

THOMAS EDOLS, FOUNDATION BREEDER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF "THE BARB"

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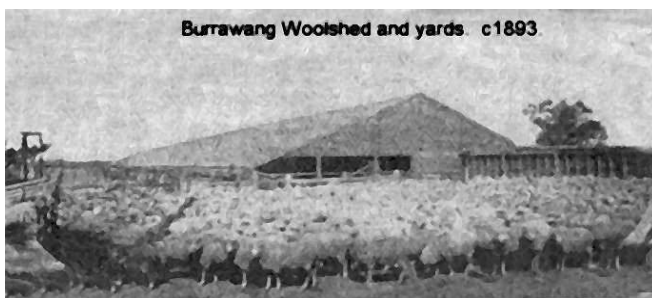
The question of whether or not the "Barb" and the "Kelpie" were separate breeds has been a subject of controversy from the time of the Barbs naming by Thomas Edols through to the present day.

The Barb strain was developed on Burrawang station a huge property of 520,000 acres much of which was unimproved when purchased by Thomas Edols in 1873. At that time Burrawang was roughly 35 miles from Forbes, extended north to the town of Trundle, to the south its border ran along the Lachlan River to Bedgerbong, the Corradgery Range on the east and Condobolin to the west. The Kelpie strain was originally developed by landholders and stockmen in an adjacent area. The Barb strain was developed by Thomas Edol who was born in Bridgewater, Somerset in 1819. Aged 13 in 1834 he came with his parents, George and Elizabeth, and 9 brothers and sisters to Tasmania. His father bought a property named 'Bloomfield' at Macquarie Plains and also invested in a hotel called the Woolpack Inn. George Edols died in October 1836. Thomas eventually came over to the mainland and became associated with various commercial activities in the Geelong district of Victoria. He married Mary Jane Donovan in 1857 and they went to live on 'Edolstone' at Cowies Creek where in 1857 he won first prize for the best managed farm in the district. He in the 1860's moved onto a larger property known as "Upper Regions" in the Wimmera a property originally of 128,000 acres, which had been subdivided twice firstly into "Upper Regions" and "Lochiel" then into "Upper Regions" and "Bonegar" before Thomas Edols took up officially in 1864 and held officially until 1874 when it passed to William Henry Lloyd. Thomas and family remained on "Upper Regions", where most of his children were born, for about 14 years before he decided to leave the Wimmera and buy a large area of land at Forbes which at the time comprised a group of properties which became known as "Big Burrawang".

When Thomas took up Burrawang it was largely dense scrub and stony patches. Totalling 520,000 acres 100,000 acres of which was freehold and the balance leasehold at a small rent conditional on clearing, fencing and provision of a water supply. The land was cleared by the hiring of Chinese to ring bark trees etc, swamp land was drained and the property divided into paddocks by miles and miles of fencing. Tanks were sunk and dams installed so that every paddock had permanent water. Two bridges were constructed so that stock could be moved and saved in times of flood. Thomas endeavoured to use machinery when ever possible. He used steam for power tank sinking, to power his huge shearing shed and woolwash which was driven by a 33 HP engine- Hot and cold water was used as well as revolving tubs and a centrifugal dryer to remove much of the water from the wool before it was put outside to dry..

Burrawang became very well known for its big deep framed merino sheep which were paddock raised, grass fed and thrived in harsh conditions. At one time over 270,00 sheep were being shorn. a reference in "Pastoral Homes of Australia" reports that "between 1882 and 1890

Burrawang sheep shown at Forbes won 14 championships, 46 firsts, 15 seconds and 24 special prizes, these being about equally divided amongst ewes and rams".



was a T shaped building catered for 101 blade shearers and is quoted as covering half an acre. This shed was destroyed by fire in 1892 after it had been changed to accommodate 88 machine powered stands. The rebuild shed also had 88 stands and these were fitted with "Burgon" overhead machinery and Wolseley hand pieces driven by a powerful steam engine.

In the year 1910 this shed put through 100,000 sheep. During the most productive years, there would have been more than 250 men working in and around the shed. Most of these were accommodated and fed on the place. Folklore has it that a man could be sacked at one end of the shed then walk to the

The Burrawang 1875 shearing shed



other end and get himself re-hired without anyone knowing what was going on" [Extract from 'Big Burrawang' author unknown].

