

SUMMER 2005

The KINGSCLERE *Quarter*



THE PARK HOUSE STABLES NEWSLETTER

The KINGSCLERE Quarter

THE



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It has been a frustrating season so far with the yard seemingly dogged by inconsistency, injuries and plain bad luck. To date a total of 18 domestic winners is some way short of where we have been at the same stage in previous seasons and a long way short of where we had all hoped we would be at the beginning of the season. Over twice as many seconds as winners and almost forty third places adds to the frustration in a yard that is not totally out of form but just not firing on all cylinders.

It has not, however, all been doom and gloom and the success of our international runners and the emergence of some real talent amongst the two year olds has provided some comfort. Phoenix Reach has been the yard flagship for some time now and must be one of the most durable and tenacious Group One performers in recent years. In spite of his persistent set backs he has the ability to come back from adversity and into the winner's enclosure against all the odds and in the very highest company.

Phoenix started his 2005 campaign in March when he began his "Spring Global Tour" in Dubai. The Dubai Sheema Classic is one of the most valuable middle distance races in the world and, whilst Phoenix had travelled to the Middle East in good shape, we were expecting him to improve for the run before travelling on to Hong Kong for the Queen Elizabeth II Cup at Sha Tin.

Drawn on the wide outside of eleven runners the expectation was dampened a little and we had all hoped that a place would set him up nicely for the journey ahead. Instead we were treated to a dazzling display from horse and jockey as they weaved their way from last to first up the long straight at Nad al Sheeba.

With over half million pounds to the winner it was the perfect way to start the season and confirmed Phoenix Reach as one of the best international middle distance performers in the world. After Dubai came Hong Kong and a drop back in distance to take on the very best horses in the Southern Hemisphere. Another poor draw did not help our cause and in the circumstances he did well to finish a staying on 5th behind some very useful local horses and a top class South African challenger. With Australian champions Elvestrom and Grand Armee behind him, hopes were high that he was still in the sort of form that would see him take all the beating in the Singapore Airlines Cup at Kranji three weeks later.

Heat and humidity are conditions rarely encountered at Kingsclere but both horse and staff had seemed to acclimatise like locals by the time I arrived in Singapore. The opposition for the \$US 2 million race included the wonderful Jim Bolger trained mare Alexander Goldrun, two challengers from the powerful Mike de Kock yard and Lee Freedman's Mummify from Australia, a top class performer on his day but seemingly out of form in recent races.

SEASON SO FAR

by Andrew Balding



The race itself was run at a furious gallop with the 2004 World Champion Epalo and an American runner both determined to make the running. Phoenix Reach travelled well before quickening to take the lead with a furlong and a half to run. Having seen off the challenge of Alexander Goldrun, the determined Mummify wore him down in the dying strides to deny him of yet another major international prize. The £200,000 for second place was some consolation and both owner and trainer were very proud of the horse and the fantastic job that Chad and Steve had done with him.

Richard Phillips (aka Chad) and Steve Woolley had accompanied the horse to Japan and Hong Kong in the winter and were fully aware they would be clocking up more air miles after Dubai, but no one was quite prepared for the fact that they would not return home until

the end of May. The delayed return was a direct result of a nasty eye infection that Phoenix picked up after his gutsy run in Kranji. What caused the infection is still uncertain but an ulcer on his cornea was deemed serious enough that surgery was required and a skin graft inserted where the ulcer was removed. Steve and Chad had to work around the clock to treat the damaged eye and, when they were expecting to be back with their families, they were still in the sweltering humidity of Singapore treating our stricken hero.

In his normal fashion Phoenix Reach bounced back from the setback and, whilst his unusually poor run in the King George was a disappointment, I have no doubt that he will return to his best for his intended autumn targets. These include a trip Down Under for the Cox Plate and a possible tilt at the Melbourne Cup. With almost

two million pounds of prize money to his name already there is every chance that Phoenix will become one of the leading British trained money earners of all time by the end of his career.

