



Article by Lindsay Ferguson

## Impact Sire **BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH**

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Laurie Stephenson and his campdrafting stallion BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH were successful both as a partnership and in their own right. There are now numerous horses in our breed that have an excellent performance record and are held in high regard, but few have a fan club like BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH.



**Above: Laurie Stephenson and BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH winning the 1988 Canning Downs campdraft. Photo: Loraine Nott**

**Campdraft career highlights: BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH**

1977	ABCRA (Nth Coast Zone) Novice Horse of the Year
1979, 1980, 1983, 1984	ABCRA (Nth Coast Zone) Open Horse of the Year
1980	Warwick Gold Cup Campdraft
1983	Canning Downs Campdraft Cut Out
1988	Canning Downs Campdraft

**Left: Laurie Stephenson and BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH scoring a 91 run in the Champion of Champions Campdraft in Armidale, New South Wales.**

I have seen progeny of BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH from the north of Cape York at the McDowall's Musgrave roadhouse to the south of this continent. Their owners state without prompting – 'I am a fan of that horse.' With such avid supporters, it is easy to understand why stock horse people stop to see what this horse has done, both with his own outstanding performance and that of his many successful progeny.

This article follows on from the story of his dam, BARRETT'S CREEK BETTY - FM HSH, featured in the last issue of this Journal (July/August 2012). Despite being of unknown breeding, BARRETT'S CREEK BETTY - FM HSH emerged from

the New South Wales bush as a top campdrafter of her day. BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH is the second of her registered foals, and the one that Laurie Stephenson had dreamt of when he planned the match of his clever mare with that of ABBEY - FS HSH, the wonder horse of the 1960s-70s. For those new to the breed, the sire ABBEY - FS HSH, a campdrafting legend, is still by far the most dominant Foundation Sire of the breed with 262 direct progeny and over 37,000 descendants.

This Impact Sire article focuses on some of the lesser known details of BLUE BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH, and particularly his impact on the breed. Our knowledge of this horse is helped by the meticulous records that Laurie has kept: 'I kept a diary – and have a record of every campdraft score he ever got', he said. It goes without saying that the success of the horse is in no small part due to the ability of the indomitable Laurie - his breeder, owner and rider. Now retired, Laurie had campdrafted since he was a kid, and had a long string of ribbons and many big wins way before BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH was born in 1972.

Laurie knew this horse would be special from the start - something magical some would claim. His wife Elaine explained that the name just came to her one night, due to his colour. Understanding the importance of the early training of his horses, Laurie sent them away to be broken-in by horsemen whom he considered to be better than him.

'I didn't have much confidence in my own ability to break them in – I was always worried that I might ruin them - especially their mouths', said Laurie. 'Jack Smyth, who was the ABCRA Hall of Fame Open Campdraft rider in 1961, broke him in for me and kept him for some time. John Mainey, who worked for Jack, was the first to ride him. Jack's son Pat rode him in some junior campdrafts as a three year old.'

Checking his records, Laurie detailed that the stallion won his first campdraft at Dorrigo on 13th September 1975, with a score of 80 and an 82 in the final. So, in his first season he competed in four [Junior] campdrafts with a first, a second, and two fourths being the result. He didn't start campdrafting seriously until he was a five year old in 1977.



## *Gentleman horse, gentleman rider.*



**Laurie Stephenson and BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. Clockwise from top: at Grafton Show (late 1990s); at home at Mystic Park in 1991; after winning the 1980 Warwick Gold Cup; leading the parade at the Grafton Show; Laurie and the stallion at home.**

In height he seemed taller than his 14.3 hands. In general appearance Laurie is the first to admit that, 'he was not an oil-painting'. He explained that, 'he was not the type to show himself off. He would mope along quietly, until you put him to work. In the yard he would stop there quietly eying the cattle, but when you picked up the reins he switched on like a torch – then

when the run was finished he would stop and look around for a pick of grass.'

