horses were essential for public communication and transportation systems as new towns developed. The inherent value put on horses can be appreciated by the fact that horse-stealing was a hanging offence.

Horses played a vital role in Australian agriculture and livestock industries right up till the end of the Second World War, when they were gradually replaced by mechanisation. In recent times on some stations, horses have been reintroduced into stock work to displace the motor-bike and helicopter.

In earlier times there were few fences and fewer stables, and in the large tracts of land taken up by the settlers, many horses strayed into the bush land, and the wild horse population grew<sup>16</sup>. These strays became known as brumbies, a name attributed to Sergeant James Brumby's horses, which were left to run loose on his land when he was transferred to Tasmania in the 1830s. So all wild horses running loose began to be called brumbie<sup>17</sup>. Wild horses were often caught and broken in by the settlers for their own use or for sale, if previous ownership could not be established. Their legendary status was given a boost with the publication in 1894 of *Brumby's Run*, a poem by A.B. (Banjo) Paterson<sup>18</sup>.

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15 This section was drafted by Velda Chaplin, based on information primarily gathered by the Waler Horse Society of Australia

16 See, for example, Paterson, A.B. "Banjo" (1930s). Wild horses. [most likely a radio talk delivered on the ABC around 1935]. Pp. 580-584 in Campbell, E.R. and Harvie, P.G. (Eds) (1983). *Song of the Pen: A.B. "Banjo" Paterson, Complete Works 1901-1941*. Lansdowne Press, Dee Why, NSW; and Barton, R.D. (1917) *Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer*. Tyrrell's, Sydney, p. 51.

17 Information provided by several informants, including Lyall Sempf, who provided the most detail. This account is the most widely-accepted explanation of the origin of the word. Other explanations include derivation from an Aboriginal word booramby (Wilkes, G.A. (1996) *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms* (4th edn), Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 59; Morris, E.E. (1988) *Morris's Dictionary of Australian Words Names and Phrases*, Viking O'Neil, Melbourne) or from the Irish word *bromaigh*, meaning colt (*The Macquarie Dictionary* (3rd edn), The Macquarie Library, Macquarie University, Sydney, p. 280).

18 First published in *The Bulletin* 13 January 1894; subsequently included in *Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1917). It is interesting to note that in an introduction to this poem, Paterson states that *brumby* is an Aboriginal word. Paterson often referred to wild horses in his later writings.

By the early 1830s, the British Army in India began to take notice of the quality and availability of horses in the colony of New South Wales and an important export market became established. It flourished for more than 100 years. The Australian colonial-bred horse was to become famous as a war horse or "remount". They were first purchased by the British Army as artillery horses and a little later were used as cavalry mounts for officers and troopers. By the 1840s large numbers of horses from the colony began to arrive in India, and in time they became known as the "Waler" - the horse from the colony of New South Wales, which at that time included the whole of the eastern half of Australia.

When Australians were called to defend Queen and country in the Boer War, Australian bush horses went with the men and proved their ability, as attested by Banjo Paterson in his despatches as a war correspondent<sup>19</sup>. Again in 1914-18 they performed with distinction as the Australian Light Horse, mounted on their Australian Walers, excelled in desert warfare and became a legend, culminating in the charge on Beersheba - the last great cavalry charge in history<sup>20</sup>. The Australian Light Horse played a key role in opening the way to Jerusalem and defeating the Turks. "The youngest nation in the world defeating one of the oldest on its home ground."<sup>21</sup> All this on Australian-bred colonial horses. As the men of the Light Horse say, "We couldn't have done this without our Walers". Banjo Paterson was also involved in this episode of Waler history, being Officer-in-Charge of the Remount Unit in Egypt from March 1916 until the end of the war. During his time in command, the Egypt Remount Unit acquired and trained 50,000 horses for the Army<sup>22</sup>, but throughout the war, 160,000 Australian horses had been sent overseas<sup>23</sup>.

While many horses were bred specifically for the remount trade, some brumbies were also rounded up and sold as remounts to the army at home and overseas if they met the strict criteria. Thus some brumbies became Walers<sup>24</sup> as all horses that left these shores for the overseas remount trade or for the Australian Army became known as Walers.

Eventually, Walers were exported to many overseas destinations including Southern Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia, Japan, the South Pacific, New Zealand and the Americas, and in total, more than half a million horses left these shores for markets overseas. Horses bred in the colony have the distinction of being one of the colony's first major exports. With the emphasis on mechanisation in the Second World War, the demand for Walers declined substantially, and this export industry in effect ceased.

To this day the name Waler has remained for the legendary Australian horses whose breeding goes back to the early horses bred in the colony up until the mid 1940s. They were the same horses that were used by the locals for their everyday horse - the Australian bush horse or stock horse. In 1986, the Waler Horse Society of Australia was formed to establish as a breed the direct descendants of station horses whose offspring were remounts. Foundation Walers are station-bred horses whose pedigrees and/or breeding histories indicate no outside influence since the Second World War<sup>25</sup>.

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19 War despatch from A.B. Paterson, *Sydney Morning Herald* 28th Dec 1899; reprinted in Semmler, C. (Ed.) (1967) *The World of "Banjo" Paterson: his Stories, Travels, War Reports, and Advice to Racegoers*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p. 155. In addition to extolling the virtues of the Waler, Paterson was scathing of the poor treatment of the horses by the Army.

20 This charge was led by General Sir Harry Chauvel, commander of the Desert Mounted Corps. Sir Harry had grown up at Tabulum in the Clarence River district, where his father, Captain Charles Chauvel, had raised the Upper Clarence Light Horse regiment in 1885.

21 Colin Stringer, *800 Horsemen*, Col Stringer, PO Box 3554, Robina Town Centre, QLD, 2000

22 Paterson, A.B. "Banjo" (1930s). Wild horses. [most likely a radio talk delivered on the ABC around 1935]. Pp. 580-584 in Campbell, E.R. and Harvie, P.G. (Eds) (1983). *Song of the Pen: A.B. "Banjo" Paterson, Complete Works 1901-1941*. Lansdowne Press, Dee Why, NSW

23 Jones, I. (1987) *The Australian Light Horse*. Time-Life Books, North Sydney, p. 21

24 Reg Wilson (Historian of the Waler Horse Society of Australia), personal communication to Velda Chaplin

25 *The Waler – an Information Kit produced by the Waler Horse Society of Australia Inc* (ARBN 088 999 624), Waler Horse Society of Australia, 2000. See also <http://www.walerhorse.com/>

Horses have served this country faithfully over generations, not only on outback stations and farming communities, but in the city as well. Uses were manifold such as for mounted police, for riding, and for taking families into town in a coach, gig or buggy. Horse-drawn buses were common in the city up to the first quarter of the 20th century. Until well into the 1950s our milk, bread, vegetables, clothes props, ice, fruit, meat and rabbits were usually delivered by horse and cart in the suburbs of Sydney and other cities. These are all within living memory. In addition, Australia is recognised internationally in equestrian activities. Mounted on our strong robust horses, Australians have established an enviable reputation for their horses and their horsemanship around the world.

It should also be noted that being mounted on horseback became a “place” where settlers and Aborigines had a strong common interest: Aboriginal stockmen have established a fine reputation as horsemen. On some outback properties where Aboriginal people now own their land, they have wanted the wild horses to remain for various reasons, including heritage and commercial considerations.

The value of horses to this country's survival in the early colonial days and its historic development cannot be challenged. Horses have found a place in the hearts of the Australian people that goes back to the beginning of European settlement.

Horses have historic, cultural and a very significant economic value in Australia. The contribution to Gross Domestic Product of the horse industry is estimated at over \$6.3 billion, and if the value of volunteer labour is also included, this pushes the contribution of the industry to almost \$8 billion<sup>26</sup>. They have their beginnings with the early days of European settlement and they have been an integral part of our nation and its history for over 200 years. The continuing importance of wild horses in Australian culture is well illustrated by the inclusion on the current Australian \$10 note of a mob of wild horses (plus the colt from Old Regret) being chased by The Man from Snowy River, as immortalised in Banjo's Paterson's famous poem<sup>27</sup>; the popularity of the film of the same name (1982), its sequel *The Man from Snowy River II*<sup>28</sup>(1988); the Man-from-Snowy-River segment of the Olympics Opening Ceremony; and the very popular *Great Australian Muster* which has become the symbol of the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

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26 <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/HOR/01-083sum.html> [21st January 2001]

27 First published in *The Bulletin* 26 April 1890; subsequently included in *The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1896

28 Also known as *Return to Snowy River*

## 1.4 THE PARK

Guy Fawkes River National Park and Nature Reserve (GFRNP, or the Park) is located 100 km north-east of Armidale (see Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1. Modern map showing the Park in the context of surrounding towns and villages (Provided by Land and Property Information, New South Wales)

The Park is jointly managed by Dorrigo Plateau Area of the NPWS North Coast Region and Glen Innes East Area of the NPWS Northern Tablelands Region. Its history of establishment is shown in Figure 1.2. In 1970 the gorge below Ebor falls was gazetted as a nature reserve. In 1972 the main section of the Park was gazetted to preserve this wild and scenic river country. Other areas were gazetted in the 1990s, and the Park now totals more than 62,700 hectares (approximately 155,000 acres). In addition, as also shown in Figure 1.2, there are also more than 30,000 hectares (approximately 75,000 acres) of adjoining land that have been purchased by NPWS but are yet to be gazetted as national park.

