



# THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL  
PROPERTY

## Alderley Waler History



Alderley Station was settled in 1831 by the Australian Agricultural Company as a horse breeding stud. The famed historic 'Alderley House' was erected between 1830 – 1831 by Convict labour for the station's farrier, groom and vet – former Irish Policeman Mr. Francis McNally and his family.

Then, the locality claimed no less than 1,143 acres of land, but today Alderley's land is just 12 acres and the property hosts a boutique vineyard, producing Chambourcin and Verdelho grapes. This article will consider the history of the famed Australian horses that once called Alderley home – The Waler.

The Waler first began development during the very early years of Australian Colonial history, their roots stemming from the many and diverse breeds imported for use by the young colony. At this point in time the Waler was not a breed, and had yet to develop into a distinguishable type – rather, they were simply the 'Australian' horses; mixed bloods cross-bred to create a superior working horse better suited to the unforgiving Australian environment.

It wasn't until the mid-1800s, following a boom in demand for the Australian-bred horse from other countries and the establishment of a thriving international horse trade, that the Waler earned its name. The term 'Waler' was a nickname coined by the British to describe the horses being imported from New South Wales (which at that time made up Australia's entire East Coast), to India for use as remounts for the cavalry, artillery, and as carriage and sport horses for both the British Army and the Raj in India.

While favour and demand for Walers among buyers from all over the world during the 1800s was continuing to blossom, it was the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 that was

to catapult the Australian Waler Horse into legend. October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1917, marks the cataclysmic event that the Waler today is most famous for, and demonstrates spectacularly, and tragically, the outstanding strength and endurance for which it was bred; when two regiments of the Australian Light Horse, the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup>, charged over six kilometres of open desert ground against the Turkish and German defences of Beersheba – Palestine, in a daring and desperate attack to save the British from a disastrous defeat. It is renowned as the last great successful cavalry charge in history.

For a time after, the Australian horse trade continued, but the introduction of efficient and affordable motorised means of transportation and machinery saw a rapid decrease in the need for horses, and by the 1950s commercial breeding of Walers had ultimately dissipated. By the 1960s the Waler, once eulogised as one of the greatest cavalry horses in history, became an anachronism, and was pushed to the very brink of extinction.

In 1986 the Waler became formally recognised as a breed. In 2014, Alderley once again saw the return of their beloved Walers in the form of a lovely black mare of strong Waler heritage "Juroki Jenna". Since then, the birth of her son, "Alderley Remembers Beersheba", born on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, seeing Alderley re-established as a Waler stud – the very reason for which it was built.

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