



## THE HISTORY



In the 1840's, the military and the English and Boer Settlers informally raced horses in the port city of Durban. But it was only some 57 years later that horseracing became more formalized in this region.

The first 'official' meeting to take place at Greyville Racecourse was over two days on 22 and 23 July 1844, two months after the Pietermaritzburg Turf Club had held its first racemeeting.

Conducted under the auspices of the 'Natal Turf Club' the racemeeting featured four races with the main race, the Turf Club purse over two miles, having a stake of 15 pounds.

Racing continued in a somewhat haphazard fashion for a number of years thereafter, but in early 1897 a group of Durban sportsmen and racing enthusiasts met to establish a turf club.

A public meeting was called on 1 March 1897 at which 40 gentlemen founded the Durban Turf Club. A committee of 15 stewards was elected of which W G Brown was the first Chairman.

The first racemeetings of the club took place on 17 and 20 July 1897 with about 3000 people attending. Who would have known that the Durban Turf Club Handicap run that day and won by Campanajo would be the first running of what is known today as the Vodacom Durban July!

A memorable day in the history of the racecourse was on Saturday 22 March 1947 when King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and their two princesses visited Greyville. The King's Cup was run on that day for the first time and King George VI presented the trophy to the winning connections.

On 25 March 1995 Queen Elizabeth II, a princess when she had first set foot on the turf of Greyville, now visited as Queen. All went well barring the weather. After months without rain the heavens opened and it rained relentlessly resulting in the loss of the racemeeting but not the royal visit, which went ahead as planned.

Sunday 25 May 1995 was yet another groundbreaking day for Greyville Racecourse and for racing in South Africa when more than 8000 people visited Greyville for the country's first Sunday Racemeeting.

Although night racing had briefly made a showing during the 1945/46 racing season at the Vaal, it was only in 1996 that it was introduced seriously into the South African racing picture. Greyville Racecourse, with its beautiful backdrop of the Durban beachfront night skyline, planned their first meeting for Valentine's Day that year. The weather again failed to play along and the meeting was rescheduled to take place two nights later. The meeting proved to be a great success with over 7300 people attending.

In 1998 the Durban Turf Club amalgamated with the Pietermaritzburg Turf Club and the Clairwood Turf Club to form Gold Circle.