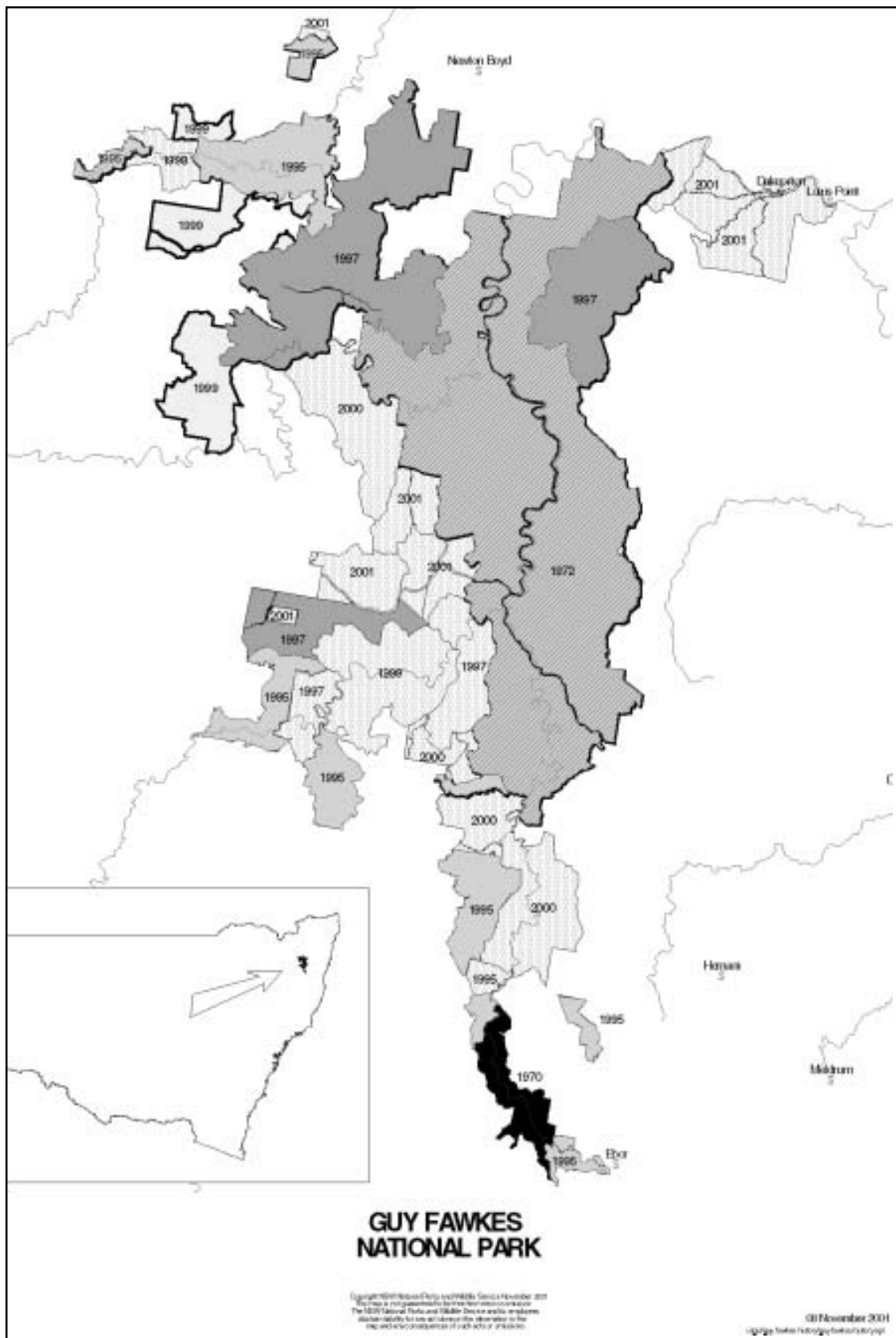


Figure 1.2. History of establishment of the Park (Provided by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

The Park encompasses a diversity of land systems, including a section of the Great Escarpment, part of the eastern edge of the New England Tableland, the deeply incised Guy Fawkes River Valley (Figure 1.3) and the rugged gorges of the Aberfoyle, Sara and Henry Rivers. The Park protects the second largest area of wilderness in northern New South Wales.

The Park is named after the magnificent Guy Fawkes River, which flows through it. The river was named in 1845 by Major Edward Parke who camped nearby on Guy Fawkes Day 5th November 1845.

From its source at Majors Point, the Guy Fawkes River flows 10 km through undulating farming country before plunging 90 m over Ebor Falls. It then follows the Demon Fault Line north in a rugged system of steep-sided gorges.

The Guy Fawkes River is believed to have been an important traffic and trade route for Aboriginal people. The area has a long history of use, with huts, cattle yards and mines scattered throughout.



Figure 1.3. The valley of the Guy Fawkes River (Provided by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

### 1.4.1 Vegetation

The Park represents a number of botanical regions including coastal, tableland and subalpine; and over 40 different vegetation communities have been mapped. The Park is dominated by open woodland vegetation of yellow box, cabbage gum, Blakely's red gum and broad-leaved stringy bark. Examples of subtropical, warm temperate and dry rainforest, as well as wet and dry sclerophyll old-growth forests, are all found in the park. Threatened and rare plant species recorded within the park include *Eucalyptus fusiformis* and the endangered *Grevillea beadleana*.

### 1.4.2 Wildlife

Grey kangaroos, wallaroos and red-necked wallabies are the most obvious of the Park's wildlife, and at night greater gliders can be seen. The Park is home to a large number of threatened plants and animals including the vulnerable brush-tailed rock wallaby, parma wallaby and red-legged pademelon. All three of the large vulnerable forest owls - the powerful, masked and sooty owls - are also found in the park.



# 1.5 TRAVELLING STOCK ROUTE (TSR)

TSRs are strips of public land set aside for the droving of stock. As shown in Figure 1.4, the Park is traversed north-to-south by a TSR that mostly adjoins the Guy Fawkes River. As also shown in Figure 1.4, this TSR was gazetted between 1880 (most northerly section) and 1900 (most southerly section). In 1923, an area of 50 hectares at the junction of the Sara and Guy Fawkes Rivers was gazetted as a Camping Reserve for use to hold stock overnight whilst traversing the TSR.

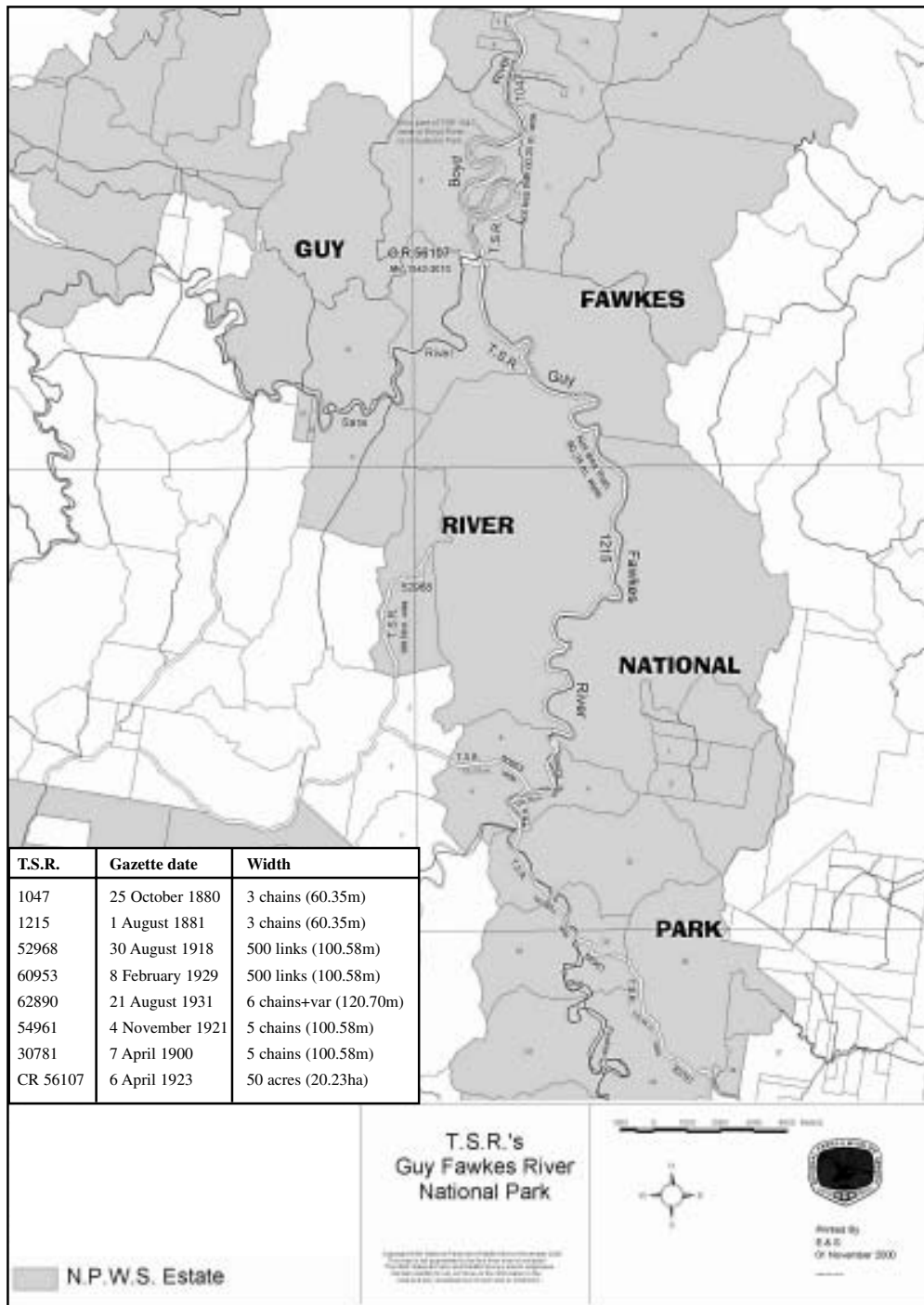


Figure 1.4. Travelling Stock Route (TSR) within the Park (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

## 1.6 BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL TRAIL (BNT)

The BNT is a trail that stretches along the Great Dividing Range, from Cooktown in northern Queensland to Healesville in southern Victoria (Figure 1.5). In the words of the BNT Information Booklet<sup>29</sup>, the aim was “to develop a trail that linked up the stock routes along the Great Dividing Range, thus providing an opportunity to legally ride and live the lifestyle of the drovers who once frequented the stock routes”. The brainchild of R.M. Williams, the BNT was opened in 1988. Not surprisingly, it follows the TSR through the Park. Figure 1.6 shows an extract from the BNT guidebook describing the section of the BNT that traverses the Park. At the time of writing this report, BNT co-coordinators, local trail riding clubs and NPWS are working together to identify appropriate holding yards and camping areas within the Park and to develop a code of conduct for appropriate use that will ensure the long-term environmental protection of the Park.

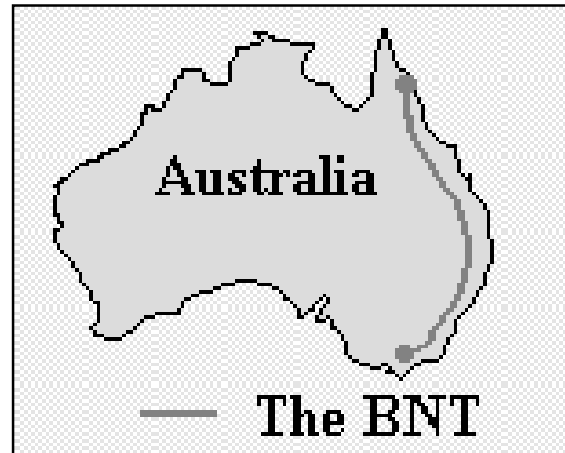


Figure 1.5. Bicentennial National Trail (BNT)  
(<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bnt/>)

### Guidebook 7, Killarney to Ebor

This section traverses rugged remote country just east of the Great Dividing Range, following the Demon Fault Line. The route is well watered but long climbs require a high level of fitness in walkers, riders and horses. There is a great variety of scenery and access to several national parks including Bald Rock, Gibraltar Range and the rainforest wilderness of Walshpool National Park is nearby. A special feature is the most remote part of the Trail, following the Guy Fawkes River through the Guy Fawkes National Park. The higher parts can be bitterly cold in winter and the best time is after the spring rains. There are no facilities on the Trail between Killarney and Ebor, although access is readily available to nearby towns.

This section should not be travelled alone.