Back at home Pentecost had added to his own impressive earnings record by winning on his seasonal reappearance at Thirsk. His old friend Vanderlin was also off the mark on his debut and followed up with excellent seconds at Haydock and at Chester.

Another old timer in the form of his life this season has been Irony. Putting a disappointing year behind him with an excellent run at Sandown, a convincing win at Carlisle and narrow defeat under a penalty at Lingfield. Voice Mail has also reached veteran status in age, but his performances this year have seen him rise to a career high rating. A remarkable fifth course victory at his beloved Bath was followed by a half length second in Brighton's most valuable race and judging by his well being at home, the winning is not quite over yet.

There are a handful of older horses who have not yet seen the winner's enclosure this year but have suggested their turn is not far away. Albinus is one of the most talented horses in the yard and I am convinced that a major race will come his way at some stage. His two seconds at Goodwood and Newmarket were achieved without his ideal conditions, his turn will come soon! Border Music is

a massive frustration as there are few horses who travel better through their races and find less! Once he gets his head in front, the penny may well drop and he broke the track record when winning impressively at Wolverhampton early in August.

Saint Etienne has worked consistently like a filly with group class ability at home, but has underachieved on the racecourse. An emphatic win in handicap class at Newbury encouraged us to take a chance and ship her to Canada to contest the Royal North Stakes a Group 3 at Woodbine over 6 furlongs. On her form in England she had little chance, but with the help of lasix and an excellent ride by Martin Dwyer she narrowly failed to peg back the winner in a field that contained some of the best female turf sprinters in North America. She will continue to race for Gary Chong under the care of Edward Freeman in Canada and we all hope she can add to this result.

Diktatorial, Cape Greko and Silver Highlight were considered our best hopes of big race success amongst the three year olds at the beginning of the season. Diktatorial has spent most of the year on the sidelines having suffered a set back after the 2,000 Guineas. Happily he has made a full recovery and is working once again like the class act he is. An autumn campaign should start off in early September and hopes are still high for him to achieve major honours in time.



Cape Greko was plagued by minor training setbacks early in the spring and whilst he pleased on his reappearance two rather lack lustre runs have enforced another break in his season. He has as much physical scope as any horse in the yard and remains an exciting prospect when he returns to his best.

Silver Highlight has been beset by respiratory problems since the middle of her two year old career and in spite of an excellent fourth in the Lupe Stakes at Goodwood we decided that her future lay with the more relaxed medication laws of North America. Being a Canadian bred meant she was eligible for a \$250,000 race at Woodbine restricted to three year old fillies bred in Canada over a mile and a quarter on the grass. It was the perfect opportunity for her and although still a maiden we felt it wise to bide our time and target her specifically for the Wonder Where Stakes in July.

The result was a wonderful win for the filly and her more than deserving owner Denis Caslon. Silver Highlight like Saint Etienne has remained in Canada with Ed Freeman and will surely continue her winning ways this year and hopefully next.

Banknote is a half brother to Royal Warrant who served the yard so well last summer and he too could emulate his sibling after impressing everyone with his third career victory at Haydock, his second win this year. Rosecliff, Oceancookie and ultra consistent Della Salute have also recorded wins with the promise of more to come and



House Martin and Foxy Gwynne are sure to open their accounts before long.

The two year olds are very much the future for Kingsclere and the signs that this year's crop are up to scratch are very encouraging. Rag Tag has speed to burn and already a maiden winner he should add to that in the coming months. Certain Circles is an unusual horse in that he is one of our seemingly rare debutant winners. He has immense promise and could improve to go on to a higher level altogether.

Santiago Star is very much a benchmark for the unraced horses and whilst it has taken a run or two to get the hang of things, his win in a decent Newmarket maiden suggest that Pinch of Salt, Deepwater Bay and Kings Ransom will be horses to follow for the rest of the season.

Cool Sting, Ollie George and Kalankari have all managed to be placed and all are capable of better in the future. Sadly Ebony Lord shattered a pastern on his 4th start and never realised his potential for his owner/breeder Audrey Hill. Of the fillies Loch Verdi will improve markedly on her debut and Theatre Royal and Antigoni are worth waiting for.

