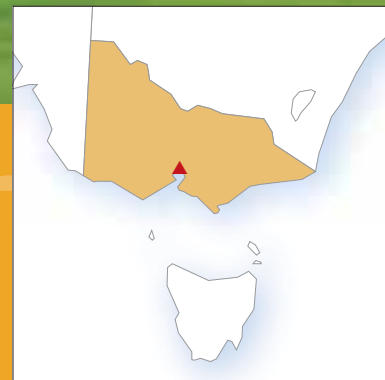


# Flemington



Date of inscription: 7 November 2006

## Flemington Racecourse, Victoria

*‘Nowhere in the world have I encountered a festival... that has such a magnificent appeal to the whole nation. The Cup astonishes me.’*

– Mark Twain, 1895

Flemington is one of the world’s premier racecourses. During the last 160 years since the flats beside the Maribyrnong River were first used for racing, Flemington has been transformed from a long path in long grass which had been roughly scythed down, into a richly grassed acreage supporting one of the finest racing surfaces in the world.

Set on 125 hectares of river flats, it is one of the longest race tracks in Australia. The track has changed from the first Melbourne Cup race in 1861, and today is famous for the ‘Straight Six’ – the six furlong (1200 metre) length of straight track that makes Flemington one of the most challenging tracks in the world. This long run down the Straight Six, a favourite with both Australian and international jockeys, gives horses a chance to come from well back in the field to make it first past the post.

In the hearts and minds of Australians, Flemington Racecourse is synonymous with the Melbourne Cup. Since it began in 1861, the Melbourne Cup has been the ‘race that stops the nation’.

Run on the first Tuesday in November, the Melbourne Cup is one of the world’s most challenging horse races, taking more than three minutes. *Kingston Rule* holds the record for the fastest run, winning in 1990, in three minutes 16.3 seconds.

The Melbourne Cup is recognised as Australia’s premier horse race. Along with the English Derby, its American counterpart the Kentucky Derby and the Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe, it is one of the world’s great horse races.

The first Melbourne Cup recorded on film was also the first cinematographic newsreel film shot in Australia. Shot by Maurice Sestier, the film was taken at Flemington on Cup Day in 1896, when 95 000 people saw *Newhaven* win the Cup.

Flemington Racecourse has long been associated with the names of horses, jockeys, trainers, breeders and owners who have been at the forefront of Australia’s racing culture. Many of Australia’s greatest racing champions have won the Cup, including *Carbine* in 1890, and the legendary *Phar Lap* in 1930.

The Flemington Spring Carnival and the Melbourne Cup are also a major venue – and stimulus – for Australian fashion. The tradition of Oaks Day as ‘ladies day’ dates from 1885, when a group of fashionably dressed ladies complained of the damage to their elegant gowns by the crush of people on Cup Day.

Within two years of its inception as ladies day, Oaks Day had become the fashion event of the Melbourne calendar and by 2005 visitors to Flemington for the Spring Carnival and the Melbourne Cup spent more than \$20.1 million on fashion purchases in Victoria alone.

In 1965 there was more interest in a drama being played out off the track and the eyes of the world were turned towards Flemington’s special guest, British model Jean Shrimpton who had caused a scandal on Derby Day by wearing a sleeveless white mini-dress with a hemline four inches above the knee.

Disapproving eyes were quick to note she was not wearing the expected Flemington fashion accessories – hat, gloves and stockings. The outfit shocked the conservative Melbourne establishment and was reported in the media around the world.

What became known as the ‘Miniskirt Affair’ inspired young women around the country to take up the new fashion.

Today the fun and glamour at Flemington on Melbourne Cup Day has entrenched the first Tuesday in November as an important part of Australia’s heritage, culture and identity.