**Terrain:** This section of the Trail traverses rugged remote country just east of the Great Dividing Range, following the Demon Fault line. There are a few steep climbs requiring some level of fitness in travellers.

**Water:** Well watered.

**Climate:** The higher parts, particularly Ebor, occasionally experience snow in winter but in the valleys it is much milder. The reverse applies in summer with the valleys hot, but pleasantly mild at higher altitudes. Avoid travelling in the heat of the day.

**Planning a trek:** Winter frosts burn off the grass so horse travel is best done after early spring rains raise new growth.

Figure 1.6. Description of the Killarney-to-Ebor section of the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT)  
(<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bnt/>)

29 Anon. (undated). *The Bicentennial National Trail Information Booklet*. p. 2. (web site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bnt/>)

## 1.7 HORSES IN THE GUY FAWKES REGION

In the following sections, many local place names are mentioned. In order to help readers find their way, Figure 1.7 presents a map showing the place names mentioned below, in relation to the boundaries of the Park.

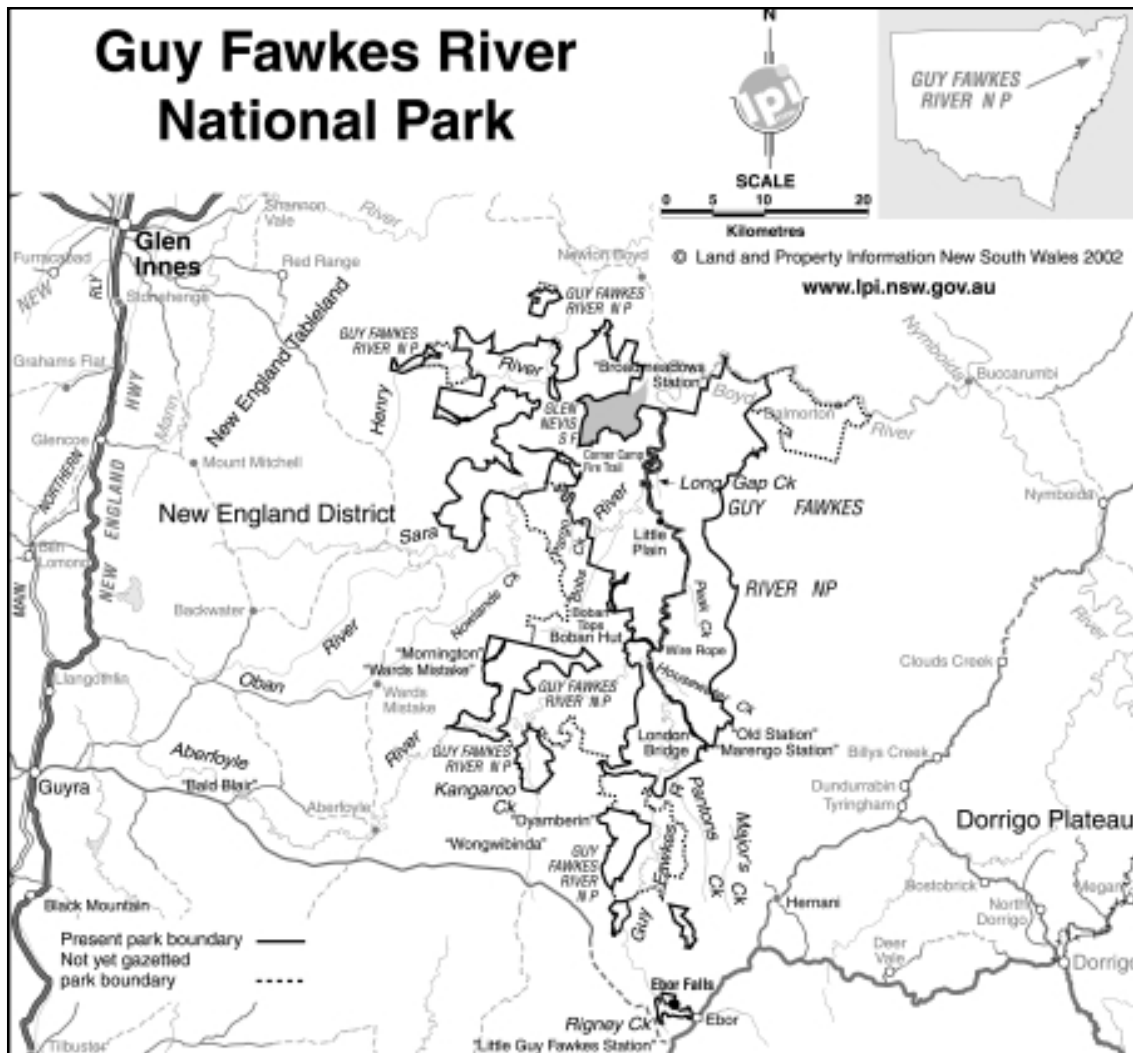


Figure 1.7. Modern map showing place names mentioned in the text, in relation to the boundaries of the Park (Provided by Land and Property Information, New South Wales, using information provided in part by Brad Nesbitt)

## 1.7.1 European settlement in the region of the Guy Fawkes River

The plateau land to the east of the Guy Fawkes River was first settled by Europeans, for agricultural purposes, in the late 1830s<sup>30</sup>. At this time, Major Edward Parke obtained a grant of land on what is now known as Major's Creek (Figure 1.8). This was the first cattle station on the Dorrigo plateau. The homestead was known as Old Station, located about halfway between Hernani and Ebor. The property was later known as Guy Fawkes Station. It extended as far west as the current boundary of Ebor village.



Figure 1.8. Parish map showing original land grants to Major Parke (Provided by Land and Property Information, New South Wales; Parish map 10187701)

30 Fahey, E.J. (1984) *The Settlement of Guy Fawkes and Dorrigo (revised edition)*. North Coast News Pty Ltd, Coffs Harbour

In the words of Eric Fahey,

The Major continued in residence and went in for cattle and horses. He soon built up an extensive herd which roamed the large fenceless runs covering thousands of acres of beautiful pastoral land<sup>31</sup>.

Major Rigney was the next to establish a pastoral business in the area, on what became known as Little Guy Fawkes Station, whose homestead was located on Rigney Creek. This station adjoined Guy Fawkes Station on the site of the current Ebor township.

These two stations form the foundation of cattle and horse grazing in the southern region of what is now the GFRNP area.

On the mid-western side of the GFRNP area, the Newby brothers settled on what became known as Paddy's Land Station, stretching down to the Guy Fawkes River, and including the river flats on the western bank of the river<sup>32</sup>. In the words of Genevieve Newbury,

"Paddy's Land" became a great cattle station running cattle into the thousands<sup>33</sup>.

A few years later, in 1848, William Nowland selected 40,960 acres later known as Ward's Mistake, adjoining Paddy's Land on the west, on what is now known as Nowland's Creek<sup>34</sup>.

In the northern region of the Park area, Broadmeadows Station was first gazetted (to William Boyd) in 1849<sup>35</sup>.

On the eastern side of the Park area, Joseph and Henry Brown settled Marengo Station in the early 1850s.

In the 1860s the Free Selection Act came into being, enabling subdivision and hence more intensive use of the land. For example, in the early 1880s, Combolo station was formed from part of the original stations on the mid-western side of the Park area, by David (Pardy) Brown, a son of Henry.

A good idea of the extent to which land in the area of what is now the GFRNP was settled last century is provided in Figure 1.9.

In summary, from the middle of last century the areas mentioned above, which include most of the area that has now become the GFRNP, accounted for thousands of hectares of unfenced land, on which thousands of cattle and large numbers of horses were raised. In the words of Eric Fahey,

The earliest squatters who followed Major Parke's example produced fine herds of cattle and horses on their large area<sup>36</sup>

For example, by the 1890s on the Guy Fawkes Station (which then occupied approximately 40,000 acres and was then owned by the three Waugh brothers, who had purchased it from Major Parke's daughter),

Horse breeding was a lucrative business, with the Indian Army a very big client. Guy Fawkes River had two stallions and bred extensively for the overseas market.<sup>37</sup>

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31 Fahey, E.J. (1984) *The Settlement of Guy Fawkes and Dorrigo (revised edition)*. North Coast News Pty Ltd, Coffs Harbour

32 Newbury, G. (1969) *Echoes On The Wind*. The Author, 5 Coates Avenue, Glen Innes (republished in 1986 as *Mother of Ducks with Echoes on the Wind*, by Genevieve Newbury, published by the author, 5 Coates Avenue, Glen Innes, NSW [ISBN 0 9589219 0 3]). The actual source in the 1986 book is a chapter entitled "Paddy's Land", p. 105

33 Newbury, G. (1986) *Echoes On The Wind*, p. 106

34 Newbury, G. (1986) *Echoes On The Wind*, p. 99

35 Newbury, G. (1986) *Echoes On The Wind*, p. 93

36 Fahey, E.J. (1984) *The Settlement of Guy Fawkes and Dorrigo (revised edition)*. North Coast News Pty Ltd, Coffs Harbour

37 Fahey, E.J. (1984) *The Settlement of Guy Fawkes and Dorrigo (revised edition)*. North Coast News Pty Ltd, Coffs Harbour

