

On returning home from a highly educational time spent with Gai Waterhouse and Adrian Bott, I have had time to reflect on my experience with the 'Lady Trainer'. I feel I have gained a wealth of knowledge and have a greater understanding of the horse racing industry around the world, most of all Australia and New South Wales. When I arrived in Australia in early January both Gai and Adrian were attending The Magic Million yearling sales on the west coast, soon however on return to Tulloch Lodge both kindly took me under their wing and I soon began to learn various aspects of their successful establishment.

My day commenced at 3am each morning and I was based at Desert War Lodge one of several yards based around Tulloch Lodge, working here alongside Gai's highly experienced yard managers and senior members of staff it allowed me to pick up and gain a better understanding of general yard duties and I feel areas such as feeding, watering and first aid care (bandaging and medications) I gained experience in. The way in which the yards are run at Waterhouse/Bott racing is quite different to the way in which we do so at Musley Bank, from small differences such as bedding and turnout to washing down and grooming.

Most defiantly I feel the aspect in which I gained most knowledge and experience in was the daily exercise of each horse, I was lucky enough to both ride and watch horses do routine track work each day. Gai is known to be a very talented trainer of two year olds. Her recorded speaks for itself in races such as the Golden Slipper and I have seen from my time spent long side her why she won seven consecutive Slippers in a row. The education of the babies is key, her methods such as trotting two upsides and cantering in pairs, to trotting figure of eights and daily barrier work are key ways in which I have learnt to prepare young stock for race day. Slow collected steady work was most horse's daily routine, but when those horses were selected to do fast track work, each horse is timed and work documented. Luckily for me I worked with Damien who timed each piece of track work, both Damien and Gai explained to me why it is important to use timers and where in the gallop is key, as I learnt the last two hundred meters is vital. Timing is something we do not tend to use here at Musley Bank and I now I have a greater insight into the benefits it can create for a racehorse trainer.

Winning this scholarship allowed me to visit and work in one of the world's most historic and famous racing yards, I have been lucky to experience a new way in which to train thoroughbreds and most of all I have seen there is no method. Hard work and a good team is key. Happy horses and happy staff seems to be something both Gai Waterhouse and Richard Fahey have in common and although both train incredibly differently, Gai on a racecourse proper and Richard on a private steady incline six-furlong gallop both are incredibly successful.

During my time I made a short video clip of my experience and if you follow the link below you will see just how much fun I had many thanks to the kind family of Alex Scott and the National Trainers Federation.

<http://gaiwaterhouse.com.au/gaitv.jess-mclernon>