His good nature was as much a feature of this horse as his performance ability. His character was consistent, right from a foal, inheriting this from his sire and his dam, who were both quiet horses. 'When I walked alongside the fence he would follow you – he always wanted to be with you',

said Laurie. His fans explain that he worked cattle with the agility of a dog and Laurie adds that 'he never attempted to savage any cattle. He only fell over twice in his career – once at Woodenbong and once at Sydney Royal. Both times he just stopped and stood there waiting for me', said Laurie.

BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH was able to excel in the campdraft arena due to these behavioural attributes, combined with his athleticism. Well-known lady rider and Australian Stock Horse stalwart, Maxine Brooks from Grafton, New South Wales, knows Laurie well and often saw this stallion campdraft. She attributes the horse's success to his ability to handle any type of beast. 'He did this naturally by quick changes in his stride. One second he was at full stretch, the next he could collect himself up back into a short stride when a beast sat up. BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH could travel at such awesome speed in covering the ground to get into position, yet he could be checked hard if needed - the horse must have been very responsive as Laurie is only a small man. He looked so good when travelling and they made campdrafting look so easy', she said.

He had 43 campdraft wins in total, with 38 of those being Opens. Laurie acknowledges that this list may have been longer, had it not been for his serious illness for about six years, which restricted the number of campdrafts in which he entered the horse. 'The highlight was the Warwick Gold Cup', said Laurie, 'but there were other wins that were also memorable.'

With such a performance record, his attraction as a sire was inevitable. Laurie started him off slowly at four years of age, with only a few of his own mares for his first few seasons at stud. This training to be a "gentleman" with his mares paid off, as 'he was not pushy - he never kicked or bit a mare', explained Laurie. 'Coming home from a draft I could put him on the truck with a mare in season on either side of him with no problems. With such manners I could get him to hand serve mares without the help of another person.'

The Stephensons were lucky that he was very fertile – rarely did a mare go back empty. Laurie's records show that he has been mated to 627 mares naturally, and a further 445 to date, through artificial insemination (AI). BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH initially stood for a fee of \$300, but this increased over time as his reputation grew. Most of his progeny have been campdrafters, but some have also done well in polocrosse.

Apart from the Stephenson's 18 progeny, he has been used by a range of breeders from large to small. The Expected

Stud used him to produce over 20 foals. Laurie recalls that, 'one year Wayne Hingst sent me down two truckloads of mares – about 15 in total – that kept BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH and me very busy'.

With 443 direct progeny and 1,851 descendants to date, he has about 25 sire sons that have spread his influence. A look at the list of those that have produced ten or more registered foals gives us a better idea:

Sires by BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH	# progeny
BONLAC GIGOLO - HSH	29
COOLUM EPIC - HSH	34
DRISCOLLS SERENITY	96
GILMANDYKE SLEET - HSH	13
GLEN PARK TRINITY	19
HALLMARK STUD TRINITY - HSH	11
HOLMROSE CHANCES	17
KIRKBYS STUD PROPHET - HSH	19
MR COLUMBO	17
ORARAPARK MYSTIQUE	10
ROPELEY PARK BRIGALOW	17
VALLI VIEW MOONBEAM	35
VALLIVIEW CLASSIC	21
VALLIVIEW CREATOR	19
VET SCHOOL DOWSETT	39

Of all his sons, DRISCOLLS SERENITY has sired the most. Bred by Sunny Hendrix, he was bought and trained as a campdrafter by the late Kevin Driscoll. Out of a Leo Grey mare, he won more than 12 campdrafts as well as Led and Ridden Australian Stock Horse events. Steve Burnett explained that he was sold at the Dalby Australian Stock Horse Sale in 1995 to the Stanbroke Pastoral Company, and then relocated to Clermont. He has since changed hands again with the sale of the property Frankfield, along with its horses, to the Burnett family in 2004.

His progeny developed a reputation as solid mustering horses and were used across many of the company's properties in Queensland. He has sired over 150 foals with 96 of these registered and his progeny have averaged \$9,000 at Queensland sales. They include some well-regarded state level polocrosse horses and campdraft winners. His campdrafters include J LEE SUPER NATURAL, WRIGHTS TOPHAT CHARISMA and STRATTON BAYWATCH, a horse that has won the Condamine Bell, reached three Warwick Gold Cup finals and placed in the Gold Cup, the Canning Downs and twice in the Rocky Open.

BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH entered the AI scene at the University of Queensland's Gatton Campus, when Bruce Wilson was manager of the Equine Unit. Bruce is an accredited Judge with both the Australian Stock Horse Society and the Australian Campdraft Association. Bruce recalls, 'Laurie left the stallion here for two weeks, which was the first occasion that the two had been separated for any length of time. When Laurie returned to pick him up, the horse heard his voice before seeing him and whinnied, such was the bond between them.'

Bruce has seen a number of top Australian Stock Horse stallions go through that AI facility, and reckons that BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH was exceptional. 'He was plain himself, but he was able to throw horses of good type – well balanced, tough, with good conformation, also making them very good

broodmares. His progeny were like Border Collie dogs, with lots of natural ability to work cattle and do it with ease', said Bruce.

Bruce Wilson was another good record keeper, and said that the Vet School stud first used him in 1997 and produced about 20 foals by him. Bruce also used him on his own mares, producing four Valliview colts. VALLI VIEW MOONBEAM ended up with Ernest Bassingthwaite of Toomba Station in Queensland's far north. 'He was a good horse to ride and campdrafted well', recalls Ernest, 'but unfortunately he died after only three breeding seasons.' VALLI VIEW BLUE MOON BEACON was gelded and is now a top campdraft horse with John Mulcahy. A broodmare that Bruce bred, VALLIVIEW BLUE SUEDE - HSH, sold at the 2012 Toowoomba & District Branch Australian Stock Horse Sale for the top price \$18,000 (ASHS Journal May/June 2012, p.73).

VET SCHOOL DOWSETT has produced many more foals than have been registered. Mick and Phyllis Brown became interested in the bloodline after reading an article on BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. They missed out on his dam at the Vet School Stud dispersal sale, but finally acquired this stallion from Gatton College. They say that he has a fantastic nature; he won his Maiden campdraft with Mick at his third outing and was also campdrafted by their young son.

Dan Redgen, of the Braeview Stud in Warwick, Queensland, was kind enough to supply some pre-release information that he has researched for his book *42 Years of Elite Campdraft Breeding*. This work details the records of 112 stallions as sires of successful progeny in each of the five elite Open campdrafts – the Warwick Gold Cup, the Canning Downs, the Chinchilla Grandfather Clock, the Acton Super Beef and the Rockhampton Open campdrafts held at Paradise Lagoons. It also analyses the ABCRA Open Horse of the Year title and the ACA Open Horse of the Year title. His analysis shows that BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH sired eight individuals who have either won or placed (up to 10th) in these events. He ranks seventh on the table of Leading Sires of placegetters, on a first generation basis, in these events as at June 2012. The following table summarises this record:

Event	Sire of	G/sire of	Great g/sire of
# of placed horses	8	10	3
Warwick Gold Cup	1 win, 3 places	6 places	-
Canning Downs	6 places	4 places	1 place
Chinchilla Clock	1 place	5 places	-
Paradise Lagoons	1 place	3 places	1 win, 2 places

More recently, CHEVIN IVORY - HSH has also won the Warwick Gold Cup/Canning Downs double, but has not yet sired a Gold cup winner. BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH is the only stallion to have won a Gold Cup and to sire a Gold Cup winner, (i.e. GREENPARK ASHANTA).

In addition to these impressive successes in the major Open campdrafts, we need to add the many successes of progeny in a vast number of other events over the years. Included in these is the gelding STEPHENSONS STUD LOMOND, on whom Glen Gough won a Cloncurry Stockman's Challenge, and Fraser Ramsay's Blue Gum, who represented Japan in showjumping at the Barcelona Olympic Games in 1992 and the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

Peter Turley, a breeder and veterinarian from near Beaudesert, Queensland is also a fan of this Impact Sire. Looking for an ABBEY - FS HSH colt to breed from in 1997, he inseminated his own mares with BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH semen. Since that time he has done quite a lot of AI work. On his own mares he has had 100% success, with eight foals by BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH.