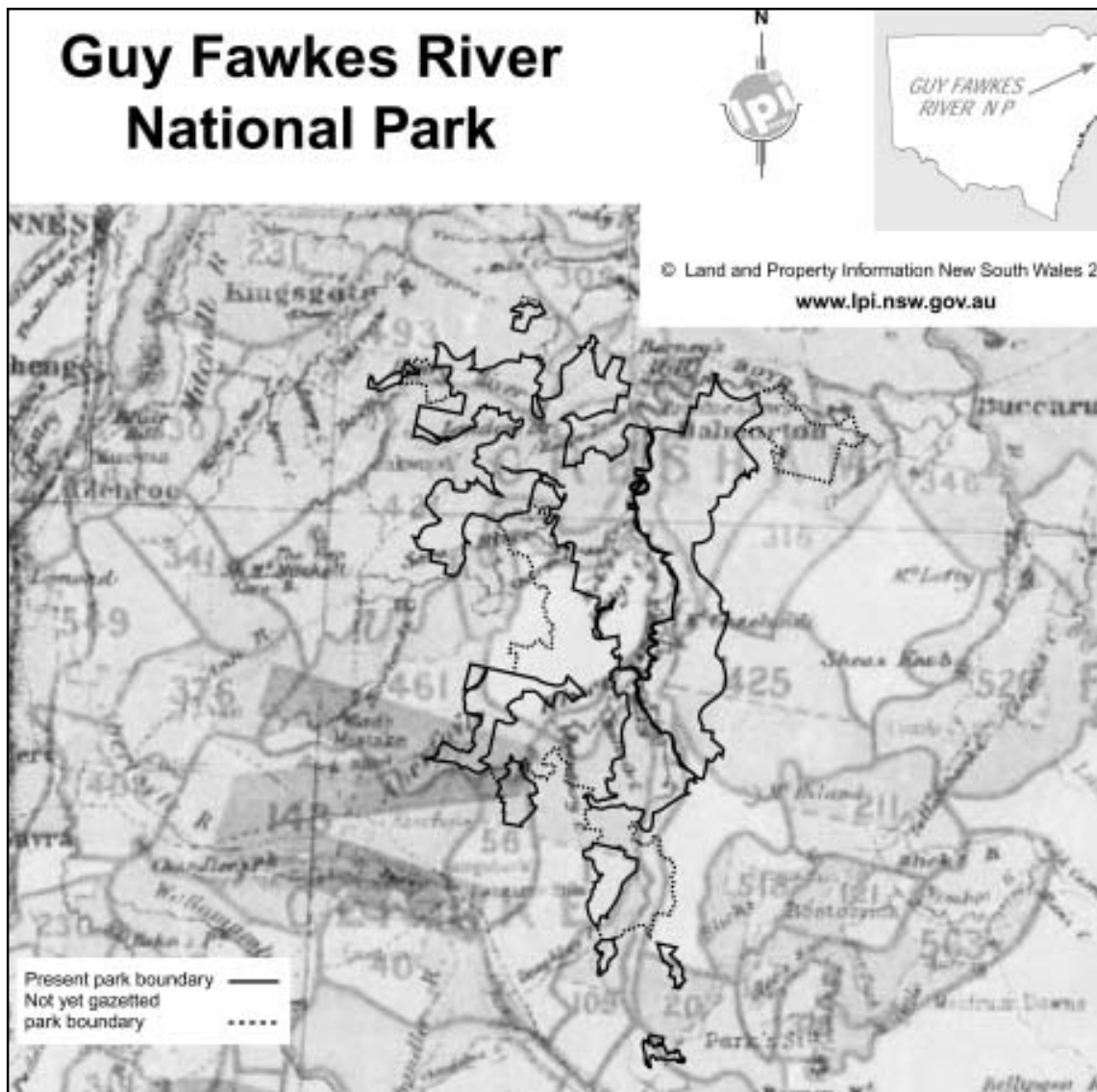


Figure 1.9. Map of the area of the Park, superimposed on a late nineteenth century map showing pastoral holdings at that time. The only areas not allocated to pastoral holdings are those areas that are blank in the background map (Provided by Land and Property Information, New South Wales)

This introduces an important issue in the history of Australian horses in the nineteenth century, namely the development of the remount trade, i.e. the breeding of horses for export, initially to the British army in India, and then to South Africa and Palestine, and to many other countries Asia (as already discussed in Section 1.3).

Writing of Bostobrick Station (around 35 km east of the Guy Fawkes river) in the 1880s, Eric Fahey states,

Horses at the time were valuable and were bred in large numbers. When one was wanted, the mob would be run in so that one could be selected, caught and broken. They were nearly as bad as brumbies, as a result of having free access to thousands of acres, and were probably only yarded once or twice before being finally broken in and used as stockhorses.<sup>38</sup>

38 Fahey, E.J. (1984) *The Settlement of Guy Fawkes and Dorrigo (revised edition)*. North Coast News Pty Ltd, Coffs Harbour

## 1.7.2 20<sup>th</sup> century

One of the few first-hand written accounts of wild horses on lands in the vicinity of the GFRNP in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is that by Genevieve Newbury in her books *Echoes on the Wind and Mother of Ducks*<sup>39</sup>. Born in 1914, and raised on a property called Aboomala, whose homestead was four miles east of Guyra, Genevieve was one of 14 children of John Newbury<sup>40</sup>, who also held land to the east in the Ward's Mistake area. Having been raised in the area, Genevieve married Tom Newbury from Mt Mitchell station, which neighboured Ward's Mistake to the north, and spent most of her adult life in the Ward's Mistake area, raising six children before finally retiring with her husband to Glen Innes. With this background, she is well placed to provide an authoritative account of cattle and horses on stations to the west of the area now declared as GFRNP.

John Newbury's western-most land, around the Aboomala homestead, was used as a fattening property for cattle brought from his lands further east. As recalled by Genevieve Newbury in *Mother of Ducks*:

John Newbury had rather large holdings in the cattle country in the east. Mustering times, Daddy [i.e. John Newbury] would load up the wagonette with foodstuff, camping gear and dogs galore. The boys would ride and lead spare horses, it was exciting to us kids. My father bred a line of nice brown stock horses. The original "Primrose", the first, his last, "Lady Betty", I named her. He purchased the first from Fitzgeralds. He also had a line of creamy Saladan mares, bred from the coast. He purchased them when "Bald Blair" was subdivided. It was exciting when the big mobs came in. The stockyards were beyond the homestead, we would love to climb the trees near the house and watch the large mobs of white faced cattle swinging across the "Falconer Plains". We had to be as quiet as mice as any noise might spook the cattle and send them stampeding in the opposite direction. I have seen that happen, they take the fences before them and anything that happens to be in their path. The cattle were mostly brought in, in the summer, the calves branded and returned to the gulf country for winter.<sup>42</sup>

In her previous book *Echoes on the Wind*, Genevieve Newbury had defined the gulf country as being situated in the rugged mountainous country east of the Great Dividing Ranges.<sup>43</sup>

The term "gulf country" is used variously by local people to refer to dissected gorge country created by the rivers and creeks in the region. These include Guy Fawkes, Aberfoyle, Sara, Oban, Henry and Pantons Rivers. Given the location of Ward's Mistake, Genevieve Newbury is most likely referring to the gorges of the Oban River, which flows into the Sara some kilometres to the east. Later in that same book, she recalls that:

In my youth the Gulf Country abounded with wild horses. These, too, are now uneconomical and are shot on sight. These horses were bred in their hundreds, mostly from former stock mares which had outgrown their usefulness on the stations and been turned out to run free. Originally, good sires were used, the young horses being brought in and broken. A few which eluded the

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39 *Echoes on the Wind* was first printed in 1969, in the form of a series of weekly columns in the *Glen Innes Examiner*. *Mother of Ducks* was written prior to 1982. In 1986, both books were published in a single volume entitled *Mother of Ducks with Echoes on the Wind*, by Genevieve Newbury, published by the author, 5 Coates Avenue, Glen Innes, NSW [ISBN 0 9589219 0 3]

40 The author's registered maiden family name was actually Newberry, but she uses Newbury (her married family name) consistently throughout her books (Jim Newberry, personal communication with Brian Fahey and Frank Nicholas, 18 Dec 2001)

41 The original Saladin (it is usually spelt with an "i") was a creamy (i.e. palomino) stallion in the Dungog district in the 1870s. A mating with one of his daughters produced another creamy stallion also called Saladin, which became famous as a sire of hardy and creamy stockhorses throughout the northern tablelands [Killmier, J. (1973) Saladin in retrospect. *Hoofs and Horns* April, pp. 38-40]. From a pedigree analysis of 305 of the first 320 stallions registered in the Australian Stock Horse Stud Book, Peter Gower has shown that the Saladins (father and son) appear in the pedigree of 10% of these stallions [Gower, P. (1974) What is an Australian Stock Horse? *Hoofs and Horns* February, pp. 66-71]

42 Newbury, G. (1986) *Mother of Ducks*, pp. 177-178

43 Newbury, G. (1986) *Echoes on the Wind*, p. 90

muster, roamed the hills and were commonly called brumbies. In my opinion, a wild stallion is nature's masterpiece. How splendid he stands in all his magnificence; his proud arrogance as he screams his defiance before he tosses his head in contempt and leads his mare to the safety of the ranges.

A brumby muster is a fascinating experience. I once took part in one. When my father sold "Aboomala" [in the 1930s<sup>44</sup>], 250 unbroken horses were yarded at his sale. To round up the remainder, a host of young fry decided to test their skill. My father despised the use of "trap yards", so we were supposed to "run" them. I am ashamed to say that after days of fruitless running we, the younger generation, resorted to the "trap" yard, and so brought in some of the mob. Just how many I have forgotten. Some were broken and others sold to horse buyers, but that exhilarating experience is one that I have never forgotten. The memory often cheers me when I am alone and nostalgic.<sup>45</sup>

Genevieve Newbury's evidence is important for several reasons: it describes cattle being over-wintered in gorge country; it describes the uncontrolled breeding of horses with the aim of the offspring "being brought in and broken"; it provides a first-hand account of the capture of some wild horses in the 1930s; it clearly implies that her father claimed ownership of gulf-country wild horses that could be captured (the main purpose of the brumby run was to capture horses that were to be yarded at her father's sale); and it describes her father having bred a line of "creamy Saladan mares". Given that she also talks of the wild horses originating from "former stock mares which had outgrown their usefulness on the stations and been turned out to run free", it is quite feasible that some of the wild horses could have been descendants from the "creamy Saladan mares". The unusually high proportion of creamy horses in the Park (see Section 1.11) has been attributed by locals to the influence of Saladin. However, it remains an open question as to whether any of Genevieve's account refers to areas that are now part of the GFRNP.

Another first-hand account of wild horses in the area to the south-west of the GFRNP is that by Phillip Wright in his book *Memories of a Bushwacker*<sup>46</sup>. Describing his memories of the Wright family property Wongwibinda, a subdivision of the original Guy Fawkes station, created in 1908, Phillip Wright recalls:

In the early days there were many brumbies, or wild horses, at Wongwibinda. There was no record of how long they had been there, or how they had originated, but they must have existed for a number of years because they were a very weedy inbred lot. However, what they lacked in conformation they made up for in wildness. The first scent they got of man they would be off at full gallop. We used to shoot them to keep their numbers down, but one had to be very careful to approach them very quietly and up the wind in order to get close enough to shoot them. We also trapped them, and any young ones that appeared to be any good we kept to break in to ride. Trapping was an exciting experience. First a yard would be built near the track the wild horses frequented, and left open for some time until they became used to its being there. When the time came to make the run, the yard was shut on one side, and from a corner was strung out from tree to tree, about three feet above the ground, a strip of calico about 2 inches wide. This would extend from the yard for half a mile or more across the route the brumbies usually took when disturbed. Its direction would be varied according to the whereabouts of the mob, which would be ascertained beforehand. Then a man would be stationed near the end of the calico line, and others would spread in a wide arc around the area in which the horses were grazing. This line of men then gradually closed until the brumbies got the scent and the run started. At once, the men closed in at full gallop and, making as much noise as possible, followed. The wild horses would either be turned by the man at the end of the calico or come up against it and be diverted into the yard. They would never go near the calico or try to jump it. We usually had several brumbies at work as stock horses. However, they were not very satisfactory, and though hardy and able to stand a lot of work, they seldom became really quiet and would kick or strike if not treated carefully. Their hooves were hard as flint, and they never needed shoeing.

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44 Newbury, G. (1986) *Mother of Ducks*, p. 178: "John Newbury sold "Aboomala" in the thirties, it was the end of an era."

