

THE 'KEEN JET' STORY

By the Late Dennis Wyndham



While keeping records of outstanding greyhound race result achievements, in 1965 I became aware of 'Keen Jet'.

At 20 months of age this 72 lb fawn dog ran 1/10th outside the race record at Gosford, NSW.

This was followed by his first up run at Wentworth Park Sydney.

He ran the 580 yds in the Fifield stakes in race record time of 31.5/10th of a second. He led by 4 lengths, entering the straight and won by 2 lengths.

Instead of winning by a longer distance and going close to the track record it was officially recorded that 'Keen Jet' had incurred a badly sprung toe.

The great sprinter 'Roman Earl' ran the same time at a similar age at Wentworth Park in the absence of injury.

Employed as I was as an artificial stock breeding officer, I visited Tom Wilson's dairy near Raymond Terrace NSW in the Hunter Valley. Tom Wilson was also a prominent greyhound breeder and when running in the two cows for me to inseminate, Tom could have been seen as the 'Pied Piper of Hamlyn' when being followed by some 20 greyhound pups around 6-9 months of age.

In the centre of these pups was an adult greyhound, fawn in colour. This dog was so impoverished he resembled a starved, death defying escapee from a Nazi prison camp that would soon die. When I questioned Tom, he identified this starved greyhound as 'Keen Jet'.

Tom did not justify 'Keen Jet's' appearance but went on to explain how he wanted to find someone to take this dog and own him as a pet rather than see him die or being destroyed, when considering 'Keen Jet's' exceptional previous racing ability.

Tom further explained that apart from toe injuries, the dog had contracted distemper virus as vaccination had not been carried out.

I had to conceal my excitement when telling Tom Wilson I would accept his offer and become 'Keen Jet's' proud new owner that very day. I picked up this poor unfortunate former speedster in my private vehicle when I had finished work. As previously arranged, Tom signed ownership papers in my name with some reluctance.

My next move had already been decided as I drove to Lochinvar, north of my Rutherford, Hunter Valley home. I intended to visit Mr Ned Redgrave at his home in his capacity of being a top greyhound trainer who in recent times had moved from Grafton NSW. Up till this time we had never met.

Fortunately, I arrived at the Redgrave house and kennels at a not too busy time and indeed Ned was horrified at 'Keen Jet's' physical appearance, knowing of the dog's racing ability.

I explained that 'Mustard' (his kennel name), needed Ned's professional training experience as I could only handle the two young dogs I had in training and my own full time job. My offer involved paying for all board/food fees including veterinary expenses in addition to half ownership in writing. My offer was accepted but the half ownership was made out in his son's Michael name.

Some two months later 'Keen Jet' was deemed to be ready to race again and contested 3 races for 2 wins. His first start was at Wentworth Park over the 790-yard-long distance. This was on the same night as 'dollars and cent' meeting was first introduced to greyhound racing.

'Keen Jet' led by 9 lengths at the first turn to the halfway mark on the last home turn when he halted sharply due to severe toe injury to finish in 5th place.

The official enquiry found that wonderful vet surgeon Dr Reg Hoskins offering his services to pinfire 'Keen Jet's' toe at his Hurlston Park surgery for free after the last race that night.

'Keen Jet's' next start was at Tamworth in a sprint in near record time at an unbeatable price of 3 to 1 on.

His 3^d and last race was at the 500 yd Cessnock track where again he started at 3 to 1 on. At the 75-yard area from the winning post he abruptly eased up but still ran the fastest time of the night.

Michael carried the dog from the catching pen due to the toe injury that required toe amputation.

It was intended that 'Keen Jet' would stand at stud at Ned Redgrave's kennels but Ned decided to return the dog to me. 'Keen Jet's' kennel at Ned's was filled by a racing greyhound and I became the sole carer when Michael signed over to me as the sole owner.

I registered the dog for stud duties at my home address but only received one mating.

As requested by Mr Brian Rickards, I leased him the dog for stud work at Brian's newly established Victorian 'Wallis Park' stud. In the 1960's Brian had been a successful owner of one of the top Victorian stud dogs.