In all it has been a poor year to date on a domestic level, but the exploits of our horses abroad and the promise of those yet to race or to hit form suggests 2005 could still be a year to remember.



All you wanted to know about CLAIMING RACES - but were afraid to ask

Stuart McPhee

I grew up picturing claiming races as a slightly superior version of a selling race. Indeed, one of my own “golden rules” for finding winners was always to look for horses running in a seller for the first time – and that definitely included horses dropping down from claiming company.

Times have changed. Once, it was certainly regarded in the UK as not quite right and proper to try and “claim” a runner in a claiming race – particularly if the horse had not even won. There used to be quite a lot of bad feeling about when this happened – and harsh words and even the occasional scuffle sometimes resulted.

Now, claimers are rightly regarded as a legitimate segment of our racing and several trainers now specialise in buying horses from claiming races and then trying to improve them into decent handicappers. In rarer cases such as Red Lancer and The Tatling [claimed from Dandy Nicholls for only £15,000], such buys can even turn into group horses. Any runner in a claiming race [not just the winner] can be claimed and these days you do not even need to be there on course. Anyone with the right credentials can claim a runner within 15 minutes of the race by telephone. The owner/trainer can also lodge a “friendly” claim because if there is more than one claim lodged then a ballot takes place.

I suspect claiming races are on the increase here, but we have some way to go before we match the U.S.A. – where approximately 70% of races in the calendar are claimers. They must have something going for them!

Claiming races are popular with some trainers for one main reason. This type of race offers a trainer a rare chance to act as a handicapper because the weight your horse carries is usually determined only by the trainer. It is directly proportional to the trainer’s valuation of the horse. For example, often, for every £1000 by which the trainer is prepared to reduce the price below the maximum valuation, the runner car-

ries 11lb less down to a pre-prescribed minimum level. At the extremes, trainers may run a horse at an unrealistically low selling value to obtain a good weight and risk losing them at an unfair value or may run with an optimistically high value and carry so much weight that they have little chance of winning.

This means that claiming races also have their own class level and that claiming races pull together horses of relatively equal market value. In theory, this means that the races are competitive but often the races are polarised into a few with chances and many that have their best days ahead of them or behind them. In terms of finding the winner, I would suggest:

- Good recent form is often a good pointer
- Speed and pace or course suitability are often more important than perceived class based on old form
- Inconsistent horses often seem to appear in claimers
- Follow trainers who specialise in this sort of race

Other odd statistics taken from claimers run on our all weather tracks are:

- 3yos win very few 3yo+ claiming races, yet they account for nearly 25% of the runners.
- Colts and fillies do not win their share of claiming races – perhaps this simply reinforces the above stat/
- Most runners are geldings but entire horses win nearly twice as many claimers as geldings
- Well-backed horses do pretty well, over 70% of winners are in the first three in the betting. 20-1 shots win less than 1% of claimers
- Horses running again within a week of a previous win have a very impressive strike rate.
- The highest weighted horse has won 25% of claimers – this implies that the weight adjustment at this level is no substitute for ability and class.

All this brings me to the real reason why I am writing about claiming races. Some of you may know that



the yard contained a sweet, but fairly slow 2yo called Crush on You [owned by me]. Of course, it was obvious to anyone that this was just a filly that needed more time to reach her potential [maybe an Oaks winner?] although even I had to admit she was a bit small. After two unpromising maiden race runs, wiser

heads than mine explained that it would be prudent to go the route of the claiming race. It seems that 7f 2yo claimers at this time of year are seriously uncompetitive and that her lack of size meant that she would be extremely unlikely to be claimed.

The plan worked – up to a point. It must have been a pretty poor race because she was only 7-1. On rain-softened ground at Thirsk, she broke well and forced a decent pace. A furlong out, it even looked like she might win. Alas, she tired but finished a respectable 3rd [qualifying us for a handicap mark for nurseries]. I tried to look nonchalant as I looked up 3rd place prize money. Andrew advised that we lodged a “friendly claim” – just in case.