45 Newbury, G. (1986) *Echoes on the Wind*, pp. 91-92.

46 Wright, P.A. (1971) *Memories of a Bushwacker*, published by the author.



At around the same time, another member of the Wright family (Maurice) had acquired another portion of the Guy Fawkes station, naming it Dyamberin. Here he stood two stallions, Leo (by Saladin) and Forest King (who is “thought to be related to Saladin”)<sup>47</sup>. These and other Wright horses contributed to the foundation of the Australian Stock Horse. It remains an open question as to whether any of the progeny of these horses became wild in the Park area.

### 1.7.3 Information from Ernie Maskey<sup>48</sup>

Ernie Maskey has lived all his life in the area of the Park. He recalled seeing his first brumby when only around 10 years old, in the area of the upper Sara, north to Henry river. In the early 1940s,

When I was going to school we used to chase the horses in Corner Camp and in the Mitchell River which is known as the Sara and we would take our horses home and break them in.<sup>49</sup>

After leaving school he worked on Broadmeadows station, and ended up owning 8,000 acres in the vicinity of Boban Tops and Bobs Creek, which has recently been purchased by the NPWS. He recalled that the numbers of horses in the area were kept under control by a combination of running and shooting. Because there were so few fences, horses could wander over large areas of land, e.g. from the Henry River to Combolo. The horses rounded up by Ernie were broken by him and used as stock horses. Ernie could not recall any cases of horses being removed from the Park area specifically for the remount trade. He clearly recalled seeing horses in the regions of the Sara and Henry rivers, in the early 1940s, but

That’s not down the river, not the main river, not the Guy Fawkes. Very odd horses came into the Guy Fawkes.

He estimated that there were no more than 50 horses in total in the upper Sara and Corner Camp areas at that time. They occurred in mobs of around 5 to 10 horses. Ernie recalled how Tiny Hume, the brother of the Working Party member Les Hume, was paid on a per-head basis by the Newburys to shoot wild horses on their property Mornington on the Boban Tops as a means of controlling their numbers. (Les Hume has confirmed this). This property was purchased about 30 years ago (around 1970) by Ernie, and was stocked with at least 40 of his own horses. Given the lack of fences, Ernie’s horses inevitably mingled with, and mated with, free-ranging horses that he did not own. At the time of purchasing Mornington, i.e. around 1970, he first recalls seeing wild horses in the Kitty’s Creek and Combolo areas. Around this time, Ernie believes that road access for extracting timber in the Glen Nevis State Forest area provided access for horses from the Henry River/Corner Camp areas to move down on to the Sara and later onto Kitty’s Creek/Combolo. Quite a few of these were creamies. Ernie’s property has since been purchased by NPWS. About 1993 or so, Ernie and friends managed to round up 54 wild horses in 10 runs off Little Plain, 3 km upstream from the Sara Junction.

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47 Gower, Peter. Wrights since 1885. *Hoofs and Horns*, September 1973, pp. 39-42

48 The information in this section was obtained primarily during an interview of Ernie Maskey by the Working Party. A transcript of the interview is presented in Section 2.4.1 (Volume 2)

49 Quotations are taken from the transcript in Section 2.4.1 (Volume 2) of this report

### 1.7.4 Information from Noel MacDougall<sup>50</sup>

Noel MacDougall was born in 1917 and has spent most of his life on Marengo. Noel recalled that in 1931-32, Bob and Errol Turnbull, together with Bob Adams and Louis Austin, ran some horses off the river between Peak Creek and The Plain. Following this run, Ted Cobley and Eddie Rose built a trap-yard, and captured more than the Turnbells. Noel recalled helping to construct a trap-yard at Peak Creek in 1933, and bringing out seven horses, believed to be the last of the Brown's horses. He recalled that there were no horses in the Kitty's Creek area at that time, and none in the Combolo area after the Second World War. Neither could he recall seeing any horses in the Housewater area. After World War II, in 1945-6, he saw only 17 horses (cream and white, piebald) at the junction of Long Gap Creek (Little Plain area), and no others. There was an agent called Dick Gilder who would purchase horses for the remount trade, but Noel could not recall any wild horses being taken from the area that became the Park, for this purpose. Neither could he recall ever hearing of remount horses being returned to the Park area after the war.



*Fig. 1.10. Some of the seven horses brought out from Peak Creek in 1933 by Noel MacDougall, Bob and Jack Rhodes and Gordon Sinclair, after being caught in a trap yard (Provided by Noel MacDougall)*

### 1.7.5 Summary of information assembled by Robyn MacDougall<sup>51</sup>

Born in 1916, Ted Mulligan has spent all his life in the Guyra area. Like many other local horsemen, he volunteered for the 12<sup>th</sup> Light Horse in the New England district in 1939, and went into camp at Armidale. Every man required a horse, which provided a strong incentive for local horsemen to round up surplus and/or bush horses. Another New England Light Horse veteran, Lloyd Piddington, recalled on one occasion in 1940 the fun they had when the brumbies were brought from Crown lease country into the camp for the Signalers, and were bucked out<sup>52</sup>. It was the highlight of his camp life<sup>53</sup>. He also recalled that Geoff Hickey was involved in mustering these horses. Lloyd recalled hearing from one of the Hickeys how these horses were managed in a controlled manner, including mustering (for sale) and shooting<sup>54</sup>.

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50 The information in this section was obtained primarily during an interview of Noel MacDougall by the Working Party. A transcript of the interview is presented in Section 2.5 (Volume 2)

51 Robyn's MacDougall's document is presented in full as Section 2.5 (Volume 2)

52 Personal communication from Lloyd Piddington to Robyn MacDougall

53 Personal communication from Lloyd Piddington to Robyn MacDougall

54 Personal communication from Lloyd Piddington to Robyn MacDougall

James Hickey, born in 1908, said that he spent three years stationed in the Armidale camp when he enlisted in the 15<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment. He provided his own horse, which he stated he had caught himself from wild-horse stock on his lands in the Gulf area. He also confirmed that there were “few horses running in the Guy Fawkes River area around that time” (i.e. during the years 1935-36), which was also verified by Fletcher Brazier’s recollection in his personal interview with Brian Fahey<sup>55</sup>.

Another local Light Horse veteran, Jack Giles, confirmed that horses were mustered for the Light Horse in Armidale from Hickey’s country in the Gulf area by the Hickey brothers, assisted by Lloyd Ellis and Doug Layton.

Jack recalled riding in the area of Bob’s Creek, Combolo and Boban between 1944 and 1946, and seeing good quality horses<sup>56</sup>.

Ted Mulligan also said that right up until the time the NPWS took over the country in the 1970s, locals used to go up and get a horse or two out of the bush for stock and station work. They humanely put down any injured animals, poor quality or troublesome stallions, so the brumbies were generally reasonably managed over many years, but this doesn’t happen anymore. Ted Mulligan said that as long as he could remember, going back to his father and grandfather, horses had always been in what he knows as the Gulf country, as well as running down in the Gorge country (the top of the Macleay River), and that it had always been known by the local horsemen that they had come from some pretty good bloodlines<sup>57</sup>.

### **1.7.6 Summary of information provided by other people<sup>58</sup>**

Joe Meehan recalled how his father Andrew Meeham and his uncle Dolf Ellis had been running in replacement horses with William Ellis in the Combolo area of the Park area in 1928, when William Ellis dropped dead off his horse (Figure 1.11). Preoccupied with packing out the body by horseback, William’s mates left open the gate of the yard that held their stock horses, which escaped and joined the wild horses, never to be recaptured. Joe also recalled that in the 1930s, his father would warn him about brumbies in the Gulf Country (i.e., the gorge of the Guy Fawkes River).

Fletcher Brazier, who was born in 1919, recalled that he first went into the Guy Fawkes River (upper catchment) with his father in 1927. In 1919, his father had bought property on Panton’s Creek, which runs into Guy Fawkes River. He also had a lease from just above London Bridge to above Panton’s Creek. The Braziers bred their horses on Panton’s Creek under tight control; nothing got with their mares, and none of their horses escaped. Some of their horses were sold as remounts. In 1936-37, Fletcher rode to Combolo with his father to pick up stray cattle. He saw no brumbies in that area then. In 1957 in Paddy’s Land, there were about 20 brumbies around the trig station at Wongas. Mrs Newbury of Mornington (later bought by Ernie Maskie) had mobs of brumbies and would not allow them to be shot until the 1965 drought, when cattle were starving and horses were out of control. After the shooting, the remaining horses moved away into the Gulf Country and Guy Fawkes River. To his mind, this is where the Guy Fawkes brumbies came from. Fletcher recalled that in 1959 there were no wild horses on his property, but there were 17 outside his boundary. The first time he saw a wild horse in the upper Sara River was in 1964 – one horse and he bolted away.

Fletcher’s son Terry has always worked and lived in the area, and has regularly travelled the river from Ecclesley Park to Ryefield Station. In the 1960s, he knew of horses in the upper Pargo, Bobs Creek and Boban Top areas. In 1967, he went into Combolo and saw no horses or signs of horses. In the 1970s, he saw one or two horses in the area of Main Water Creek and Housewater Creek.

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55 This paragraph is taken almost verbatim from Robyn MacDougall’s document

56 Personal communication from Jack Giles to Robyn MacDougall

57 This paragraph is taken almost verbatim from Robyn MacDougall’s document

58 The statements on which this summary is based are presented in Section 2.7 (Volume 2) of this report

Ian Lupton has lived in the area for 50 years. His father-in-law (Geoff Hickey) owned Falconer's block and then Pearce's block on the Wongwibinda side of the Aberfoyle; now owned and managed by Ian and other family members. Around 1959, the first horses he saw were two he caught with Rudd Wright and Steve Mull at Kangaroo Creek. He believes they were probably horses hunted out from Boban Hut by stallions. In 1979-80, he first saw wild horses up the river; before that they were always below the Wire Rope (somewhere below the Combolo).

Doug Ferris, the owner of Dayswater since 1981, also owns Whitehorse Creek property on the Aberfoyle River. The first wild horse he saw in the river was in 1975, when he and Paul Hickey and Peter Clark captured a stallion at the bottom of Survey Spur. Doug believes that this horse had come into the Aberfoyle River off the Boban Top. In the mid 1980s, whilst riding from Wongwibinda to Lemon Tree Plain on the Guy Fawkes River, he counted 268 wild horses.



*Figure 1.11. The spot where William Ellis dropped dead off his horse (Provided by Joe Meehan)*

## 1.8 HORSES CAPTURED FROM WITHIN THE PARK AREA

The Working Party has been able to locate 16 present-day horses that were born in the Park, and which were later removed from the Park to become working and/or family horses. Table 1.1 provides known details about these horses.

