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TRC

*Special feature on the
phenomenal career
of a Briton abroad*

A portrait of Allan Smith, an older man with white hair, wearing sunglasses and a dark blue button-down shirt. He is looking slightly to the left.

The extraordinary Allan Smith

Also inside: The life of a slave who became a celebrated jockey /
Why the Golden Slipper just ain't what it used to be /
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 **SPENDTHRIFT**



Allan Smith with Frankie Dettori after they teamed up to win the \$1 million stc 1351 Cup on Saudi Cup day. "It was nice to be on the big stage," the trainer says. Photo: Nicholas Godfrey

From small-time betting coups to million-dollar races: *the extraordinary story of master trainer Allan Smith*

Nicholas Godfrey | March 23, 2020

Have passport, will travel. And Bahrain's multiple champion trainer Allan Smith, has certainly followed the racing path less taken in a career now well into its sixth decade.

An Essex boy and proud supporter of Southend United Football Club, Smith started out as a callow teenage apprentice in Newmarket in 1966. Don't be misled, however: in the end, the bright lights of the racing world were not for him.

The intervening half-century – the odd diversion here, the odd headline there, and plenty of good stories throughout – have seen long, hugely successful stints training in Belgium and Bahrain, with three



years in Dubai plus an aborted retirement in Florida. Oh, and a few years as a touring musician in a country-and-western outfit.

Given his wandering instincts, it makes sense that he wouldn't waste any time taking advantage of the new eVisa to visit nearby Saudi Arabia. More surprising, perhaps, was the fact that he came back from Riyadh as a winner, having saddled Dark Power for a 66/1 success (on the industry odds returned for British bookmakers) under Frankie Dettori in the stc 1351 turf sprint on the undercard at last month's inaugural edition of the Saudi Cup.

The race was worth a total of \$1 million, making the victory by some measure the most lucrative of Smith's long career. "It was nice to be on the big stage," he says. "No one takes any notice of us and it was

very satisfying. I suppose it gives us a bit of spending money for our holidays!"

Although Smith has been training for four decades now, on and off, the one place he has never fancied is back home. "I love going racing in England and used to have lots of runners but I always say now it's a lovely place for a holiday but I wouldn't want to live there," explains the softly-spoken 69-year-old, speaking in the lovely surroundings of Bahrain's Royal Stables where he is employed as salaried trainer to senior members of the ruling family. His major patrons include HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa plus Al Mohammadiya Racing and Al Adiyat Racing, the respective stables of HH Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Khalifa and HH Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who owns Dark Power, an ex-British-

Smith and Dettori at the presentation ceremony at the King Abdulaziz racetrack in Riyadh. Photo: Jockey Club of Saudi Arabia/Neville Hopwood

trained 6-year-old son of Dark Angel.

"I'd like to take him to England in the summer but I'll have to persuade Sheikh Isa," says Smith. "We could look at a variety of races – he's fast enough for five, he broke the track record over five in Bahrain so he's not slow but on the other hand, he's not your typical type of sprinter, he extends his stride, he's a big-moving horse. He's a bit of a Cadillac."

Before the Saudi victory, Smith's most prestigious triumph came with Skoozi in the first leg of the Maktoum Challenge, a G3 at Nad Al Sheba in 2002.

“Anyway, I rode back with Bruce and he asked me where I’d come from and how much money my mum had given me. I told him, ‘ten bob’.”

Reflecting on Riyadh, he adds: “It was very satisfying — not just for me but for my son, Paul, who does so much work in the stable. He’s a bit of an unsung hero — he does do a lot of the work. I always say it’s no good having a dog and barking yourself, and he does a lot of barking!”

While such a high-profile victory was undoubtedly another feather in the trainer’s cap, nobody in Bahrain — also on the mark in Saudi with Fawzi Nass-trained Port Lions — can have been shocked.

To say Smith is the dominant force in the kingdom is to risk understatement. Though he faces a strong challenge this year from his old mate, Jimmy Naylor, Smith has been champion trainer every season since he began his second stint in Bahrain in 2005; he first went there in 1994, when he saw the writing on the wall for Belgian racing as off-course betting interests broke into the pari-mutuel monopoly.

