

Billy's the smiling face of Reimer kennel

By

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BILLY Hutchinson came to John Reimer's rescue ... and then became part of the family.

It was just a few years after he had arrived in Queensland to try his hand at greyhound training in the Sunshine State. "I was at Lawnton to trial a couple of dogs," Billy remembers. "I heard someone screaming out from the back of a panel van.

It was John. The door had closed shut on him and he couldn't get out. "He was in there ... screaming."

Billy unlocked the door, helped John trial his dogs, met up with Reimer's daughter Joanne and three years later they were married. He's been the on-track face of the Reimer kennel ever since and has become one of the most popular people in greyhound racing in this state.

But Billy, 57, had a long and successful greyhound racing career before he became part of the scene at Rush Creek, near Dayboro.

He was a 20-year-old working in a foundry in Melbourne back in the early 70s.

"I was pouring metal, and it was hard work," he told The Journal.

But Billy was also a great greyhound racing fan. He and brother-in-law Bill Warren were regulars at Sandown every week.

"I decided to give greyhound training a try," said Billy.

"There was no racing in my family, but out of the blue I got an old bitch, but she was no good.

"So I bought a pup by Clay Moss-Foot Of Blue and named him True Blue."

And Billy was on his way. True Blue developed into a smart galloper winning at Sandown, Sale and Traralgon.

In fact, he won first up at Shepparton and "the whole town shouted me a beer".

Billy had met and become close to Ronnie and Dot Adamson who had a number of quality greyhounds at the time. Billy learned his new trade quickly from the Adamsons and soon was training professionally.

"I had 13 in work out of a small property at Highett in St Kilda footy club area," he said.

Dogs like True Blue, Stunt Man, Buster Bibs and the luckless Calendar Girl all flew the flag for the kennel.

"Calendar Girl beat Temlee in a qualifying but she broke a write in a fall and we had to put her down," said Billy.

"She was pretty good. I had bought from her the Adamsons."

But with greyhound racing surging in Queensland, 25 years ago Billy Hutchinson headed north to try his luck.



Billy Hutchinson ... hard at work

"It's 25 years ... time gets away when you're having fun," he said. "My mother was not well at the time and we had to move north primarily for the warmth."

Billy brought a couple of dogs north and quickly settled in at the Zammit property at Deception Bay.

"I worked for Tony and George at the breaking in track at Deception Bay for three years," said Billy. "Michael was just a cheeky little kid at the time ... in fact, he's still pretty cheeky today."

Billy and Tony even formed a formidable combination as indoor cricketers at the time.

It wasn't long after that Billy made that fateful trip to Lawnton to unlock a screaming JR from his panel van, and unlock Joanne Reimer's heart.

"I started going over to Rush Creek to help John," said Billy. He and Joanne were married three years later and have two children, John William, 17, and Linda Kate, 16.

"John gave us a block of land as a wedding present and we built a house on it.

Joanne and I were whelping a lot of broodbitches at the time. Eventually I came to work for John and have been

there ever since.”

Reimer’s great galloper Miss Perlita, owned by Joanne, was racing at the Gabba when Billy came north and since he linked with the Reimer kennel, Billy has seen some of the greats of greyhound racing in this state pass through.

Names like Rinkeno and his littermates Playboy Jack, Playboy Roy and Ann Perlita.

Others like the littermates Minerva Reef, Stout Star, Merry Miner and Bakery Hill.

The speedsters Half A Strand, Blue Find and Lachlan Georgia, Billy’s favourite greyhound Winged Runner and now Sheza Good Sort, Cosmo Topper etc

The kennel has always been able to find a star, like Lawnton 100,000 winner Gemini Storm.

Hutchinson talks in awe of Rinkeno.

“Half a Strand was a free for all bitch at the Gabba when we trialled her against Rinkeno there one day and Rinkeno beat her a conservative 20 lengths,” said Billy.

These days JR likes to take it easy at home on race nights.

“He’s 67 and has been at the game for a long time,” says Billy. “He’s got his phone account and watches the dogs on Sky, but he’s very active with everything around home.”



Rinkeno

Billy and John have been a great combination. “We have a fight every now and then, but it’s always forgotten within a few seconds,” he said.

Joanne doesn’t have much hands-on with greyhounds these days. “She breeds and shows chooks,” said Billy who also has a passion for showing pigeons.

“There are plenty of ribbons around the house to show both of us are doing something right,” he said. Joanne also has a passion for growing Bromeliads, a flower.

There have been winners too many to mention go through the Reimer kennel and Billy Hutchinson has handled them all. He goes racing three times a week and still has a passion for the animal.

And what of his future ... “All we are looking for are more winners”.