The Burrawang homestead complex was more or less a self contained village situated on the edge of a man made lagoon. Overall it provided residences for most of the employees, as general store, blacksmith and carpenters shops, butcher shop, stables, sheds catering for all sorts of vehicles and agricultural equipment. A large vegetable garden and orchard irrigated from the lagoon yielded much of the stations needs. Thomas also had 3 wine cellars and made his own wine. The station bell which hung from a large gum tree as rung at 7am, 1pm and 6pm to indicate working hours. As Thomas's family grew up and married houses were built for them on each side of the lagoon.

Thomas Edols was a very generous and hospital man. He was never known to refuse a man a job so many travellers and itinerant workers passed through Burrawang. When he died his sons carried on but the property was continually decreasing in size due to the Governments ' closer settlement ' policies. The 1900 - 1903 drought followed by 13 inches of rain was to bring about the demise of the Big Burrawang and by 1920 no one named Edols remained on any part of the original property.

THE BARB

"The Barb" was a slightly different blend of the same strains which formed the Kelpie foundation only one generation further on. His dam was Sallie [or Sally] was by Laddie, [litter brother of Caesar by Brutus x Jenny] from King's Kelpie [Caesar x Gleesons Kelpie]. Whilst there are several different accounts of Sallie's movement there is little doubt that she was bred by C T W King, originally owned by Pat Cox of Merringreen, and given to a half cast aboriginal boundary rider named Davis who was on 'Wollongough' Station at the time. She was mated to Moss [Yarrowonga Clyde x Rutherford Lassie] who had been left with Pat Cox when Jack Gleeson left the district in c1880. A black male pup of the litter was sold to Mr Thomas Edols of Burrawang Station when six months old and was named "Barb".

The Barb's dam Sallie broke her leg and was purchased from Davis by R M Macpherson, who mated her to Harri Kings Clyde by Moss [Yarrowonga Clyde x Rutherfords Lassie] out of Wylie II [sister to Kings Kelpie] she whelped but was found dead when the pups were only a few days old. Only one pup survived and was raised by R M Macpherson who kept and worked her for a number of years and finally gave her to Mr CT W King, she was mated to James Cunningham's Nero [Caesar x Gleesons Kelpie] and gave a male pup to Macpherson. In his correspondence published in the the Australasian Mr Macpherson fails to advise of a name for the Clyde x Sallie female that he worked for some time before giving her to C T W King nor did he give us the name the dog he received from C T W King the mating of Nero to his Clyde /Sallie female.

Like King's Kelpie the "Barb" was successfully entered for competition and he too created a name for himself. Edols "Barb" won the Condobolin event for sheepdogs in 1885 as well as best sheepdog The following year he was second to G R Thompson's Barber. The Barb won the Forbes sheepdog trial in 1885 and again in 1896. And for some years the Barb's progeny figured very successfully in both the Condobolin and Forbes sheepdog trial results.

The property "Burrawang" where the Barb strain developed was a very large property running large flocks of merino sheep. The Barb strain was developed to suit the conditions that prevailed on the property and for use by the stockmen. Unlike the Kelpie strain the Barb and his progeny were not promoted publically but needless to say they were equally successful - in fact on records held, admittedly not complete, the Barb and the Barb strain appear to have been more successful than the Kelpie strain..

The Barb was born c1880 and was highly regarded all who witnessed his working ability. The following extracts give some idea of what the dog was expected to do. One extract attributed to Phil Mylecharane, one of the three judges of the first Forbes trial in 1879, in an article in the Australasian January 1921.

".....I have frequently heard Mr Edols, of Burrawang, speak of Barb. He bought the dog for 15 pounds from the above mentioned Dairs [Davis- 10 pounds according to the MacPherson's account BMC]. He could make it do almost everything else but speak, although his words of command seldom further than 'Sit down, or I'll kick you'. One performance, and a pretty regular one, put up by this dog was to take out three ration sheep to a distance of eight miles from the homestead and leave one at each of the three burrcutters' camps at different intervals on the way. The dog was accompanied by a man on horseback, but even then the performance was regarded as a particularly difficult one among men and on a station where clever dogs are the rule and not the exception." further down in the article by Bendleby is the following *".....Mr Edols has always maintained that Barb used to mesmerise all the sheep that came under his control....."*.

The Kelpie and Barb strains developed more or less independently in their respective 'districts' until the 1890's when Sheepdog trials became part of a lot of the country Shows. King's Kelpie's performance at Forbes in 1879 created a demand for her pups and it is interesting to note that Mr Edols successfully exhibited sheep at the same Show and his sheepclasser was Mr Gibson who worked Tweed.

