



I can definitely say the inspiration for 'Mangadoo' came about through my involvement with the Nor West Jockey Club in Roebourne which is located in the Pilbara region of Western Australia between the coastal towns of Karratha and Port Hedland. In 1989 Cyclone Orson destroyed the facilities at the Roebourne Race course and I was shanghaied onto the committee to assist with fundraising to build new facilities.

Because of my keen interest in horse racing in my native England I accepted the challenge and within two years the Nor West Jockey Club committee had raised over \$100,000 and new facilities were erected at the Roebourne Racecourse.

The new facilities were opened in June 1992 but prior to the launch of the new facilities the committee were looking at ways to promote the club and its new facilities. I convinced the committee that we should promote the club from the 'heritage angle' and I set about reading every book I could get my hands on that mentioned horse racing and pioneering in the Roebourne area.

I discovered that the Jockey Club had been founded in 1863 by the early pioneers to the area, and was the second oldest race club in Western Australia. By the early 1870's the early pioneers had innovatively created a horse export industry by breeding the thoroughbred

racehorses they had brought to Roebourne for racing with their station broodmares.

The new breed of horses was called the 'Nor West Bred'. They were nimble, strong and intelligent and they thrived in the harsh, rocky and spinifex strewn environment of the Pilbara - an environment very similar to India where they soon became very popular with the British Army.

The 'Heritage Angle' proved successful and the Jockey Club prospered. I continued to learn about the 'Nor West Breds' from the old station owners and trainers who always came to watch the Roebourne races every year. I discovered the 'Nor West Breds' eventually disappeared with the arrival of motor bikes and later the rationalisation of station properties in the 1960's.

I wanted to tell the history of the 'Nor West Breds' but struggled to find enough information to fill a book. In March 1994, I left the Pilbara and moved to Adelaide. I returned to Roebourne in July of that year for the Cup meeting and was awarded a 'Life Membership' of the Jockey Club.

It was on the return flight to Adelaide that the concept of 'Mangadoo' was born. I was reading a feature article in a racing magazine about 'Shergar', the champion Irish horse that won the Epsom Derby and later disappeared. By the time I landed in Adelaide I had mapped out the initial storyline.

With no literary experience I started writing. It was a slow process and over the next few years I wrote in phases. I tried attending writing classes but found them boring. Surprisingly, it was the annual family holiday at Coral Bay in the North West of Western Australia where I became most inspired to write. One by one, holiday by holiday the chapters took shape.

The title was originally 'Nor West Bred' but on a trip home to Gloucestershire, England I decided to change the name of the novel to 'Mangadoo'. It was a word my mother and her friends had abbreviated to replace the name of our village called 'Mangotsfield'. 'Mangadoo' had a rhythmical sound that was always spoken in a happy tone and I could not help think just how Aboriginal it sounded. The decision was made and everything seemed to fit better in the story.

Some of the characters in the novel I have developed from people who at some time in my life have left a big impression on me. George Nolan, the main character of the novel, was in fact the name of an old First World War veteran who managed a market garden on the outskirts of 'Mangotsfield'. He was a story teller and once told me he was put on a ship against his will and it took him three years to get home.

Captain Burns was an old cigar smoking seafaring man I met in Penarth, South Wales who at the time was a remarkable resemblance to Sean Connery. He was a gambler and told me that he had been to every major racecourse in the world and had once owned horses in Australia and South Africa.

Throughout the seventeen years of writing 'Mangadoo' the biggest inspiration was my father who would often call from England and his first words would be "Finished that bloody book yet?" He only visited the Pilbara once but shared my passion for the region. Sadly he passed away in 2009. It was his passing that gave me the final inspiration to complete the novel.

David Morgan

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