Then came the bombshell. An even wiser old head [Reg Hollinshead] had claimed her. She was not coming back to Kingsclere. It all seemed a bit sudden compared to the slow process of entering and selling a horse in a “horses in training auction”. Do you think that Reg H is experienced enough or should I write to him with a few words of advice on how to win a race with her?

Still, at least I have a few thousand pounds burning a hole in my pocket. Bring on the October yearling sales! Or perhaps Andrew would like me to look out for something in a claimer? I wonder if they will charge me for the empty horsebox coming home.



HOG ROAST DAY



THE 2005 **12** TO FOLLOW COMPETITION

Scores up to and including July 30th 2005
Please let us know if you suspect any miscalculations

		1 BUTCHER, MRS G	116		
		2 GAY, SUSAN	111		
		3 BALDING, IA (A)	99		
		4 HALLAS, GARY (A)	97		
		4 MACREADY, SIR N	97		
6 GORDON, JOHN	93	30 FARREN, JOHN	71	56 BALDING, IA (B)	61
6 HALE, BARRY	93	32 COPE, C (B)	70	56 DILLON, BATT (B)	61
6 BALDING, ANNALISA	93	32 MASON, TERRY (B)	70	56 PINK PARTNERSHIP (B)	61
9 CASLON, DH	89	32 MICHAELSON, RCB	70	56 WARD, CARLO	61
9 WHITEHALL, A	89	32 PARRY, ROGER	70	60 POWELL, DAVID (B)	60
11 DILLON, BATT (A)	87	32 PLUMBLY, SIMON	70	61 MORRIS, CHERYL (B)	59
12 MORRIS, CHERYL (A)	86	32 SHARLAND, R	70	62 COPE, C (C)	58
12 PECKHAM, GEORGE (B)	86	38 HESLOP, DEAN	69	62 MELLUISH, MICHAEL	58
12 POLLITT, L	86	38 HUMBLE, JESSICA	69	64 COX, VIV	57
15 CHONG, GARY	83	40 BALDING, M R & C	68	65 BROUGHTON, T	56
15 MICHAELSON, RPB	83	40 NICHOLLS, ANDREW	68	65 CHESHIRE, ANGELA (A)	56
17 MACKINNON, ROGER	81	40 PLUMBLY, HELEN	68	67 BALDING, CLARE	55
17 MELLUISH, ANNA	81	43 HOWSON, GEOFFREY	67	67 BALDING, AM	55
19 MASTERTON, L & R (A)	80	44 CHESHIRE, NATHAN	66	67 GEGIC, AMIR	55
20 MASTERTON, L & R (B)	79	45 DERBYSHIRE/CHIVERS (B)	65	67 MICHAELSON, SOOTY	55
21 CULLEN, EUGENE	77	45 MULLIGAN, ALEXANDRA	65	71 LEE-ROBINSON, NICK	54
21 EASTLEY, LISA	77	45 WECHLER, ENID	65	71 O'BRIEN, DR/MRS (D)	54
21 GEE, MARY	77	48 CHESHIRE, ANGELA (B)	64	71 OURY, GERALD	54
21 OSWALD, MICHAEL	77	49 ABP	63	71 PAYTON, MICHAEL	54
25 RHODES, MELVIN	74	49 BACK, DAVID	63	75 COPE, C (A)	53
26 ALLPORT, DAVID	72	49 BOUNDS/JOHNSON (A)	63	75 HYDE, MRS J	53
26 BOX, PETER	72	49 SAVORY, PAUL	63	75 MCPHEE, STUART (A)	53
26 COUSINS, ROSE	72	53 PALMER, CECILIA	62	78 GAY, DAVID	52
26 COX, TOM	72	53 ROGERS, JAMIE (A)	62	78 HILL, AUDREY	52
30 BANYARD, ANDREW	71	53 WILLIAMS, P	62	78 MASON, TERRY (A)	52