Both strains had very loyal supporters and a number of letters to the Sydney Mail of 1903 gives a picture of promotional rivalry and arguments about whether the Barb should or should not be a distinct breed.

Messrs King and McLeod of Wilgar [sic] Downs, Hermidale, wrote:

"We note in the 'Mail' that Mr Baugh, of Isis Downs, Queensland claims that the Barb is a distinct breed from the Kelpie and a most valuable worker. We would like to point out that the original Barb was bred by C T W King, of Wollongough and was ex Kelpie by Moss [Sallie x Kings Kelpie by Moss BMC]. Therefore we fail to see where any difference in the breed comes in. As regards the Barb being more valuable workers, it may be pointed out that the weight of evidence tends to a different verdict. We have almost eliminated the Barb strain from our dogs, because we found that they were hard on sheep, difficult to control, and for show work had a tendency to rush when at close quarters. For general station purposes they show no superior qualities to the so-called Kelpies - both are equally hardy and suitable for these hot climates. The name Kelpie misleads many people.

It derives its origin from the bitch of that name mentioned above, and her pups were naturally called after herself. It has been asserted by many that the breed is known as such in Scotland. This is entirely erroneous. We have here, from Inverness, Scotland, a black and tan bitch, an exact facsimile in all details, the prick ears etc of the type so well known here....."

Mr G Downes, of Carisbrooke Macleay St, Sydney replied:- "Re Messrs King and McLeod's letter on the relative merits of barbs and kelpies. Mr Braugh's claim that the two breeds are distinct rests on tolerably solid grounds. I do not know if our Kennel Club has drawn up a standard for the two breeds but the practice in vogue at some shows of including them both in one classification - thus barb or kelpie - has done much to create a confusion in the minds of fanciers, from which Messrs King and McLeod are not altogether free. The writer has owned, bred and worked scores of both Barbs and Kelpies, and has gathered information concerning them from the most reliable sources. That they are now separate and distinct breeds, possessing and transmitting to their progeny not only a characteristic form and colour but a no less characteristic temperament, are certain. The barb is a coal-black pricked -eared dog rather smaller than the other very apt at his work, but so untiring in his energy that he is sometimes, as Messrs King and Macleod state, a bit hard on the sheep. He is a likeable little chap, and will take a beating in good part. The kelpie is the black and tan, or black, white and tan dog, whose appearance suggests an undersized and indifferently bred smooth collie. In disposition, as in appearance he does not compare favourably with his rival. A harsh word or a crack of a whip, not to mention merited chastisement, will make him sulk for a whole day, or even induce him to sneak off home, if not too far distant. With regard to the origin of the Barb, as touched upon, I have always understood that the honour belongs to Messrs Edols, of Burrawang."

King and McLeod: responded: "If you will kindly allow space to reply to a letter in your last issue by Mr George Downes, of Sydney, on the subject of the origin of the Kelpies and Barbs, we will appreciate the concession. It may be mentioned that the senior partner of this firm is a cousin of the Mr Charles King of Wollongough owner of [one of a BMC] litter of one[sic] of the original Kelpies introduced by Mr Gleeson from Victoria to a station near Merooral Creek. It seems to us that, according to a great many latter-day authorities, a dog is merely to be coal-black and prick-eared to be dubbed a Barb. On the other hand, the only qualification necessary for a canine to carry the cognomen of Kelpie is to be prick-eared and any other colour except black. Could anything be more ridiculous! Several of the alleged Barbs and Kelpies that we have seen in our time have never had a closer acquaintance with the two breeds than the fact that they had a common birthplace namely Australia. Your correspondent, Mr Downes is clearly in error in his description of the Kelpie. He omits altogether what we consider the most typical colour of all, namely brown or dark red, and if cares to attend the coming Sydney trials we will be pleased to show him what, in our opinions, are two typical specimens of the breed, both red, true to type in every particular and bred absolutely pure for the past 30 years. And, more over, we think their work will be found quite equal to the average dog. The names of these two Biddy and Bonnie. We cannot endorse Mr Downes' statement that a crack of the whip or a merited chastisement will make the Kelpie sulk for a whole day. Our dogs here will take as much of the stick as one can give them- the more the better - and they come up smiling immediately afterwards. The Barb passed into the hands of Messrs Edols of Burrawang, per medium of a coloured gentleman, who got him from Mr Pat Cox, of Merringreen, and to the Messrs Edols is due the credit of discovering the working qualities of the Barb, and thereafter establishing his name....."