Table 1.1 Guy Fawkes horses located by the Working Party

ID	Year of capture	Area of capture	Distinguishing markings					
			Age	Sex	Colour	Head & face	Limbs	Body
GF01	1992	South of Peak Creek (Chaelundi Creek)	10	mare	Buckskin	Nil	Nil	Brand: GE (near side), 91 (off side)
GF02	1995	London Bridge, Marengo Creek Flat	6	gelding	Buckskin	white star	off side hind sock	Brand: GE (near side), 95 (off side)
GF03	1992	Paddys Basin	9	mare	Palomino	star & snip	1/2 sock off hind	Brand: GE (near side), 92 (off side)
GF04	1993	Peak Creek (Chaelundi Creek)	11	mare	Buckskin	Nil	Nil	Nil
GF05	1999	Sara River Junction	4	stallion	Brown	Nil	Nil	Nil
GF06	1999	Sara River Junction	3	mare	Taffy	Nil	Nil	Nil
GF07	1994	Northern end Long Gap, steel yards	12	gelding	Buckskin	thin blaze & snip	Sock near side hind	Nil
GF08	1992	Above Sara River Junction	17	gelding	Buckskin	Nil	Nil	Nil
GF09	1997	Jimmy Freemans Flat	6	mare	Palomino	star (parrot mouth)	Nil	Nil
GF10	1995/1996	Kittys Creek	7	mare	Buckskin	star & snip	white hind socks	Brand: <-CM (near side), 94 (off side)
GF11	1996	Jimmy Freemans Flat	5*	gelding	Bay	star & snip	Near side hind sock	Nil
GF12	1998/1999	Below Sara River	4?	mare	Chestnut	Star	Nil	Nil
GF13	1998		3-4	mare	Creamy	Nil	Nil	Nil
GF14		Little River	16	gelding	Buckskin	Star	Near side hind sock	Nil
GF15				mare	Albino			
GF16		Combolo		gelding	Palomino	oval star	both hind hooves striated	

\* removed from river in utero

One of these horses (identified as GF04 in Table 1.1; illustrated in Figure 1.12), was written up in a recent issue of *hoofbeats*<sup>59</sup>. The article tells the story of a muster in 1993 that yielded 17 wild horses; of the four-hour climb to the plateau 700m above the valley of the Guy Fawkes River, with the wild horse being pulled up the steep slopes with the aid of another horse; and how she has become the owner's "number-one" horse.

Another Guy Fawkes wild horse (GF14 in Table 1.1; illustrated in Figure 1.13) has been fondly described by its present owner as a "mighty brumby"<sup>60</sup>. Ridden for several years by children as young as four, this gelding has done much Pony Club work. In addition, at the 2001 State Sporting and Campdrafting Championships at Tenterfield, he came tenth in the flag race and reached the finals for campdrafting.

Photographs of most of the other GFRNP horses are included in Volume 2 of this report.



*Figure 1.13. Guy Fawkes horse GF14 (Photo by Brad Nesbitt, for the Working Party)*



*Figure 1.12. Guy Fawkes horse GF04 (Photo by Brad Nesbitt, for the Working Party)*

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59 Anon. (2001) Domestication : a life line for the brumby. *hoofbeats* Oct/Nov, pp. 21-23.

60 The complete statement is filed with the papers of the Working Party in the State Library of NSW

## 1.9 LOCAL COMMUNITY VALUES RELATING TO THE GFRNP HORSES

The previous sections have shown the long-standing involvement of locals with wild horses in the Park area. In particular, the capturing of wild horses in the Park area, and their subsequent taming for work or family uses, adds another dimension to the bond between humans and their horses. Apart from these aspects, the sense of loss experienced by some members of the local community after the aerial culling in 2000, illustrates the values held by these people. The Working Party can attest to the strength of feeling aroused by this culling: even though the Working Party's terms of reference did not include consideration of the management of the horses, almost every submission received (both in writing and verbally) and almost every informal conversation included intense criticism of the cull. Indeed, equally strong feelings were expressed by all local representatives on the Working Party and by the Waler representative. However, it is important to note that not all members of the local community hold these views; indeed, there are some who hold the opposite view, namely that the horses have no heritage or historic value.

Those opposed to the cull do not believe that the horses should be unmanaged. On the contrary, even the harshest critic of the 2000 cull agrees that numbers have to be controlled. Indeed, as indicated in evidence received by the Working Party (Section 1.6), locals have been actively involved in control of wild horse numbers in the Guy Fawkes area.

Taken together, this indicates that the present local perception of the GFRNP horses amongst a proportion of the community is that they are an important part of local culture, requiring careful management. Locals are very keen to be involved in this management, as they and their forebears have been in the past.

The other major issue involving local community values of the GFRNP horses is that the people who hold that the horses are an important part of local culture also believe that they should be retained and managed within the Park area. This is the second major point made in almost all submissions. And, as described in Section 1.1.5, this view is held equally strongly by the local representatives on the Working Party and by the Waler representative. The Working Party notes that it is not required to make any recommendation on this issue. It is mentioned here solely because it forms an important part of the local perception of the GFRNP horses.

## 1.10 GENETIC EVIDENCE

In his second report (page 9), Dr English stated that the

Heritage Working Party would need to enlist the assistance of appropriate organisations or individuals to investigate the genetic or other basis for claims of heritage value.

There have been many genetic studies of populations of wild horses throughout the world. A bibliography of the published studies is provided in Section 2.13 in Volume 2 of this report. In essence, these studies involve obtaining a blood sample from horses that are representative of a particular population of wild horses, obtaining a “genetic profile” of the population by determining the genotype of each horse at a set of loci, and then comparing the “genetic profile” of the wild population with that of established breeds of horses. The most commonly-used set of loci are the sets of blood-group loci and protein electrophoretic loci endorsed by the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG). A leading researcher in this area is Dr Gus Cothran of the Equine Parentage Verification and Research Laboratory at the University of Kentucky [<http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/VetScience/EBT.HTM>]. Dr Cothran has a database containing the raw genotype data from most of the populations of wild and endangered horses that have been studied around the world, together with comparative genotype data on most of the recognised horse breeds.

When he was contacted by the chair of the Working Party, Dr Cothran readily agreed to analyse any relevant data that could be provided to him, with the aim of comparing the “genetic profile” of GFRNP horses against all those populations in Dr Cothran’s database, and hence to obtain a useful guide as to the extent of their genetic uniqueness.

Accordingly, the Working Party agreed to obtain a blood sample from the GFRNP horses that are readily accessible, namely those that have been removed from the Park<sup>61</sup>. In addition, arrangements were also made for samples to be collected from Walers, a breed thought to be derived in part from populations of horses like those in the GFRNP<sup>61</sup>.

The chair of the Working party made arrangements with Dr Kevin Bell and Dr Helen Arthur of the Australian Equine Genetics Research Centre at the University of Queensland, for the samples to be genotyped in their laboratory (this being the only laboratory in Australia that performs this form of genotyping on a regular basis). The data were then transferred to Dr Cothran for analysis. The final assembly and interpretation of the results was greatly assisted by Dr Lars Jermiin, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney.

### 1.10.1 Evidence from “genetic profiles”

Details of the results of the analyses are provided in Section 2.11 of Volume 2 of this report. The results will be summarised here in the form of answers to the following questions:

Q: How inbred are the horses?

A: Very little. On a scale going from zero (no inbreeding) to 100% (complete inbreeding), the Guy Fawkes horses have a score of 5% and the Walers have a score of 7%. This relatively low level of inbreeding is consistent with a continual introduction of “outside” blood.

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<sup>61</sup> The Working Party is very grateful to the many owners of horses who agreed to a sample of blood being taken, and to the many people who helped and assisted in the collection of blood samples. A full list of names is provided in Section 2.11 of Volume 2 of this report



Q: In terms of genetic variability, how do these horses compare with other populations?

A: Guy Fawkes horses have around 8% less variability than the average of wild horse populations, and around 14% less variability than the average of recognised breeds. Walers have around 8% more variability than the average of recognised breeds. The greater variability in Walers is consistent with their origins being from a number of different populations from different parts of Australia. The lower level of variability in Guy Fawkes horses is consistent with their single geographic origin. Despite being lower than average, Guy Fawkes horses still have substantial genetic variability: on a scale that goes from zero (no variability) to approximately 80% (maximum theoretical variability), Guy Fawkes horses have a score of 35%.

Q: To which recognised breeds are the horses most genetically similar?

A: This answer can best be represented in the form of a “tree”, whose branches illustrate the historical relationship of breeds, as shown in Figure 1.14. In summary, the Guy Fawkes horses are most genetically similar to Arabian-type breeds, and next-most-genetically-similar to saddle and harness light horses. The opposite applies for Walers: they are most genetically similar to saddle and harness light horses, and next-most-genetically-similar to Arabian-type breeds. The two groups of breeds to which the Guy Fawkes horses and Walers belong cluster next to each other, indicating a greater genetic similarity between these two groups than between either of these two groups and any other group of breeds.

Q: To what extent are the horses genetically unique?

A: Of the 49 different genetic variants detected in Guy Fawkes horses, 47 occur in recognised breeds in Australia; and all of the 62 genetic variants detected in Walers occur in recognised breeds in Australia. In other words, the Guy Fawkes horses are not a significant reservoir of unique genes. And the same can be said for Walers. In drawing this conclusion, it must be noted that when a group of recognised breeds is studied in this manner, the breeds typically share a large proportion of genetic variants: generally, fewer than 10% of genetic variants in a group of different breeds are unique to a particular breed.