81 ANDREW, KAYLEIGH	51	118 LAMBOURNE, EMMA	40	159 ARNOLD, ROB	29
82 ARNOLD, HUGH	50	118 MCPHEE, STUART (B)	40	159 DOHERTY, TERRY (B)	29
82 BARRINGTON, GLYNN	50	122 PECKHAM, GEORGE (A)	39	159 MCPHEE, MINA	29
82 LUMLEY, PETER	50	122 SUMNER, C & S (A)	39	159 PASCOE, RICHARD	29
82 MCDUGALL, R	50	124 HODGKINS, ADRIAN (A)	38	159 ROGERS, JAMIE (B)	29
82 TOLHURST, ANDREW	50	124 CULLEN, SARAH	38	164 BOUNDS/JOHNSON (B)	28
87 CLAYTON, PHILIP	49	124 DERBYSHIRE/CHIVERS (A)	38	164 GREEN, MARION (B)	28
87 GEE, SIMON	49	124 SUMNER, C & S (B)	38	164 NEWBERY, KAREN	28
87 HOLISTIC	49	124 WALK, MR R	38	164 RAE-SMITH, MRS M (A)	28
87 MARSH, RACHEL	49	129 GREEN, MARION (A)	37	168 THOMAS, JT	27
87 FEANE, PADDY	49	129 HODGKINS, ADRIAN (B)	37	169 JENKINSON, ROB	26
92 BAVEYSTOCK, HARVEY	48	129 WINTERBECK	37	169 JOLY, MRS D	26
92 CLEGG, D & B	48	132 BARBER, HAZEL	36	169 RITCHIE, TINA	26
92 MEARS, GARRY	48	132 CLAYTON, C & D	36	172 HALL, MELANIE	25
92 PLUMMER, ANN	48	132 HOBHOUSE, JOHN	36	172 TREGASKES, G M	25
96 COVENTRY, BRYAN	47	135 HALL, SIMON	35	174 PALMER, W	24
97 BONNER, CHRIS	46	136 GALE, JOHN	34	175 CADBURY, SALLY	23
97 BROWN, DAVID	46	136 HALL, JULIA	34	175 HALL, BEVERLEY	23
97 CHRISTOU, KELLY/ANTHONY	46	136 MACKINNON, BRIDGET	34	177 CATRIDGE	22
97 DOHERTY, TERRY (A)	46	136 MAHER, TERRY	34	177 CLAYTON, OLIVER	22
101 BARBER, DAVID	45	136 PALMER, ANNE	34	177 HMB	22
101 DERBYSHIRE, IAN	45	141 HARRIS, NIGEL	33	177 LUMLEY, SUE	22
101 GAY, EDWARD	45	141 KENT, MARK (A)	33	181 HALLAS, GARY (B)	21
101 PINK PARTNERSHIP (A)	45	141 O'BRIEN, DR/MRS (B)	33	181 OVETT, NICK	21
101 WEEDY, MICHAEL	45	144 ANDERSON, CHARLOTTE	32	183 FINDLAY, ROSEMARY	20
106 PALMER, CLARE	44	144 BUCKLEY, ROGER	32	184 LYSAGHT, CORNELIUS	19
106 PARIS, REX	44	144 HALLAS, GARY (C)	32	184 SIMPSON, ANDREW	19
106 STRUTHERS, LORNA	44	144 HYDE, MR M	32	186 DERBYSHIRE, MRS D	18
106 THOMAS, KATH	44	144 KENT, MARK (B)	32	186 HALE, JANICE	18
106 WOOLLEY, STEVE	44	144 KINGSCLERE STUD	32	186 KNAPP, SIMON	18
111 DANGAR, RICHARD	43	144 WALTON, CRAIG	32	186 O'BRIEN, DR/MRS (A)	18
111 POWELL, DAVID (A)	43	151 BELL, CLIVE	31	186 WALTON, LOUISE	18
113 KNAPP, J	42	151 HUMPHRIES, G	31	191 ARNOLD, ALICE	17
113 MARSH, FIONA	42	151 LAWRENCE, BEN	31	192 WILSON, D	15
115 GOVER, TONY	41	151 WATSON, GREG	31	193 ARNOLD, PAMELA	11
115 RANSON, J M	41	155 BALDING, EMMA	30	194 RAE SMITH, ALAN	10
115 RITCHIE, POLLY	41	155 BROUGHTON, B	30	195 O'BRIEN, DR/MRS (C)	0
118 BEDFORD, PETER	40	155 COVENTRY, SERENA	30	195 RAE-SMITH, MRS M (B)	0
118 HALL, DAVID	40	155 NEWTON, WILLIAM	30		