**Above left: Beth Hill holding GREENPARK ASHANTA, Milton Hill holding GREENPARK MISTRESS and GREEN PARK GYPSYS MAGIC, all by BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH. Above right: Stephen Hill on GREEN PARK GYPSYS MAGIC in the first round of the 1995 Warwick Gold Cup.**

Peter also vouches for the good fertility of the semen. He describes the progeny as being like kelpie dogs – ‘they want to work cattle and they are real naturals’, said Peter. Partly from experience with his own four BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH mares that he breeds with, he notes that the female progeny are great mothers who are able to pass on their genetics.

Another fan is John Atkins of Singleton, New South Wales and his son Tony. They have used this stallion to produce seven horses with the Green Gully prefix, including the grey gelding GREEN GULLY MYNSTRAL - HSH. Taking time off from mustering in the north of South Australia, this horse carried the Melbourne Cup down the straight at Flemington in 2010 (see Journal Jan/Feb 2010, p.25).

Of his female progeny, Laurie reckons that his best was STEPHENSONS STUD SERINA – ‘she was the last and the best mare I had of his.’ Milton Hill, his son Stephen and his family also had success with his progeny. Laurie Mills rode a Hill family mare named BORE HEAD GYPSY to first place in the Risdon (now Canning Downs) campdraft in its last year in 1972. Put to BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH, she produced three full sisters that were all Open horses and were ridden by Stephen and his daughters Sarah and Megan to victory in many campdrafts. These were GREEN PARK GYPSYS MAGIC and GREENPARK MISTRESS, the latter which Stephen rode into second place in the Canning Downs in 1997. The last of the trio was GREENPARK CHANTELE, on which Megan Hill won the Ladies campdraft at Warwick in 1999.

BORE HEAD GYPSY had a filly in 1976 by ELLIOTTS CREEK CADET - FS HSH, which was bred to BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH to produce the mare GREENPARK ASHANTA in 1986. This mare won her first Maiden and Novice campdraft on the same day in 1992, progressing to win the Warwick

Gold Cup in 1995 ridden by Stephen Hill. The following year she came second at the Sydney Royal Easter Show campdraft by only half a point. She also placed twice in the Canning Downs campdraft. Sarah remembers the honour of ‘Uncle Laurie’ allowing her a little ride on the grey stallion at the Grafton show. She re-iterated to me his wonderful nature and his natural cattle sense and ability in the yard. ‘His progeny were amazing,’ she said, ‘you didn’t need to train them – they just knew what to do.’

If Laurie’s health allowed, he would still like to breed again from BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH (using AI), if he could find the right mare. When asked what that mare would be like, he remarked, ‘she would have

to be a pretty good type in conformation, a mare with a lot of go and pretty cowy.’

BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH had to be put down on the first day of the Canning Downs campdraft in 2006. He died only a few metres from where he was born. Laurie and Elaine have now left ‘Mystic Park’ at Copmanhurst and moved into Grafton, but they still greatly miss the old grey horse. ‘He was a mate as much as anything – a real pleasure to do anything with’, Laurie said. With a fan club the length of Australia and generations of well-performed descendants, there are many people who empathised with Laurie’s loss. Equally, we look forward to the ongoing contribution of this Impact Stallion to the development of the breed. 🐾

## BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH

**Colour:** Grey **Height:** 14.3hh

**Lifespan:** 34yrs (1972-2006)

**Breeder:** Laurie Stephenson, Grafton NSW

**Performance:** Champion campdrafter, including winner of 1980 Warwick Gold Cup

**Progeny:** 443 registered progeny, the most notable being GREENPARK ASHANTA, winner of the 1995 Warwick Gold Cup.



BLUE MOON MYSTIC - IS HSH ASH Reg: 27015	ABBEY - FS HSH	radiant O2 - WH	radium ii O2
			lady squires O2
	BARRETT'S CREEK BETTY - FM HSH	joys pal O2	radium ii O2
			cooplacurripa station mare O1
	unknown sire		
	unknown dam		