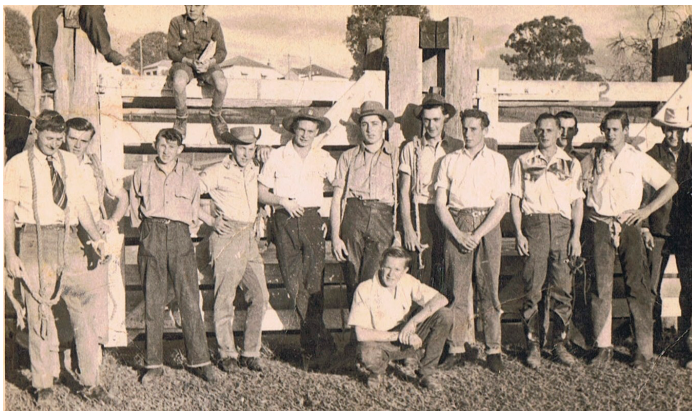




THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

Back In the Day



I grew up in the Hunter Valley as my father did and his father before him. My family has been in this area for at least 150 years. My early years were spent listening to the stories my dad, Wal, and his brother-in-law would tell about catching Brumbies with their mates, the Murrell brothers from Girvan. In those days you had to ride to where you were going and return home the same day. Dad was an excellent horseman and I take my hat off to him. Even when he got on in years, it would still take a good man to keep up with him and his horse Radish in the bush. Any man could ride for days out there and not see one Brumby, but my dad could always pick where they were, depending on the day and season.

Dad taught me how to ride from the day I could walk. My first pony was a Brumby he had caught named Tiny. I was about three years old and too young to remember much of Tiny except the day she tested a young fella's strength by taking me for a good run! Tiny had a few foals and I soon outgrew her and graduated to one of her fillies — Trinket.

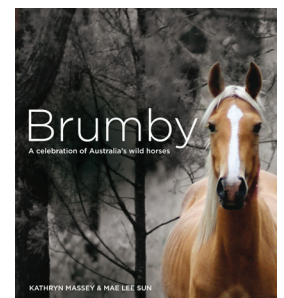
Trinket was a great little pony and every spare minute I had we were off on adventures, usually over the river to visit my grandparents. Dad would always warn me when the river was up and the best spots to cross, but Trinket would always get me out of trouble because she was sure-footed and knew where to go.

By my mid-teens I had grown too tall for Trinket and she was sold to a family in Stroud for £60. That was big money for a horse back then. Not long after she was sold, a big horse sports day was announced in town and there was some prize money and ribbons up for grabs. I knew if any pony could do it, it was Trinket. I asked her new family if I could borrow her for the day to compete and they happily agreed. I cantered her the few miles to town and won every event that day! Trinket's new family got to keep all of her ribbons and I was able to keep the couple of pounds prize money.

As I grew older, Dad continued to teach me how to ride in the bush, usually on a young horse, but Dad was always happy to swap with me so I could ride Radish when we spotted some Brumbies. Radish was a great old horse and quite a character. If he didn't want to be caught that day he would just keep leaping fences from a standstill until you got the message that it wasn't a good day for riding. Old Radish was a great horse for my dad and me, and he eventually taught my own kids how to ride. He was also sensible in the bush. Radish wasn't a Brumby but he was just as smart and could scent them out. When we got alongside them, he would nudge them back for us so we could get a rope on them.

Back in my dad's day, and mine, we didn't have the luxury of fancy yards, radio collars and cameras. It was all done with good horses and good men. Catching Brumbies back then wasn't for the faint-hearted; you had to ride hard and smart. Your horse had to have a good temperament, good balance and good bush sense.

Richie Davey, Booral
An extract from: *Brumby. A celebration of Australia's wild horses* is available from www.exislepublishing.com.au and wherever good books are sold. RRP\$45.00. Author royalties go to the valuable work of helping Australia's Brumbies.



STROUD RODEO & CAMPDRAFT WILL BE HELD AT STROUD SHOWGROUND SEPTEMBER 20 & 21ST 2013