LEADING HORSES

To be a leading contender in this year's competition so far, it seems as if one needs to have selected a tried and trusty seasoned campaigner.

VANDERLIN and VOICE MAIL are the leading scorers with 24 apiece and IRONY has also scored well with 17. Amongst the three year olds, the consistent DELLA SALUTE has amassed 24 points and BANKNOTE has 20.

Our only two year old winners so far are RAG TAG [20 points] and CERTAIN CIRCLES [10 points]. However, with several promising 2yos still to run, the 2yo performances could hold the key to this year's lists.

LEADING LISTS

MRS G BUTCHER	SUSAN GAY	IA BALDING (A)
BANKNOTE 20	FLORIDA HEART 1	PENTECOST 14
DIKTATORIAL	CASUAL GLANCE	VANDERLIN 24
DONASTRELLA 14	BANKNOTE 20	SPANISH ACE 1
DISTANT PROSPECT	VANDERLIN 24	PHOENIX REACH 8
PENTECOST 14	PENTECOST 14	ALBINUS 14
VANDERLIN 24	PHOENIX REACH 8	BORDER MUSIC 5
VOICE MAIL 24	VOICE MAIL 24	MR LAMBROS 5
COSTA PACKET	PINCH OF SALT	KALANKARI
RAG TAG 20	COSTA PACKET	PORT ARTHUR
TANGARITA	RAG TAG 20	RAG TAG 20
THEATRE ROYAL	RAINBOWS GUEST	WITH INTEREST
WITH INTEREST	THEATRE ROYAL	DINGAAN 8

GARY HALLAS (A)

BRIAREUS 10
PHOENIX REACH 8
VOICE MAIL 24
ALBINUS 14
CASUAL GLANCE
DIKTATORIAL
OCEANCOOKIE 11
CERTAIN CIRCLES 10
PALMISTRY
RAG TAG 20
TIME OUT
WELSH DRAGON

SIR N MACREADY

VANDERLIN 24
PENTECOST 14
PHOENIX R 8
PRINCE OF THEBES 7
SAINT ETIENNE 14
BANKNOTE 20
DIKTATORIAL
CALL ME WAKI
CERTAIN CIRCLES 10
LOCH VERDI
THEATRE ROYAL
TIME OUT

THE BEST FLAT JOCKEYS I HAVE KNOWN IAB

I was privileged to know Sir Gordon Richards mainly when he was manager to Lady Beaverbrook and also for Sir Michael Sobell and Lord Weinstock whilst they had horses in training at Kingsclere. Gordon (the only jockey to be knighted) used to come and ride out on work mornings, when it was always a pleasure to listen to his amusing reminiscences and pearls of wisdom. He was one of nature's gentlemen and I can think of no one that I have respected more in the world of racing.

His record as champion jockey, no less than twenty six times with a total of more than 4,800 winners, will almost certainly never be equalled in this country. Surprisingly he rode only one Derby winner (Pinza in 1953) during his thirty four seasons of riding and thirteen other Classic winners. He reckoned that the 1947 2,000 Guineas winner Tudor Minstrel was the best horse he ever rode.

Gordon always had a great sense of humour and after his very first winner when asked by the trainer why he had gone so wide round the bed he replied: "Well you said he wanted further, sir!" The much respected and many times champion trainer, Noel Murless, who retained Gordon for years, got it right when he said he was lucky enough to have four greats in his life – Abernant, Crepello, Petite Etoile and Gordon Richards.