Although given this opportunity, 'Keen Jet' only served 4 matrons before being returned to me at Maitland. Then and even now many breeders would select the most fashionable and/or expensive stud dog in order to obtain the best price for pups for sale or to race.

After conversing with my great friend Tom Bourke, who educated me in greyhound breeding, I was fully aware of the importance of the 'Tumblebug' breeding, not only here in Australia but also the USA.

As 'Keen Jet' had not only a double cross of 'Tumblebug' but a double cross of 'Chief Havoc', I asked Tom if through his influential friend, Billy Ducker, in Sydney could get me the contact details of H W Shugart in the USA. This gentleman was the biggest buyer of stud dogs and brood matrons from Australia, Ireland and England and included not only 'Tumblebug' but also 'Tell You Why'. All told H W Shugart imported about 90 odd greyhounds in his lifetime.

When in possession of H W Shugart's contact details, I forwarded all known details of 'Keen Jet's' breeding and racing performances as listed in the 'Greyhound Recorder'.

KEEN JET, IMP.

Fawn Dog Aug. 17, 1963 Racing wt. 72 lbs.

Sire: BOEING JET	Rocket Jet Gorgeous Babe	Tumble Bug Marnaleen Chief Havoc Daisy Rock	Menang Proposed The Marne Tobaleen Trion Thelma's Mate Roccabright Daisy Valley	Alwin Chris Bonny's Pride Perplexed Wattasmie Tullera Lad Nancy Force Golden Terms First Panel Silver Chief Kirst Robert Kent Silver Dell Eyes Bright Sparkle Sheen Pharaminda Weedy Valley
Dam: MISS KIN	Br.gante Tie Lin	Rich Glow Kaysign Fine Linen Tiepa	Tumble Bug Olive Dell Young Sign Kay Havoc Search Again Blue Linen All Chiang Gay Glenda	Menang Proposed Roccabright Jean Dell Roccabright Bonnie Signess Chief Havoc Marlene Kay Roccabright Joan Cee Heroic Blend Aloneness Mullagatawny All Mistral Minda Jerry Alberther

Keen Jet, Imp. comes to the American breeder with bloodlines and a track record that should make him one of the outstanding sires to be imported from Australia.

He has a double cross of Tumble Bug, one of Australia's greatest sires of modern times. Out of 48 dogs advertised at stud in the Dec. 21, 1967 issue of the Australian Greyhound Recorder, 22 are descendants of Tumble Bug. Also in the same issue, out of the 95 dogs listed for racing at Harold Park, 60 were descendants of Tumble Bug; at Wentworth Park 53 of the 88 listed were his descendants. This is typical of every week at those tracks, which shows the dominance of Tumble Bug breeding. Quite fantastic when you consider Tumble Bug was only at stud for two years in Australia before coming to America.

Keen Jet, Imp. also has a double cross of Chief Havoc and four crosses of Roccabright, great sires that are well known by American breeders. The dams in his breeding were also top producers of track dogs.

Keen Jet, Imp. was a fine track dog from a top litter. I think he will be one of our top stud dogs. He is a beautiful dog with a perfect conformation and a fine disposition. I am proud to be the importer of Keen Jet, Imp.

STUD FEE \$150

Ship by rail to Olathe, Kansas or by air to Kansas City, Missouri. I am only 30 minutes from the airport.

H. W. SHUGART, Owner

Keith Dillon

Route 3 — Olathe, Kansas 66061 — Phone: ST 2-0265 (Code 913)

On the very same day in December 1967 that our Prime Minister disappeared in the Victorian ocean, I received H W Shugart's reply. Enclosed was a cheque for my stipulated purchase price and freight cost for 'Keen Jet's' one-way trip to Manhattan, Kansas, USA.

This achievement now provided 'Keen Jet' with more opportunity to prove himself at stud in the USA.

Harold Shugart placed 'Keen Jet' with the great USA greyhound breeder, trainer and stud master — Keith Dillon at his Olathe, Kansas stud. Harold stated that Keith Dillon's greyhound stud and total facilities were the best in the world.

