



## Glenloth “the milkman’s horse”

Another inspiring story to come from the annals of Towong Turf Club history is that of **Glenloth** – “the milkman’s horse”- born in the Upper Murray.

So why was Glenloth called this? The tale is a fascinating one.



Glenloth was a “handy galloper” around the bush in the early 1890’s and won the Towong Handicap of 12 furlongs (a mile and a half) in 1891 but when he won the 1892 Melbourne Cup he started at 50 to 1, had his tail tied up like a mop and belonged to a milkman who had bought him with bookmakers’ money.

**Image 1.** Artist’s impression of Glenloth. Source: Brora to Glendon: A Sutherland Family History’, courtesy of Margaret Sutherland

On the day Glenloth won the Cup the track at Flemington was a virtual quagmire after torrential rain, and conditions were so adverse that it took the starter nearly half an hour to get the runners marshalled in a line straight enough to let them go. Away the horses went, and it soon became obvious that the “bag of bones” from the bush was the only one which could handle the mud and Glenloth duly slogged his way to victory by three lengths. He even hurdled a fallen horse, Pilot Boy, without missing a stride. Several other horses fell in the mire. Glenloth’s trainer, Michael Carmody, had had the foresight to tie a knot in the horse’s long tail lest it should get caught in the mud, and while this innovation had caused some mocking laughter when Glenloth made his appearance the laugh was on the punters when the race was run. In fact, in the words of an English journalist employed to report on Australian racing: “*I have been to race meetings in all sorts of weather in the old country and elsewhere but I never recollect a more uncomfortable day than when Glenloth won the Cup.....and its win put the finishing touches to a backer’s misery.*” (Nat Gould: On and Off the Turf in Australia, 1895.)

It is worth noting that Glenloth’s time for the winning run through the mud was 3.36.25, which was only a touch slower than the time recorded by Van der Hum, winner of the Melbourne Cup in similar conditions in 1976.

The proud owner of the horse, Mr James Urquhart, received the 1892 Melbourne Cup trophy. This was extraordinarily detailed and ornate, featuring three horsemen on a plinth around a “*shell shaped cup, surmounted by the figure of Victory holding wreaths...*” (from Christies sale catalogue, June 2000). The trophy is made of sterling silver and stands 44.5 cm.

Mr Urquhart was a milkman. During the Depression years, he, like many businessmen, had several customers “on the tab.” One of these was a jockey, and by way of payment



for milk he gave the milkman a red hot tip for his mount in the Caulfield Cup of 1890. This was a horse called Vengeance, which duly won, and in the same year the mighty Carbine won the Melbourne Cup. James Urquhart backed the double and won a tidy 200 pounds, using these winnings to put towards the purchase of Glenloth, described by some as a “bag of bones.”

However, Glenloth was no second rate horse, and a contemporary report of the running of the Melbourne Cup published in the Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney NSW) on 12 November 1892, page 35, states “... that he is a good one can scarcely be doubted after performing such a feat as winning a Melbourne Cup in such weather that prevailed on November 1 1892.”

Glenloth had been bred by James Sutherland and was foaled at Lockhart’s Creek (the area now called Charleroi, near Kiewa) in 1887. He was by Glenmarkie, a sire with an impeccable pedigree and impressive racing record, which James Sutherland had purchased at auction circa 1884 and brought to his property, Glendon. The dam was The Gem, Mr Sutherland’s best mare. Glenmarkie, whose progeny featured in many races around the district in those days, is buried on the property and a brass marker on the site can still be seen. Also still visible is the area used by James Sutherland as a training track for Glenloth. The pair enjoyed considerable success around the district and further afield, as can be seen in Glenloth’s track record below. His wins in 1891 as a three-year-old were impressive, including the Towong Handicap in March and continuing with wins at Corowa, then Narrandera, then Hay, where he won the Handicap over 11 furlongs in May.

Glenloth had his detractors because his performance could be inconsistent. According to Sutherland family history, on one occasion the horse ran so poorly at Sandy Creek that the jockey, on returning to scale, did not enter through the gate but simply jumped Glenloth over the fence. “This horse is too slow for the flat, put him over the sticks,” he said in disgust.



**Image 2.** Glenloth, held by James Sutherland’s nephew.



**Image 3.** Glenmarkie – Sire of Glenloth. Source for image 2 & 3: Brora to Glendon: A Sutherland Family History’, courtesy of Margaret Sutherland



However, James Sutherland had faith in Glenloth, claiming that: “this horse can and will win races.”

In the end, events were out of James Sutherland’s control. In the 1890’s much of the Upper Murray was in the grip of a crippling drought and he was not the only man on the land to fall on hard times. The horses would have to go, and so Glenloth was sold to the Melbourne milkman’s syndicate in October 1891 for the sum of 400 guineas. As his record shows, he notched up successive victories for the Urquhart/ Carmody partnership, culminating in the greatest of all, the Melbourne Cup of 1892.

But the story does not end there.

In 2007, a great great granddaughter of James Sutherland, Mrs Julie Madgwick, heard by chance that the 1892 Melbourne Cup was going to be auctioned by Bonhams and Goodman, Prahran. This was actually the second time the Glenloth Cup had come up for sale. It was advertised for auction by Christies in Melbourne in 2000, and expected to make between \$60 000 and \$80 000, being described in the Christies catalogue as: *“a silver and electroplated trophy surmounted by the figure of Victory holding wreaths, upon a shell shaped cup decorated with rocaille, flowers, scrolls and satyr masks.....having three racehorses with jockeys up flanking and facing the cup.....”*. The auction was attended by several members of the Sutherland family intending to buy the Cup “at a price”, but in fact it was passed in.



**Image 4.** Melbourne Cup 1892. Source: Christie's Auction House, 2000 Catalogue

Julie Madgwick had grown up with the story of Great Great Grandfather’s horse winning the Melbourne Cup and she sprang into action, never having actually seen the Cup, which had passed into obscurity again. Bidding by phone, Julie secured the prize for the high price of \$168,000, thus attracting considerable media attention. She said she was pleased to be able to restore the Cup to the Sutherland family so many generations later; however, in the interests of racing history, in 2013 Julie presented the magnificent trophy to Champions, the Australian Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, where it is currently on loan.

The value of Glenloth’s Melbourne Cup of 1892 is now said to be in excess of \$300,000.

Milkman’s horse indeed!

Dixie Coutts

Assistance from the Sutherland family



**Image 5.** Artist’s impression of Glenloth. Source: The National Library