I just remember seeing Gordon ride and although he would look somewhat unstylish nowadays, his tremendous strength in a finish and complete mastery of tactics were memorable. To think that without the aid of an agent he rode over two hundred winners in twelve different seasons is quite amazing. It speaks volumes for not just the great man himself but also for his long time devoted wife Marjorie.

Lester Piggott was without doubt the greatest flat jockey I have seen and I am proud to say that he rode many winners for us at Kingsclere, most memorably the Prix de Diane on Mrs Penny. He was champion jockey eleven times and rode over 4,500 winners, but it was his thirty Classic winners, including nine Derbys, that place him on a pedestal. He was totally without nerve which was a huge part of his mastery on the big occasion and he rode Epsom better probably than any other jockey has ever done.

Lester was notorious for "jocking off" other riders and Bill Williamson on Roberto in the Derby and Yves Saint Martin on Rheingold in the Benson and Hedges Gold Cup were two of the more publicised times. It was typical of his cheek



when one day he phoned trainer Harry Wragg and said "I can ride your two at Hamilton tomorrow as I know Geoff (Lewis) is going to Nottingham". Harry didn't consider any further and accepted the offer but the meeting at Nottingham turned out to be a National Hunt fixture and G. Lewis was not best pleased!

Tactically Lester was supreme whether taking the initiative and setting the pace or coming from behind. His strength in a tight finish was unequalled (one recalls in particular his Derby win on The Minstrel). Although he often appeared to hit his horses hard and sometimes frequently, it was, vitally, always in the right place (i.e. high up on the rump). On the other hand he was often very tender, with fillies in particular, and would never win by a bigger margin than was necessary.

Again, like Sir Gordon, he never had an agent and it was remarkable that for many years he controlled where at least half a dozen trainers ran their horses – all this with a speech impediment and deafness in one ear! It is sobering to recall that he rode his first winner aged thirteen and was dominant in his sport for a period of four generations. He is the only jockey I have known who was just not interested in food or drink. He was so disciplined in this respect that for the greater part of his career he rode at eight stone five pounds every day when at his height of five foot nine inches his natural weight should have been somewhere near ten stone.

Lester also has a great sense of humour, if at times a somewhat unusual one. When at his peak and riding for all the top trainers in the land he took a ride in a big handicap



one day for the North country trainer Snowy Wainwright. It had recent form and had been backed down to favouritism. Snowy only trained half a dozen horses and when Lester was beaten a neck, and in the trainer's opinion had disobeyed some very particular riding instructions, he shouted in anger and frustration at the champion jockey. "You will never ride for me again", quick as a flash Lester replied "Well I suppose I had better consider retiring then."

Scobie Breasley was a great Australian rider who had been champion jockey in his own country before he came to ride in England. He was Lester's contemporary and for many years his greatest rival. One need never look for him during a race in any other place but the inside rail and his cool, last minute finishes were a feature of his race riding. He was champion jockey here four times and beat Lester by one winner in an epic dual for the 1963 championship. He won the Derby in 1964 on Santa Claus as a fifty year old grandfather.

Scobie was a tremendous character and rode for my father-in-law, Peter Hastings-Bass before I took over. He was a great friend to and had an enormous influence on Geoff Lewis our stable jockey at the time.

Yves Saint-Martin was the best French jockey that I have seen he rode over 3,300 winners and was champion in his own country on many occasions in the same era. He was incredibly versatile tactically and I once watched him ride a four timer at Saint Cloud that was magical in its different styles. He rode many big winners in England including the Derby on Relko in 1963 and the 2,000 Guineas on Non-oalco in 1974. Like Gordon Richards he had a perfect build for a flat jockey (if a shade heavier) and was very powerful as well as being a superb horseman.

In the slightly later generation came two all time greats in Steve Cauthen and Pat Eddery. Steve was born in Kentucky, was a boy wonder in his own country and in one sensational year there rode 487 winners worth over 6 million dollars. He won the American Triple Crown on the fabulous colt Affirmed but soon afterwards had weight problems which hastened a much publicised move to England. Steve initially rode for Barry Hills but later had a very successful partnership for many season with Henry Cecil. Having been



brought up with a clock in his hand he was an expert at making the running. Never was that better demonstrated than when he won the Derby on Slip Anchor in 1985. He also won the Irish, French and Italian Derby and the St Leger three times.

