

Melbourne Observer Victorian Sport

TRACKWORK: A DIFFERENT WORLD

■ If you are a racegoer, and have never attended track work, then you don't know what you are missing.

For over 40 years I have been covering trackwork for TV, radio, and newspapers as well as for the Victoria Racing Club.

It is a thrill not to be missed. Yes I know, who wants to get up at 4.30am in the morning to see horses run around in circles.

Well, take it from me it is very exhilarating, with the fresh morning air especially in the colder months.

The main work mornings are on Tuesday and Thursdays, and in the peak period for instance at Flemington for the Melbourne Cup Carnival, over 650 horses work out.

On an average around 580 strut their stuff.

At Flemington there are a number of different tracks for you to work your horses on including the Viscoride a mixture of dirt and foam, you have a number of sand tracks, including two trotting tracks, a tan track, and the steeple grass.

The course proper where all racing is conducted, caters for only the topline horses like Group One Horses or similar class.

All track work is carefully scrutinised, with a number of track supervisors, who run the show on training mornings.

The likes of Wes Burr and his partner, Marie Shaw, Jack Franklin, and Mick Hurry, all highly skilled in their respective positions.

Mick Hurry is also a starter and a barrier attendant and a highly skilled horseman.

They do a tremendous job controlling all aspects of gallops and possibly unruly horses throughout their mornings at the track.

I go back to the old days when I first joined Channel Nine, and at that time the stables were over at the 800 metre mark, later on they were moved over to the Maribyrnong River side near the Elms, now that too is all gone.

Most of the trainers who work their horses at Flemington are situated on course and



Ted Ryan

walk them through the newly established long tunnel where they walk them into the centre of the course before getting ready to gallop their horses.

The one exception is the Bart Cummings team who walk in from Leonard Crescent when he has his Sainly Lodge Stables.

The Tunnel with a concrete base padded with sand is approximately 100 metres down hill, then a straight stretch of a similar distance then an uphill climb to the centre of the track.

Unlike us pedestrians you keep to the right of the horses who are approaching you from behind.

A word of warning, especially if you're thinking of going to have a look at them working out, remember, a number of these highly strung horses can be a bit flighty and where you walk down the centre of the course be very careful or you will get run over.

A majority of those horses trialling be it on the sand, tan, Viscoride, course proper or otherwise are ridden by track riders although when the top shelf gallopers appear to work they generally have a top flight rider like Glenn Boss or Damien Oliver aboard.

There are three main huts in the centre of the track utilised by the likes of David Hayes, Bart Cummings, Mark Kav-anagh, Danny O'Brien, Matt Ell-

erton, Simon Zahra, Mike Moroney, Peter Snowden and interstate trainers when they compete here.

On top of this there are plenty of stalls available just prior to entering the tunnel, to strap your horses and also a Cafeteria where you can grab a cup for coffee and something to eat.

Also a top class pool is available for the gallopers.

The top it all off, there is Millie the fawn and white cat who Marie tells me has been with them for some 15 years, and the horses have a certain soft spot for the "Moggy", who loves Marie, never leaving her side, but is very carefully where she walks, as you wouldn't want a 500 kilo animal stepping on you.

Come on, get out of bed early, especially in the Summer time and have a look, soak up the atmosphere, but it is not open slather.

Check with the VRC on 8378 0888 if you would like to go one morning, but please be careful.

Of course with the rules and regulations no person unless authorised is allowed in among all the action, but can see plenty of what is happening from the confines of the Grandstand with a good pair of binoculars you can pick up all the action.

It is certainly another world like being up on the snow, the Stawell Gift, a Test match, or a footy Grand Final.

PAKENHAM CUP

■ A big day is assured by joining us at the Devine Communities Pakenham Cup at their picturesque track on Sunday (March 14).

The Club through its recently appointed Sales and Events Manager Events Manager, Anthony Millican, who we wish well in his new endeavour, have organised a great day

Gates will open from 11am, with \$ 18 for Adults, \$14 Concession, while children under 18, accompanied by a parent get in free.

A fantastic day's racing has been scheduled with the \$100,000 Devine Communities Pakenham Cup, and the \$35,000 David Bourke Memorial Handicap which will be shown live on course on two large screens, and I am sure covered by TVN.

There will be free children's activities provided by Camp Australia. There will be \$ 11,000 worth of prizes for the Fashions on the Field extravaganza.

Categories include: Most Elegant Lady, Most Elegant Mature Lady, Best Dressed Couple, Best Dressed Local.

There are still plenty of marquee packages available big and small. Give Anthony a ring on 5941 1207.

NICE TOUCH WITH MATTY MAC

■ At the last meeting at Pakenham there was certainly a nice touch when a "neddy" by the name of Matty Mac saluted, much to the delight of several young blokes who race the horse

Trainer Steve Theodore told me he only had the horse a few days, but was confident of winning.

Now the real nice touch. Matty Mac, is named after Mathew McEvoy, who was tragically killed outside the Queensbridge Hotel a couple of years ago.

One of the boys, Luke Martin, said after the races on the Sunday they were meeting the parents of Matty to present them with the trophy and celebrate at a hotel in Cranbourne.

Well done boys, a great gesture.