Both Harold and Keith were inducted into the USA Greyhound Hall of Fame in Abilene Kansas in the 1980's. It was sad that Harold Shugart passed away in his late 90's.

My own life took on many changes that saw me not as involved in the greyhound industry when I moved to Sydney to work with Commonwealth Serum Laboratory.

In 1993, I contacted Mr Gary Guccionie as the Executive Director of the National Greyhound Association of the USA. In detail I was informed that 'Keen Jet' had experienced a successful stud career in his 12 years of life.

As listed in one of Gary's many books – 'Great Names in Greyhound Pedigrees' Vol 1 and 2, he indicated how 'Keen Jet's' mating with 'Bouncy Bell' had produced 'Orange Slice' who in turn produced 'Economy'.

When mated with 'Dillard' (an Irish import in the USA) with the brood matron 'Economy', produced the great racing greyhound 'Understood', owned by none other than Keith Dillon. In further breeding from 'Understood', 'Wigwam Wag' was sired who in turn sired 'Gable Dodge' who through benefit of physical and artificial insemination sired nearly 11,000 offspring in a variety of greyhound racing countries, including Australia.

Between such sires as 'Underwood', 'Wigwam Wag', 'Gable Dodge', 'Stan's Boy', 'Flyer', 'T Hee', 'Hondo Black' (bred USA and sold to Ireland), 'E J's Douglas', 'Gable Oscar', 'Lonesome Cry' and 'Hey Vern' have an offspring total at least of 34, 628 in the USA, Ireland and Australia.

Of the 5 matings in Australia by 'Keen Jet' according to available records, appropriate credit should be given to the female offspring 'Lady So Big' who he was bred from. 'Lady So Big' came from a mating by 'Sungari' and 'Gay Oak'. Her dam 'Oakleigh Fairy' and in turn her dam 'Silver Fairy' did not win any races. Each matron had only one female offspring each going back to 1941.

As 'Keen Jet's' greatest fan, prior to further in-depth investigation due to his few matings, I had absolutely no belief that 'Mustard' (his kennel name) would have been nothing but a failure in Australia despite his successful level of stud success in the USA.

My investigations proved me wrong. The 'Lady Sojet' mating produced 'Rusty Action' and 'Slow Model'. Both came from a mating with 'Bourkes Law' in April 1970.

The owner of 'Lady So Big' was D S Cox (whether a male or female owner) and this mating decision was responsible for making many people in the greyhound industry circles not only gain a degree of fame but also financial wealth from racing, pup sales and stud fees.

From 'Rusty Action' through the mating with Irish sire 'Witches Coven', came 'Sally Coven' and in turn 'Wild Port' by 'Kid Springdale'. From 'Sally Coven' came the following high-class greyhounds through racing, breeding and in the Australian Hall of Fame.

Acacia Park, Acacia Ablaze. Awesome Assassin. Amerigo Magic, Hotshot, Railway Road, Collision, Goodesy, Rapid Journey (Aust Hall of Fame), Lansley Bale, How's The fort, Lilli Pilli Lad, Elite State, Go Wild Teddy to name just some of many.

The total offspring of these sires number 21,000. As such, for USA, Australia and Ireland sire totals are over 55,000, not involving so many other offspring from sires that I have not had the time to discover.

On the brood matron side in Australia, the following names are but a few of many that have bred on through sires that go back some 10 or less removes to 'Keen Jet' and in most cases no more than 12 removes with the passing of 51 years since 1968.

They are Tranquil Flame, Carmel Bale, Spider Web, Claybern Kate, Christina Bale, Wild Flame (Aust sold to USA as dam of the 'County Dogs', who as a family won \$1 Million in racing prize money including such dogs as 'Major Gossip'), Goddess of Fire (litter sister to 'Awesome Assassin') and 'Paua To Burn' (our Aust Hall of Fame) and 'First to Fire'. Also 'Miata' listed in greyhound data as the world's champion race bitch whelped Oct 2009. 'Miata' has two crosses that go back to 'Keen Jet' in 10 removes on the dam side through stud dog 'Lansley Bale', 'Carmel Bale' and 'Christina Bale' and 11 removes to 'Keen Jet' through 'Acacia Ablaze' and 'Wild Port'.

