

## How the Club was formed

**I**N 1984 Steve and Sabine Mueller arrived from Germany, bringing with them their Afghan hounds. They were involved in Lure Coursing in Germany, and after racing their Afghans on the Greyhound tracks with the Afghan Hound Club for a few months, decided there was a need to find a more natural form of chasing for the dogs.

Steve and Sabine floated the idea of lure coursing, however nobody here knew what this was, so with a lot of explaining decided to try it.

A small group of people got together to try and figure out how to make this happen. After many attempts and many hours of building machines and rollers and holding fun days trying to get equipment to last the day without blowing up, we finally in 1990, had equipment good enough to form a club.

In 1990 Steve and Sabine called for people interested in forming a lure-coursing club to meet at Ian Smith's house. Well, so many people turned up that we had to move into the double garage, and a club was formed that night.

At that first meeting it was decided the club would run all breeds in competition, but also be 'dedicated to the preservation of the functional hound' – which became the club's motto. It was also decided to have a section where dogs without papers could run, as most breed clubs had a rescue arm and this section would allow the people who took these dogs into their homes, something that they could take part in with their dogs. We also decided that there would be no interbreed running – each breed could show its full potential while on the coursing field.

With the starting of a new sport and the forming of a new club, a lot of things had to be put into place, like rules being formulated, how to actually run a competition, how to judge all breeds; the list just went on and on. As you can imagine the first elected committee was meeting every week late into the night trying to put this together. We relied heavily on Steve and Sabine Mueller's experience with lure coursing to put a system in place that people would be happy with.

The first competition meeting was held in late 1990. This was a very nervous moment for the hard working committee but it proved to be very successful with people having a very enjoyable day. As the months passed we learnt a lot and improved with every meeting. A grading system was finally worked out that suited all breeds and the judging was fine-tuned so all breeds were on equal terms. This has worked really well; as we have had everything from a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, to Greyhounds, get best in field.

One of our big problems was getting somewhere to hold meetings. Steve and Sabine had 5 acres, which we used but now they had to move. A Pony Club came to our rescue and allowed the club to use their grounds, which proved unsuitable as the horses cut up the ground rather badly, which is not good for fast running dogs. So a decision was made to get our own grounds.

We approached the Brisbane City Council for land and after a lot of meetings (and I mean a lot) the council granted us a lease on 15 acres of land, a great step forward for the club. With the help of some great sponsors we put up a dog proof fence around the running area and around the spectator area to keep the people separated from the dogs running. We previously had to walk a fair distance to the toilets but now we have toilets on the grounds.

The club is now holding meetings once a month and sometimes twice a month, during the winter months, and running a Summer Cup during the hottest months of the year – in the coolest part of the day. Our championships (Invitation Races) are held in August, where after qualifying during the year, the top 3 dogs of every breed are invited to run a 550m course twice in 15 minutes with Vet checks before, in-between, and after. If the dog does not recover sufficiently it is vetted out at the Vet's discretion. This is an endurance event and a good meeting to watch.

Well, that's a brief outline of how lure coursing started and progressed up to the present day.

*Ian Smith*