“Belgian racing was very strong then and we had a lot of success, training over 50 winners each year and having runners in Britain, Germany and France,” he recalls. “But it was beginning to go down, so, before it went completely, I saw this advert for a job in Bahrain. The advert said it was for a prominent stable, so I thought I’d see what it was all about — but I didn’t know it was the Emir himself! I started off training local-breds and ended up with more Thoroughbreds alongside Pat Rohan. Then Pat retired and had the stable to myself.”

Now, with son Paul as his assistant — another son, Martin, trains in Newmarket, Smith supervises more than 100 horses, many of them inexpensive ex-Brits bought at horses-in-training sales. They are housed in six air-conditioned barns next to the Arabian horse complex near the royal stud, all just beyond the winning post at the Sakhr home of the Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club on the outskirts of the capital, Manama.

The track hosted its first international race in November. Smith saddled third-placed Rustang, who led for much of the way before losing out to French-trained Royal Julius; as usual, however, he enjoyed success elsewhere on the showpiece card.

Short-lived Florida retirement

“It’s a nice job and we’ve got a nice stable of horses,” reflects the long-serving trainer. “We start early in the morning and I’m finishing by 9 am; there’s racing once a week and we don’t have to drive too far.”

Smith is now in his second stint in Bahrain, having decamped to the UAE for a spell at the start of the century, when he trained at Umm Al Quwain for a year before moving to Jebel Ali in Dubai with Sheikh Ahmed as his main patron. When that contract finished, he was ready to enter semi-retirement in Florida — “we had a small horse farm in Ocala,” he explains — before he was asked to return to Bahrain in 2005.

“It has changed a bit over the years,” he says. “It is competitive racing now and our top horses are definitely Group 3 horses. A lot of the work is buying decent horses, then also improving our local stock. But I used to be able to go to the sales in England to get an 80- or 85-rated horse and that would be enough for here, but now you wouldn’t get a look-in.

“I still buy those horses, but only those where I believe there’s some improvement,” he goes on, adding that he sources horses alongside bloodstock agent Richard Frisby. “We have paid quarter of a million but that’s a big spend. I don’t like doing that. I used to go to the sales when I was in Belgium with five grand in my pockets and find something!”

An impish character, Smith is fond of a colourful anecdote — at least several of them entirely printable — going right

back to the start of his life in racing as a wannabe apprentice, wet behind the ears as he went to Jack Clayton’s yard in Newmarket in 1966.

“When I started, Scobie Breasley was our stable jockey and Lester Piggott was riding as our second jockey,” he recalls. “Bruce Raymond had just ridden out his claim and was our third jockey. Can you imagine going there and riding your first bit of work with those three?”

Smith vividly recalls his first day on the gallops. “I went over to Racecourse Side and Lester came out in his car and Scobie in his chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce,” he explains. “Bruce, who was a great jockey and an even better judge, had ridden out and the gov’nor said I could ride back in on the pony.

“Anyway, I rode back with Bruce and he asked me where I’d come from and how much money my mum had given me. I told him, ‘ten bob’.

“He said: ‘You take it racing today and put it on our filly in the Nell Gwyn.’

“I said: ‘In the what?’

“He said: ‘The 4.30!’

“And that was Hiding Place and she won at 10/1, so I was quids in! This was the game for me!”

Smith also rode a winner on his first ride, Systematic, (owned by the Queen’s racing manager, Lord Porchester) at Folkestone, the now defunct Kent venue that two decades later was the stage for what must count as Smith’s most memorable contribution to the British Turf.

Not before an interlude, however. “I got out of racing and became a professional musician for a while in the early 70s,” he deadpans. Double bass (plus backing vocals) was his instrument of choice, and he toured extensively with Pete Sayers, the former Nashville-based country-and-western star who was back in the UK with the ‘Grand Ole Opry Road Show’.

Belgium's glory days

Smith still rode work for Michael Jarvis when he could; the peripatetic life of a giggling guitar-slinger lost its appeal when he had a young family, so he went back into racing and agreed to ride work for his old friend, the trainer Brian Lunness, who was based in Ostend in Belgium. When Lunness left, Smith took over the training licence. "I went out for three months to ride as a lightweight and I stayed there 16 years," he grins, recalling an era of prosperity in the country's racing when Smith was top dog.