As of November 2013, 'Miata' has whelped a litter of pups to 'Barcia Bale' (whelped in 2010) who aside from his racing statistics (includes one record breaking run) has exhibited ability beyond belief through a career involving injury. 'Barcia Bale' through sire 'Go Wild Teddy' and matron 'Web of Silence' both go back to 'Keen Jet' in 9 removes covering 47 years and on the dam side through 'Princess Bale' and back to 'Lansley Bale' through 'Christina Bale' to 'Keen Jet' in 11 removes. It is said 'Barcia Bale' and 'Miata's Pups' will sell for \$20,000 each at 3 months of age.

These breeding facts highlight the ultimate breeding achievements of 'Keen Jet' from 5 mating's and 15 offspring in Australia compared with 181 offspring of the immortal 'Tumble Bug' prior to his going to the USA.

The above 'Keen Jet' breeding figures are clearly evidenced in the 1968-69 Australian Stud Book when he was bred from the mating of Boeing Jet and Miss Kin.

I felt it was important to pass on the following information to Neil Brown involving the breeding of the following famous Hall of Fame Australian stud dogs.

Namely, 'Temlee', 'Brett Lee' and 'Brother Fox'. All three go back to 'Tumble Bug' where as 'Brett Lee' came by way of one of the very greatest 'Temlee'. 'Temlee' born in 1972 sired 695 offspring

'Brother Fox' born in 1983 sired 1,360 offspring

'Brett Lee' born in 1999 sired 4,784 offspring.

Totally they sired 6,839 offspring.

While these three famous Hall of Fame racing and stud dog achievements (like 'Keen Jet') go back to 'Tumble Bug' they are not connected to 'Keen Jet's' individual line of breeding and 'Temlee' was born 9 years after 'Keen Jet' in 1972.

It is interesting to note that 'Keen Jet's' breeding line is very well represented in many of the Wheeler families racing and breeding greyhounds.

From my in depth research, my guesstimate/estimate revealed that at the very least 50% of all greyhounds involved in all aspects of racing, breeding and Hall of Fame induction lead to 'Keen Jet' in blood lines that don't extend beyond 12-14 removes.

Recent year classic race results are as follows –

1. Wentworth Park 'Peter Mosman' in 2016 of the 40 participants in he semifinal 38 lined back to 'Keen Jet'.
2. Melbourne Cup – Sandown 21-11-2013, 6 out of 8 grand final starters bred back to 'Keen Jet'. This included 1st, 2nd and 3rd placings.
3. To celebrate the reintroduction of greyhound racing in NSW in 2018, 4 major races were set for Wentworth Park with \$250,000 prize money set for each of these races. 'Keen Jet's' dominance was evidenced with wins, place getters and other starters in the 4 races.

In conclusion, I am very proud of the part that fate, circumstances and opportunity allowed me to involve myself in the life of 'Keen Jet' and finally his inclusion in the Hall of Fame, breeding wise.

It is my sincere desire that many greyhound people will be motivated when seeing this story to establish and carry out their personal desired regarding their own greyhounds, if and when their individual greyhound exhibits exceptional racing and/or breeding ability.

In point of fact it is my belief that determination guided by the application of logic and reasoning should be applied by everyone when dealing with all broad-spectrum aspects of life and not just confined to greyhound racing and breeding involvement.

Sincerely Dennis Wyndham

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***** Dennis passed away after a long battle with Cancer on June 26th 2019. GCA EO David Simonette and I with the sanction of the GCA Racing Committee brought forward the presentation of the Award due to Dennis' perilous circumstances. The fact was he would not have been able to travel to Perth to accept. With sheer will and determination and in incredible pain he proudly accepted the trophy on Friday June 21st and we both spent an enjoyable few hours with Dennis talking Greyhounds. His mind was still sharp, but his body was shutting down, the recognition of Keen Jet had meant a great deal him proving to me the wonderful connection between a man and his dog that had lasted six decades.

Neil Brown.

