

White Rose boasts a lifetime of success

By **DAVID BRASCH**

MARION Furbank knows what she is about. Which is why Marion and her husband Peter are certain of success with their move into greyhound boarding and rearing at White Rose Kennels at Walloon.

The former Yorkshire, England couple have been at Walloon since buying the property from Ipswich Club president Merv Page back in September last year, but they bring with them 35 years experience in the care of dogs.

Marion in particular is into natural rearing methods for dogs. "We have been utilizing natural rearing for the past 20 years," Marion told The Journal.

"By this we mean the use of all natural foods like yogurt, brewers yeast, cottage cheese, eggs, linseed oils, cod liver oil, seaweed meal, plenty of vitamin C, and lots of bones, as well as the regular meat and dry food diets," she said.

Peter and Marion might have been at Walloon only since September but already they have huge plans for the property and have embraced greyhound racing with a passion.

And greyhound racing has embraced the couple. The kennels are full and the expansion plans are being forced on the couple.

The Furbank history in dogs was developed in their native Yorkshire in 1969 through a passion for Afghan hounds. They bred, showed and even raced Afghans with huge success.

Peter Furbank was also a ruby player, tempted to South Africa in 1973 to play for the famous Wanderers club in Johannesburg where the game is a religion and Peter enjoyed every minute of life as a loose head prop.

The club has 70,000 members.

Peter and Marion went to South Africa without dogs, but returned to England in 1976 regretting from the moment they arrived home having forsaken a warmer climate.

"The very day we arrived home we walked into a blizzard in Leeds," said Peter.

"We knew we had made a big mistake, but by this time we were committed because every we owned was on the high seas coming back to England."

The couple stood it out for another five years. In the meantime Peter continued playing rugby, this time



Peter and Marion Furbank handle the daily chores.

for Headingley and Chesterfield, and Marion got back into showing Afghans.

"We had lots of wins, traveled throughout the country and enjoyed the time," said Peter.

But by 1982, the couple decided that warmth was best and they tossed up between heading to Canada and settling in Australia.

Melbourne won.

They brought two Afghans with them and today still have the line going even at Walloon.

In 1988 they decided to shift north, settling on a seven acre property at South Maclean. They have been there until last September when local council problems forced them to look around for a licensed property.

"We were sitting on the verandah at South Maclean having a glass of wine, pondering the council problems, when we spotted a real estate advert for 'kennels for sale'," said Peter.

“We came up to Walloon the next day. The property went to auction but we had not been able to arrange finance in time.



Fortunately for us it was passed in and we were able to negotiate with Merv afterwards.”

Merv Page had been on the property for many years and had developed a showplace kennels set-up with plenty of gallops and yards on hand. As president of the Ipswich club he was a busy man and decided he had to scale down.

Greyhounds had already touched the Furbank household while the couple were in Melbourne.

“We knew Sandra Bibby well, having met her back in 1982 in Melbourne. She is now training in Darwin, but when we were in Melbourne we went racing with her regularly,” said Peter.

Sandra moved to Grandchester for a short while and Peter and Marion stayed in touch.

It was during the Flying Amy era and Sandra being a greyhound trainer, she took her friends along to see the great champion race at Albion Park.

“We even raced our Afghans at Albion Park and Ipswich around that time,” said Peter.

When the Furbanks moved in at Walloon, they renamed the property White Rose Kennels. The White Rose is famous as the emblem of Yorkshire.

“The kennels are great,” said Marion. “It was the kennels that convinced us to buy the place.

“There was 30 dogs on the property when we moved in.”

Already changes have been made or are in the planning. They plan a reception area near the car park entrance to the property, more kennels and more greyhounds.

“Already the kennels are not big enough to cope with the boarders,” said Marion.

But individual care and attention will be the name of the game at White Rose Kennels.

“Pups are pups, no matter what breed they are, but you have got to feed them the best to be able to get the best out of them,” said Marion explaining her successful formula.

“We feed only fresh food, plenty of veges, rice and pasta.



The imposing kennel block at White Rose Kennels at Walloon (left and right).

“Our dogs’ diets are varied all the time.

But with greyhounds we are always aware of each trainer’s requirements and will feed, rear and spell accordingly.”

All dogs are fed separately, even the yard dogs to make sure their requirements are met.

“We will even stand in the yards to see the dogs are eating,” said Marion.

Peter admits he would like to give greyhound training a try. The couple go greyhound racing every week at Ipswich to keep in contact with clients and new-found friends.

“We have met some great people,” said Peter.

The Furbank day starts at 6am and is seven days a week, but try telling Peter and Marion it is work.

“Greyhounds are a lovely breed,” said Marion. “We love the new property and love what we do.”