

History of the HR Pierce Cup by Grenville Sylvester - LAC 1969

Francis Henty, of the Henty family who were the first settlers in Victoria at Portland, owned the property of Merino Downs. When Francis passed in 1889, the property was divided to his daughters. Mary Ann married Alexander Magnus MacLeod (Magnus) and built the homestead Talisker on her share of Merino Downs. Magnus was the 9th laird of the MacLeod of MacLeod house of Talisker from the Isle of Skye, Scotland.

The Hentys and Macleods were well known successful graziers, pasture and land managers and breeders of quality livestock.

The Hentys were originally bankers who provided unsecured loans to farmers in England to improve crops, pastures and livestock and hence were recognised to be instrumental in the late 1700s for the agricultural revolution. Their line bred Spanish merino sheep made up the bulk of the merino sheep that McArthur bought out to Australia.

The MacLeods were very involved in thoroughbred horse racing and maintaining studs in piggery, dairy and cattle.

Mary Ann and Magnus had a daughter (Alexandra – Lex) who had two female siblings. Lex married Grenville Sylvester (Casterton and Coleraine solicitor, Solicitor to the Hentys and MacLeods). Lex and Gren had Francis Henty Sylvester (Henty) in 1920. Henty had two siblings. They lived in Casterton.

Robert and Bridget Pierce of Mt Gambier and who moved to Casterton had a son called Hugh Robert who had four siblings. Hugh was the blacksmith at Longerenong from 1915 to 1940.

Henty attended Melbourne Grammar from junior school and then attended LAC in 1937 before going jackarooing in outback NSW. He then joined the AIF Light horse and then the NAOU (North Australian Observation Unit).

Gren and Lex passed away while Henty and his brother were serving. The Talisker property was taken for Soldier Settlement blocks while the two boys couldn't defend their rights back home. After the war finished and during settlement of the estate, the large silver cup was secured by Henty.



Grenville Sylvester with the Cup
in 2019

Because Henty loved his time while blacksmithing at Longerenong with Hugh, and because Hugh passed away in 1943 aged just 57 and was a member of the Casterton community, Henty decided to give the cup as a perpetual trophy to celebrate Hugh's life and what he offered students.

Because of the Henty and MacLeod history the cup was a very important trophy, from England or Scotland prior to the two families migrating to Australia.

On the way to Doon, Henty called into the jeweller to have the raised lettering done, to be told the cup and its lid was solid silver. Henty's comment was recorded as being "I hope the college will see the importance of this". Henty could not recall what the engraving was prior to it being replaced by the Horsham jeweller. Some letters can be seen through magnification and photography. Henty married Diana Henty Smalpage and

had Grenville Henty Sylvester who had two siblings. Grenville attended Longerenong in 1969 and returned to the College in 2019 to celebrate 50 years since commencing first year. Henty passed away in 1990.