

Sarah Brown
Mentone Horse Riders Club. Member since June 2007

Hello... this is Mr Darcy and I.... yes, he's a chestnut, not dark and brooding as in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* character... but nonetheless, he's handsome (well, I think so).



I started riding in England at the age of 9. It was a big thing to save the 7 schillings and 6 pence it cost to have a lesson at Oak Hill Riding School in Daisy Nook. My grand-dad used to take me there on his Honda 50 cc motorcycle. It wasn't long before I was riding the newly broken ponies that were being schooled (or "educated" as you Aussies say).

In my mid-teens I gave up riding, only to return at 19 and it wasn't long before I bought Tasmin, a 14.3hh chestnut mare. I sold Tasmin but was able to continue riding her for her new owner. I also used to ride Sam, a massive 17hh grey Clydesdale owned by Mrs Boon, who was always in the news as every couple of years she used to ride Sam around England. She was well into her seventies when she gave up riding. I also used to exercise Anglo Arab race horses.

After moving to Australia in 1987 it was almost twenty years before I was regularly back in the saddle again. In less than a year I was fed-up on riding school horses and knew I had to get my own horse again. Mr Darcy came to me via the friend of someone I work with. It's been a hard slog – over 16 months before I was able to get assessed and take us out to our first comp. Hopefully, there will be many more to come.

I love being part of Mentone HRC. The people are friendly and supportive and I've made some wonderful new friends in Melbourne's horsey scene. See you around the rallies and comps soon!

Sarah
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