Paul Mellon loved having Steve on his horses and some of his big race rides were memorable. Gold and Ivory and Diamond Shoal in particular. In spite of weight problems he won our jockey championship three times. He is a delightful character, loved the English way of life and became a popular guest at some of our well known ancestral homes. He had an eternal struggle with his weight however and quickly retired when he found Amy, the girl of his dreams. He then moved back to America to work in the media and help to run their stud farm with his brother.

Pat Eddery was born into a racing family and served his apprenticeship in the famous Frenchie Nicholson academy. He was just beaten by our own Philip Waldron for the apprentice jockeys title in 1970 but won it comfortably the following year. Pat then went on to be champion jockey eleven times. His first important retainer was for Peter Walwyn for whom he won the Oaks on Polygamy in 1974 and the Derby on Grundy in 1975.

In the 1980's his retainer with Vincent O'Brien at Ballydoyle gave him access to a string of good horses such as Golden Fleece, Detroit, Caerleon and Sadlers Wells before



taking on the retainer for Prince Khaled Abdullah. The best horse he ever rode, however, was almost certainly Dancing Brave and Pat's ride on him to win the 1986 Arc de Triomphe was always considered to be a masterpiece. Pat rode a lot of winners for us and I remember in particular him making all the running to win the Grosser Preis von Baden on Glint of Gold.

Of all the jockeys I reckon that Pat made the fewest mistakes and he was always totally professional and reliable. With just short of 4,500 winners to his name Pat is, after Sir Gordon, the second winning most jockey in Britain. He was very deservedly awarded the O.B.E. for his services to racing and was always a credit to his profession.

Finally the two current masters of their art are Kieren Fallon and Frankie Dettori both of whom have ridden many winners for us at Kingsclere. Kieren, was apprenticed to Kevin Prendegast in Ireland and moved to Jimmy Fitzgerald in England. The Ramsdens were very quick to realise his potential and he rode for them as first jockey for several years, winning amongst other big handicaps the Chester Cup on Top Ceas. The well publicised moves to and from Henry Cecil where followed by a retainer in 2000 with Michael Stoute. Kieren repaid him with some brilliant rides in big races – most notably the 1,000 Guineas with Russian Rhythm and the Derby with Kris Kin and North Light.

His most notorious loser was almost certainly Ballinger Ridge in a modest maiden race on the all-weather for Andrew Balding! Just this year he accepted the job as first jockey to the Coolmore team at Ballydoyle in succession to Jamie Spencer and has enjoyed immediate success winning both English Guineas on Virginia Waters and Footstep-sinthesand.

Kieren has worked hard to be champion jockey in England on seven different occasions and has won almost every big race in the calendar. He is controversial as a character and has incurred the wrath of our Jockey Club on several ill judged occasions. Nevertheless his all round talent as a jockey is admired by everyone, not least his fellow riders and he must undoubtedly take his place in my list of all time greats.



Frankie is currently racing's most marketable asset and its most famous character. His brilliant riding and effervescent personality have endeared him to a legion of sporting and racing enthusiasts. He has been champion jockey three times and has won most of the major races in Britain and elsewhere particularly as first jockey for Goldophin.

He was initially apprenticed to fellow Italian, Luca Cumani, but the first outstanding horse that he rode was our own Sprint Champion Lochsong in 1993/94. In 1998 he had his unique "Magnificent Seven" winners at Ascot when one of them was Lochangel owned by Jeff Smith and also trained here.

Frankie was much helped in his early days by his first agent Matty Cowing and then on his retirement by his good friend Ray Cochrane who rescued Frankie from a near disastrous airplane crash. Frankie is an ardent Arsenal fan and was recently awarded an honorary M.B.E. He is happily married to Twink Allen's daughter Catherine and has a growing army of children. All that is left to complete his C.V. is to win the Epsom Derby which continues to evade him.