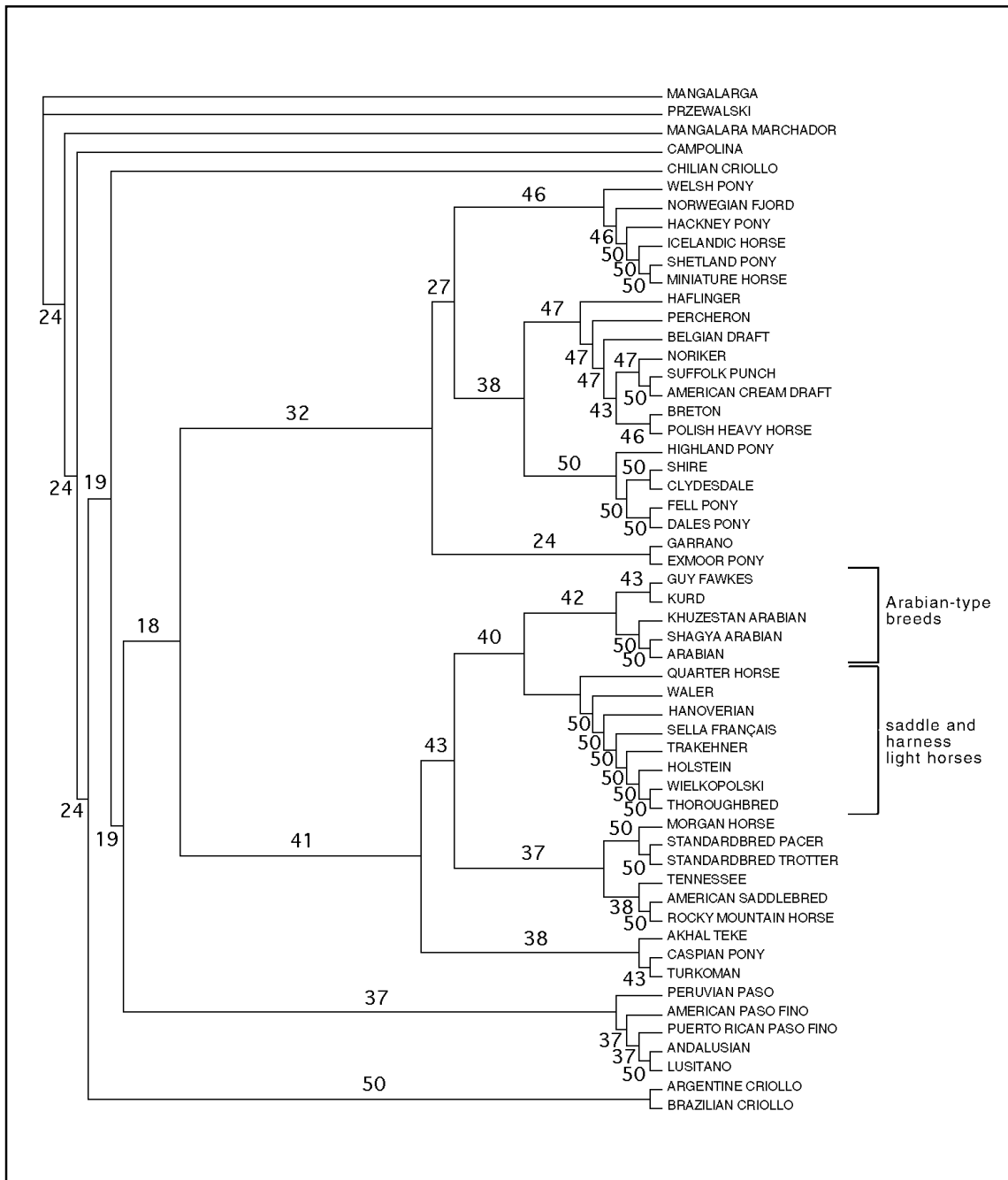


Figure 1.14. Phylogenetic tree based on blood-typing data, showing that Guy Fawkes horses and Walers are most closely related to Arabian-type breeds and saddle and harness light breeds. The tree represents the consensus from 50 replicate trees that were generated from the data. The numbers at the forks indicate the number of times the groups consisting of the populations to the right of that fork occurred among the total of 50 trees that were constructed. In other words, the closer the number is to 50, the greater the confidence in concluding that the populations to the right are more similar to each other than to other populations (Courtesy of Dr Gus Cothran and Dr Lars Jermiin)

## 1.10.2 Evidence from assessment of conformation

All the Guy Fawkes horses and Walers sampled for the above analysis were also scored for 30 different aspects of conformation using the scoring system devised by Jordana and colleagues (Volume 2, Section 2.12)<sup>62</sup>. These scores were then subjected to the same type of analysis as for the “genetic profiles”, by Dr Lars Jermiin, School of Biological Science, University of Sydney, who is a specialist in phylogenetic analysis. Although based on very different data from the evidence above, the results from the conformation data (Figure 1.15) are remarkably similar to those from the “genetic profiles”, except that there are fewer breeds, and consequently fewer clusters. Moreover, because the analysis was based on only 30 different aspects of conformation, the results may not be as reliable as that of the “genetic profiles”. For the conformation data, the Arabian-type breeds and the saddle and harness light horses are all clustered together, and, consistent with the genetic results, both Guy Fawkes horses and Walers are in this cluster.

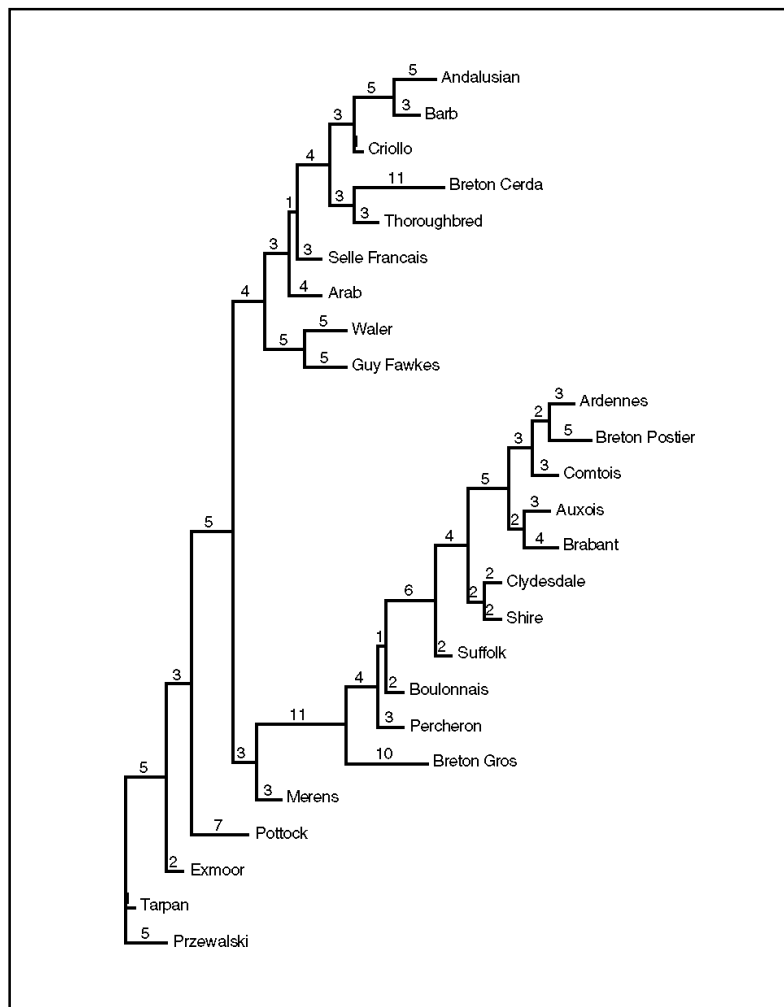


Figure 1.15. Phylogenetic tree based on conformation data, showing Guy Fawkes horses and Walers in the same group as Arabian-type breeds and saddle and harness light breeds. The number on each branch of the tree and the length of each branch indicate the extent to which populations differ (Courtesy of Dr Lars Jermiin)

62 The Working Party gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the owners of the horses in enabling the scoring to be done, and also the many people who performed the assessments. A full list of names is provided in Section 2.11 of Volume 2 of this report

### **1.10.3 Conclusion**

Bearing in mind the limitations of the data, as detailed in Section 2.11 (Volume 2), it is concluded that there is substantial evidence to suggest that Guy Fawkes horses and Walers have relatively high genetic similarity with Arabian-type breeds and/or saddle and harness light horses, which is consistent with their historical origins. It is also concluded that the Guy Fawkes horses have a relatively low level of inbreeding, and are not a significant reservoir of unique genes.

In all respects, these results are consistent with the historical evidence, namely that the GFRNP horses are a mixture of different breeds, with a more-or-less continual introduction of “outside” blood. As such, the genetic study shows that the GFRNP horses are a good example of the Australian “wild” horse or brumby.

## 1.11 THE CURRENT STATUS OF HORSES IN THE GFRNP

Table 1.2 summarises the history of sightings of wild horses in each of the major areas within the GFRNP, while Table 1.3 summarises the results of counts of wild horses in the Park. Figure 1.16 shows a typical distribution pattern of horses along the rivers and adjacent slopes in the 1990s.

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from the history of sightings is that first-hand accounts indicate small numbers of horses on the top country and along the rivers in the northern half of the Park area (e.g. Sara River, Pargo Creek, Boban Top, Peak Creek, Corner Camp, Henry River) as early as the 1930s. In the southern areas, however, e.g. the Combolo, upper Guy Fawkes River and Aberfoyle River, there are no first-hand accounts of horses in any numbers until the late 1970s (i.e. after the land was gazetted as National Park). Figure 1.16 shows that by the late 1990s wild horses were well distributed along the river in both the north and southern areas of the park. These surveys do not show horse numbers on the top country to the west of the Guy Fawkes River.

The surveys summarised in Table 1.3 indicate very small numbers of horses in the Park area in the early years of the NPWS's management. Numbers appear to have increased significantly in the early 1980s. This may have been as a result of natural increases of wild horses, especially in view of the removal of large numbers of cattle, and/or movement of horse breeding stock from adjoining unfenced pastoral properties.

In relation to coat colours, the Working Party was not able to obtain accurate estimates of the frequency of coat colours of GFRNP horses. However, an inspection of black-and-white photographs of some of the groups recorded in the most recent survey included in Table 1.3 (April 2001) supported anecdotal evidence received by the Working Party, namely that there is an unusually high proportion (around one-third or so) of creamies (including palominos, buckskins and paints). While this does not provide direct evidence of a strong Saladin influence, it is consistent with a substantial creamy contribution to the GFRNP horses from one or more sources, one of which could have been Saladin (see Section 1.7.2).