Showbiz Extra

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

■ Strathmore Theatrical Arts Group (S.T.A.G.) is presenting Andrew Bovell's Australian play *Speaking in Tongues* until March 13 at 8pm at the Strathmore Community Hall, Loeman St., Strathmore.

Under Kris Weber's artistically adept direction, Emma Cox (Jane and Valerie), Rachel Negus (Sonja and Sarah), Xavier Ryan (Leon and Nick) and Ben Starick (Pete, Neil and John) skilfully deliver Bovell's challenging, intricate dialogue as their characters present stories depicting betrayal, trust, mystery and secrets.

As Weber notes in the program, Bovell experiments with techniques such as 'parallel dialogue, split scenes, simultaneous dialogue, fragmented dialogue and dream landscapes and refers to his play as an 'emotional labyrinth'. Attention is focussed throughout on the play's dialogue, not action.

The lighting designed by Callum Robertson and Kris We-

er and operated by Terese Maurici-Ryan effectively establishes various narrative modes within the contemporary, stylised set designed by Tony Leatch and Kris Weber.

Images projected on two translucent screens in the set represent abstract and realist concepts, with vines indicative of the entanglement of human relationships. Kris Weber's sound design operated by Beth Stryk creates palpable tension at times.

Congratulations to Gabrielle Taurins for creating and performing the original music used during the play.

The Strathmore Community Hall is a cosy, intimate venue, with S.T.A.G.'s friendly and hospitable front of house team led by Jonne Finnemore.

Speaking in Tongues finishes on March 13. Tickets: \$20 Adults, \$15 Concession. Bookings: 9379 5348. www.stagtheatre.org

- Review by Cheryl Threadgold

JIM SHERLOCK'S TOP SELLERS

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KEN RUSSELL COLLECTION: Mahler, Crimes of Passion, Women in Love, Valentino.

INGMAR BERGMAN COLLECTION: The Hour of the Wolf, The Passion of Anna, Serpent's Egg, Skammen.

NEW TV/DOCUMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

TAGGART: 100th Episode Collection.
NASH BRIDGES: The Complete Season One.
NUMBER 96: Volume Two.
CORONATION STREET: The Best of the 1960's-1980's - 21 Disc Box.
GOMER PYLE USMC: The Complete Second Season.
HALE & PACE: The Best of Volume One.
RAWHIDE: The Complete Second Season.

Carried Forward

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Big reader comp.

■ *Observer* readers also included those from Seville, St Albans, Strathmore, Torquay, Travancore, Wantirna South, Watsonia, Yallambie and Yarra Junction.

Phoenix readers included those from Alexandra, Box Hill, Cathkin, Diamond Creek, Doreen, Eltham, Emerald, Flowerdale, Geelong, Gladsydale, Glenburn, Healesville, Heathcote Junction, Hurstbridge, Kangaroo Ground, Kilmore, Lilydale, Marysville Montmorency, Pheasant Creek, Research, St Andrews, Wandong, Warrandyte, Wattle Glen, Whittlesea, Woori Yallock, Yarra Junction and Yea.

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New menu launched

■ Other new entrees on the Kingston Hotel menu are smoked salmon, and a mexied leaf salad.

The Hightett St hotel's main courses include deep fried calamari, grilled chicken salad, Moroccan beef sausages, beer battered fish and chips, chicken parmigiana, cassoulet with roasted pork belly, porterhouse, Nepalese curry of goat, gnocchi, scallop tortellini, duck breast, lamb shoulder, blue eye, eye fillet of beef.

Sides include carrot and beetroot salad, summer greens, mash, chips and roasted kiplers.

Desserts include summer trifle, triple layered chocolate cake, brown sugar creme brulee, passionfruit tart, and cheeses.

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Aaron Rourke's Review

■ Director Bruce McDonald (*The Tracey Fragments/Highway 61*), aided immeasurably by cinematographer Miroslaw Baszak and editor Jeremiah L Munce, draws the viewer in from the word go, and brilliantly creates and sustains tension despite the fact that the whole film takes place inside a radio station.

The supporting cast are fine, but McHattie is outstanding. With a voice made for radio, this excellent actor makes the most of the material.

RATING - **1/2**

■ DVDs kindly supplied by Video Vision, 177-179 Carlisle Street, Balaclava. For information or bookings on these titles please call 9531 2544.

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Featured DVD Releases

FILM: JESSE STONE - NIGHT PASSAGE:
Cast: Tom Selleck, Stephen Baldwin, Saul Rubinek.
Genre: Crime/Mystery/Thriller/Drama.
Year: 2009.
Rating: M.
Running Time: 86 Minutes.
Stars: ***1/3

Verdict: If a good, solid cop drama is a part of your viewing diet, as they are mine, then this second outing in the series of newly arrived, determined but flawed New England police chief Jesse Stone, investigating a series of murders, is right on the button, the charismatic Tom Selleck captures the character with a depth and emotion rarely seen in the genre, beautifully filmed and with the right balance of tension, humour and pathos, never sagging for a moment, based Robert B. Parker's best-selling novel, six in total have been filmed with Tom Selleck in the title role, who also co-produced, and 'Jesse Stone: Death in Paradise' is also available on DVD, let's hope the rest in the series hits DVD soon, highly recommended!

- Jim Sherlock

The Final Word

■ Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid.

- Showbiz legend Hedy Lamarr