Mr G H Newnham of Burrawang Station, Forbes joined the discussion.... "I have read in Kennel Notes of the "Sydney Mail" Mr Baugh's (of Isis Downs, Queensland) remarks of his Barb dogs, also Messrs King and McLeods reply to same, from which I take the following extract 'as regards that barb being more valuable workers, it may be pointed out that the weight of evidence tends to a different verdict. We have almost eliminated the Barb strain from our dogs, because we found they were hard on sheep, difficult to control, and for show work had a tendency to rush when at close quarters'. With regard to that part of the paragraph I beg to differ from Messrs King and McLeod, as from my own practical experience of working them for a good number of years, and from conversations with many others who have had them under their control, the faults quoted are exceptions and not the rule, and that what may be taken as rushing in is smartness and activity in close quarters.

"I note in the 'Forbes Times'...- "We understand that some very high prices have recently been offered for Mr R.L. Nicholson's Dick, which animal defeated all comers at the trials at the late Bathurst Show. All offers have, however, been refused, and Dick is still in the charge of his first owner, Mr. W. Tulloch. Dick is to be kept for stud purposes and his first mate will be Mr A. R. McLeod's champion bitch, which arrived by train on Thursday. Mr Nicholson's Dick is ex Rubie, by Dick I., and is a pure-bred Burrawang dog. I bred Rubie myself here on the station, and Dick I was also bred here. Both of them were sold to G. Thompson, of Forbes, and mated whilst he was still the owner of both. I may also mention that at the Parkes sheepdog trials, 1901, I met a field of 18 dogs, and my Barb dog Nigger was placed first, J. Newell's Yarrie second (winner in Sydney), and Mr G. Thompson's Jim third. Again, in Parkes, 1902, Nigger again won; R.L. Nicholson's Dick and J. Newell's Yarrie divided second and third prizes.

"With reference to what Mr Bough states in the issue of the "Sydney Mail" of the 3rd ultimo as to their being distinct breeds, I quite agree with him, also Mr George Downs as to the characteristics in colour, form, and temperament; and my experience with them, extending over many years, coincides with Mr Down's remarks; and lastly, it may be mentioned that it is now over twenty years since the late Mr Thomas Edols first became the owner of the Barb and founder of the breed so well know throughout the different States".

Summary: The 'Kelpie' and the 'Barb' had a common foundation and therefor could not be regarded as different breeds but for a short while could have been developed as separate strains. Neither of the Kelpie and the Barb strains could not have expanded without the first generation and subsequent generations being bred to other sheepdogs strains or breeds that were also in use. Thomas Edols' "Burrawang" station was a very large holding running over 200,000 sheep the management of which would have required a number of men and sheepdogs. When the "Barb" was acquired and proved to be an outstanding worker there is no doubt that he

was used as a Sire over the existing station females and in this way could have laid down the basis of new strain. Whilst we have no documentary material outside the success of the strain in sheepdog trial competition, the records of which indicates the part the Barb played in the development of the future Kelpie breed. The fact that the name Barb became a 'household' word strongly suggests that he was extensively used to establish a strain of sheepdogs on "Burrawang" and elsewhere. The Barb, an all black dog like his sire, appears to have sired predominantly black progeny which no doubt helped to establish an association between the name 'Barb' and all black dogs.

The Gibsons whose "Tweed" tied for first with Kings Kelpie at Forbes were connected with the Edols as sheep classers; were well-known Tasmanian Sheep breeders and keen smooth collie sheepdog people. It is quite likely that some of the dogs mated to the 'Barb' could have come from these Tasmanian breeders. Three dogs from the mating of Kings Kelpie and Yarrowonga Moss, all black and tan, were owned by the Gibsons, namely Chester, Grand Flaneur and Bosworth [like the Barb they were also named after very successful race horses) All, including the Barb were by Yarrowonga Moss and competed successfully at sheepdog trials. Grand Flaneur is quoted as never having been beaten. There is little doubt that their bloodlines would have been introduced into the Gibson's Tasmanian strains of sheepdogs.

In conclusion: Both the Kelpies and Barbs had a common foundation so could not be different breeds, but for a very short period of time could have been described as different strains. The purity of both strains was not maintained long enough to qualify as different varieties.