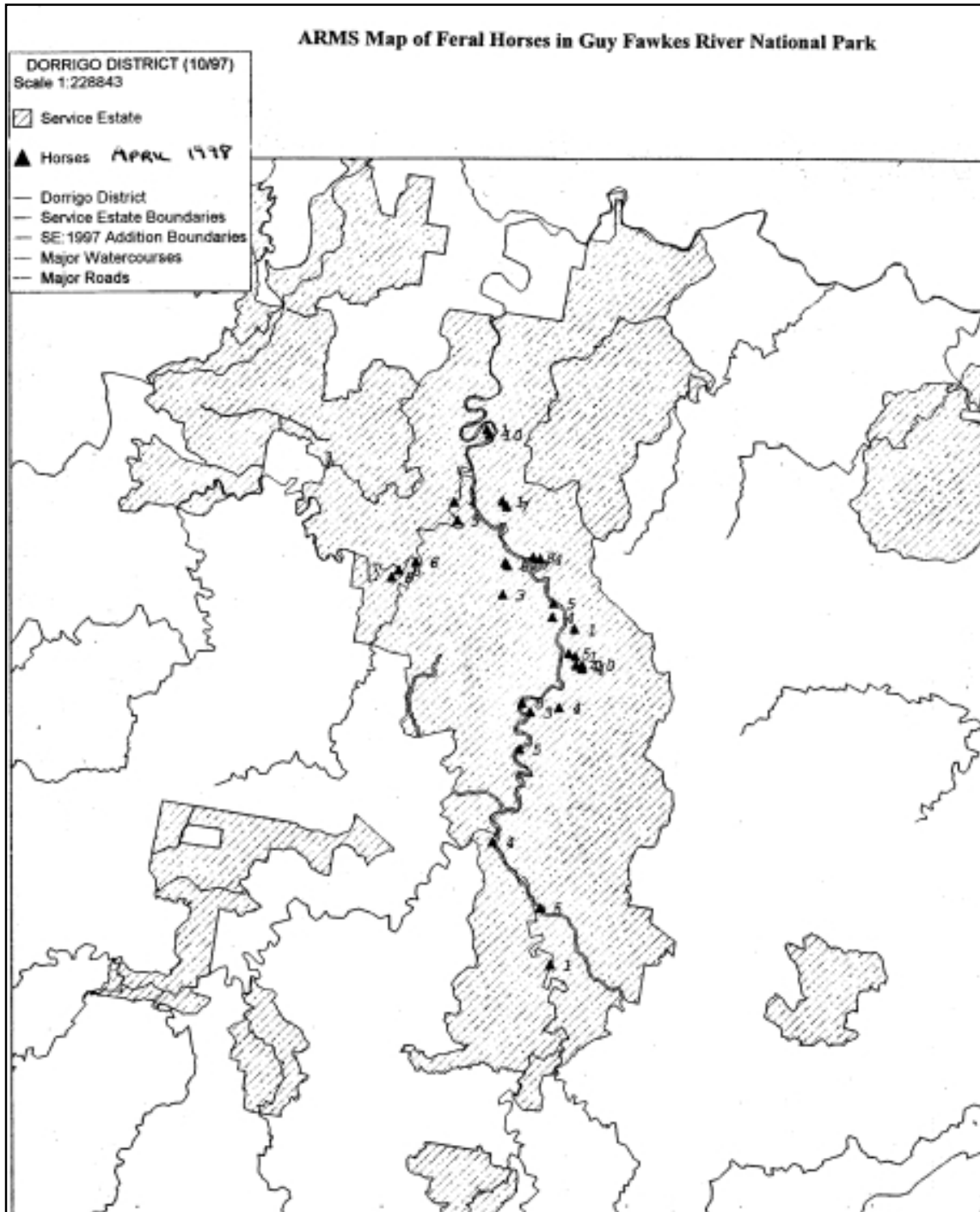


Figure 1.16. Map constructed from the April 1998 aerial survey of the GFRNP, conducted using the automated real-time mapping system (ARMS), showing the location of groups of horses. Numbers indicate the size of the groups (Provided by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

Table 1.2 History of sightings of wild horses in the Guy Fawkes River National Park

LOCATION	DATE	COMMENTS	SOURCE	TYPE OF EVIDENCE	HORSE TYPE
<b>Upstream of Aberfoyle River Junction</b>					
Housewater Creek	1960s	saw only 1 or 2 horses here	Terry Brazier	First hand account	
<b>Aberfoyle River area</b>					
Wongwibinda	?1930s	Mustered wild horses off the top country (not out of the River)	Philip Wright	First hand account	
Kangaroo Creek	1959	First saw horses here on the top country (not in the river), believe they had come over from Boban Tops	Ian Lupton	First hand account	
Surveyors Spur (Aberfoyle River)	1975	First wild horse I saw on the Aberfoyle River	Doug Ferris	First hand account	Old stallion pushed on from Boban Tops, he thinks
<b>Combolo area on Guy Fawkes River</b>					
Combolo Flat	1928	Gate left open and stock horses escaped to mix with wild horses	Joe Meehan	Second hand account	
Combolo & upstream	1936	No horses	Fletcher Brazier	First hand account	
Combolo & upstream	1940	Almost nothing	Ernie Maskie	First hand account	
Combolo & upstream	circa 1945	No horse here after the war	Noel McDougall	First hand account	
Combolo & upstream	1967	Went into the Combolo and no horses seen and no sign of horses either	Terry Brazier	First hand account	
Combolo & upstream	1979/80	First time saw horses in this area	Ian Lupton/Doug Ferris	First hand account	
<b>Peak Creek to Kittys Creek area on Guy Fawkes River</b>					
Peak Creek & the Plain	1931/32	Errol Turnbull captured some horses	Noel McDougall	First hand account	Piebald
Peak Creek	1933	Trapped 7 horse, only ones known to be running in the river at that time	Noel McDougall	First hand account	Creamy, white, Piebald
Kittys Creek junction with Guy Fawkes River	1930s	Ted Copley trapped horses and held them in Plains Yard	Doug Meyer	Second hand account	
Kittys Creek	1939	No horses there in 1939	Noel McDougall	First hand account	
<b>Corner Camp/Henry River</b>					
Corner Camp	1940	Chasing horses	Ernie Maskie	First hand account	
<b>Sara River</b>					
Sara River	1940	Chasing horses	Ernie Maskie	First hand account	
<b>Pargo Creek, Bobs Creek, Boban Top Area</b>					
Days Water then north to Pargoor south to Aberfoyle	circa 1935	Former stock mares turned out to run free and became wild horses	Genevieve Newbury	First hand account	
Pargo and Bobs Creek	1940	Not a lot of horse (no more than 50 all up)	Ernie Maskie	First hand account	
Ballards Flat	1946	Doug Meyer, Kevin Mulligan, Rex Thompson reported as running horses here	Doug Meyer	First hand account	
Pargo Flat	1959	17 horses counted	Fletcher Brazier	First hand account	
Upper Sara River	1964	Saw horses for the first time in the upper Sara	Fletcher Brazier	First hand account	
Pargo Creek, Bobs Creek, Boban Top	1960s	First time I saw horses here but knew (from Fletcher Brazier) that they were here for some period	Terry Brazier	First hand account	
Boban Top/Bobs Creek/Kittys Creek	early 1970s	More than 40 breeders added to area and mixed with wild horses	Ernie Maskie	First hand account	
<b>Locations General or Unknown</b>					
Horses put into the River from Light Horse, in case needed for defence of the Brisbane Line		"No I don't think so, never heard of any"	Noel MacDougall <sup>63</sup>		

63 Working Party members Les Hume and Brian Fahey support Noel MacDougall's opinion

TABLE 1.3 Counts of Wild Horses in the Guy Fawkes River National Park<sup>64</sup>

Year	Month	Survey Method	No. of Horses	Source
1979	April	Ground count from Horseback	3	NPWS Stock patrol <sup>65</sup>
1979	August	Helicopter aerial count	0	NPWS Stock patrol
1980	March	Helicopter aerial count	0	NPWS Stock patrol
1981	March	Helicopter aerial count	62	NPWS Stock patrol
1982	April	Helicopter aerial count	54	NPWS Stock patrol
1982	June	Helicopter aerial count	31	NPWS Stock patrol
1982	September	Helicopter aerial count	12	NPWS Stock patrol
1985 circa		Ground count from Horseback	268	D. Ferris <sup>66</sup>
1991/92		Ground count from Horseback	290	G. Everingham <sup>67</sup>
1996	February	Helicopter aerial count	174	NPWS Feral Horse & Cattle Surveys
1997	February	Helicopter aerial count	121	NPWS Feral Horse & Cattle Surveys <sup>68</sup>
1998	February	Ground count from Horseback	150	A. MacDougall
1998	April	Helicopter aerial count	126	NPWS Feral Horse & Cattle Surveys <sup>68</sup>
2000	May	Helicopter aerial count	180	NPWS Feral Horse & Cattle Surveys <sup>68</sup>
2000	October	Helicopter aerial count	283	NPWS Feral Horse Survey during Fire Operations <sup>69</sup>

64 With the exception of the count taken after the aerial culling in 2000, the actual population is likely to be larger than these counts.

65 Count by Rod Holmes whilst on a NPWS stock patrol recording cattle and horse numbers in the park. Travelled on horseback from MacDonalds Spur up river to Pantons Creek then down the Guy Fawkes River to Aberfoyle River, Kangaroo Bend, Combolo Homestead, Long Plain, Kittys Creek, along Sara River to Ballards Flat then back along the spur.

66 Doug Ferris counted these horses when on a ride from Wongwibinda down the Guy Fawkes River to the grass plain with the lemon tree in the mid 1980s

67 Greg Everingham counted this number of horses within the GFRNP in 1991/92 before starting on a program to capture horses.

68 Counts made from helicopter by Brad Nesbitt and two spotters, travelling in a zig-zag pattern along the rivers and adjoining slopes (does not include survey of western plateau country). Locations mapped using the Global Positioning System (GPS) and the automated real-time mapping system (ARMS)

69 Counts made from helicopter, but only along Guy Fawkes and Sara Rivers, during October 2000 wild-fire control operations, and therefore not a complete survey of the Park



## 1.12 SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Having assembled and considered the evidence presented above, the Working Party presents the following summary:

- The GFRNP was established in 1972, and now constitutes more than 62,000 hectares, with a further 30,000 hectares of adjoining land having been purchased but not yet gazetted
- horses have been bred in parts of what is now the GFRNP for more than a century; some were in managed mobs; others were bred in unfenced country
- large numbers of horses were bred in the Guy Fawkes River catchment area specifically for the remount trade (Walers) from the 1890s until the early 1940s, thereby becoming part of the Waler legend
- some unclaimed horses have been sighted in various locations, but predominantly in the northern areas of what is now the GFRNP, since the 1930s
- in the area that is now the GFRNP, the first known record of capturing unclaimed horses by local residents for their own use is in 1931
- horses from the Guy Fawkes River catchment area were drafted for use by the Light Horse in the New England district during the second World War
- prior to the purchase of land by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), most unclaimed horses in the area were controlled by the property owners/lessees; however, during the wars, management became less controlled due to a shortage of labour
- as land was purchased by NPWS after 1972, management of unclaimed horses ceased until the early 1990s
- there are strong social and cultural associations with capturing and using “wild” horses from what is now the GFRNP
- Given the nature of the terrain in the GFRNP and the widespread use of horses on neighbouring grazing properties (some of which have now been incorporated into the GFRNP), the GFRNP horses represent a mixture of different breeds, with a more-or-less continual introduction of “outside” blood.
- The genetic study shows that GFRNP horses have relatively high genetic similarity with Arabian-type breeds and/or saddle and harness light horses (for example, Thoroughbreds), and are also genetically similar to Walers, all of which is consistent with their historical origins. Being a mixture of different breeds does not diminish their heritage significance. On the contrary, it shows that GFRNP horses are a good example of the Australian “wild” horse or brumby, and thus embody the romantic notions that are associated with brumbies
- The genetic study shows that the GFRNP horses have a relatively low level of inbreeding, which is consistent with a continual introduction of “outside” blood
- The genetic study shows that the GFRNP horses are not a significant reservoir of unique genes, which is also consistent with a continual introduction of “outside” blood
- The local perception of a Guy Fawkes wild horse or brumby encompasses several aspects: there is circumstantial evidence that they are representative of the bloodlines of Saladin, a famous ancestor of local stock horses; they are representative of horse types bred for the remount trade; and some are highly regarded because of their “wild” origin, historical associations and natural ability

## 1.13 KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Having examined and documented claims made in relation to the heritage value of horses in the GFRNP, the Working Party concludes that these horses:
  - are important in the cultural history of the Guy Fawkes area
  - have a special association with a group of persons of importance in the cultural history of the Guy Fawkes area, namely the Light Horse regiments
  - have a strong association with some sections of communities in the Guy Fawkes area
  - are important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of an item of significant national cultural heritage, namely the brumby
- For these reasons, the Working Party concludes that the GFRNP horses have significant local heritage value, sufficient to warrant their being managed on this basis