"Racing used to be great in Belgium," he says. "Prize money was better than England in the 1980s and the biggest race, the Grand Prix Prince Rose at Ostend, was a major target. Rheingold had won it in 1973 before he won the Arc."

With a string of 75 horses at his zenith, he thrived as a multiple champion, winning every race worth winning. "It was a great life in Belgium back then," he goes on. "I had the equivalent of Derby winners, Grand National winners, and I hardly ever went to the races without coming back with money in my pockets. You could get a bet on because they had on-course bookies as well as pari-mutuel."

Smith was always fond of the odd raid from his Belgian base and it was one such successful sortie with the two-year-old Old Hook at Folkestone in June 1993 that brought him into the headlines. Not for nothing is the trainer's Twitter handle @oldhook.

'I think we can do a job with him'

To cut a long story short, off-course bookies initially refused to pay out on a well-executed coup before facing up to their obligations – to the tune of somewhere in excess of £150,000. "It was about six months in the planning and they had to pay up because there was nothing wrong with it," says Smith, who picked up the horse at Goffs in Ireland.

"I saw this little horse by Digamist, who was the most unsuccessful stallion there's ever been," he recalls. "But I knew the dam, who had won nine races in Belgium, and of course no-one took any notice of that, but he was a nice little horse, precocious-looking."

He roped his family into the bargain. "I phoned my brother and said, 'I think I've found one – I think we can do a job



with him," he says. "He didn't know what I meant so I had to explain: 'We can have a gamble!' So we bought him for five grand and that was Old Hook."

The juvenile trained okay and finished fifth at Brighton on his debut under Smith's son Paul. "He said he probably could've been placed if he'd been harder on him and it wasn't a bad little race," says Smith. "After that he worked with a sprinter who had won in England and worked all over him, so I set about looking for the worst race I could possibly find."

The race that jumped out was a seller over five furlongs at Folkestone in July. "I told my brother, 'we're going to Folkestone but you're not. You can watch it on the bloody telly in the bookie's.'"

Family and friends were duly sent out into the shops, told not to have more than £300 on a single slip, and to wait until the last minute to avoid suppressing the starting price. "We got about £7,600 or more on," he says. "We didn't take a price and on course he was 33s in a couple of places, then 25/1. But because the lad who led him up didn't obey his orders and had a fiver, he was returned at 20/1."

The rest, as they say, is history. Ridden by then-three-pound claimer Brett Doyle, Old Hook obliged by a length and a half. "The stewards called us in," he grins; the off-course betting industry, via its trade association BOLA, cried foul over 'unusual betting patterns'. "The guy from the betting association said, 'Mr Smith, your

How the Sporting Life reported the Old Hook episode of 1993

horse, there seems to have been some money on it," says Smith.

I said: "Yes, that's right, everything's gone to plan!"

But he said there had been none on course, which was suspicious. I had to correct him. I said, 'well, there was some because the bloody boy who led him up had a fiver. He'll be lucky if he's got a job tomorrow morning!'

"The stewards asked how much we'd had. I told them we wanted ten grand but we'd be happy if we got seven on."

There was no case to answer. "The head steward turned round at the end and said: 'Bloody well done!'"

Mind you, it doesn't always work, as Smith recalls. "We have piled money on in Belgium and come unstuck," he says. "I've been in Belgium when someone has turned up in a shabby trailer with hair and tail down to the ground and I've got my shiny new horse from England and we've been slaughtered!"

Nowadays Smith could hardly be further away from the cut and thrust of the betting ring as the elder statesman of the burgeoning Bahraini horse racing scene. It has, as they say, been quite a journey.



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The mysterious life of a slave who became the most celebrated jockey in North America

Patrick Lawrence Gilligan | March 16, 2020



A portrait of Abe Hawkins: the only known image of the great jockey of the mid-1800s

There were two famous men known as old Abe in the mid-19th century. One of them had the last name Lincoln. The other, for much of his life, had no last name. He was the most celebrated jockey in the land in his day. A man born a slave, sold along with the horses he rode, his history guessed at, half a name, traded as livestock. But astride a horse, he was a prince.

We don't know who his parents were, or for sure where he was from, though Mississippi is touted, or even whether he was traded or sold before Duncan Kenner, the owner of Ashland Plantation in Louisiana, purchased him for \$2,300 in 1854.

The sale was listed in the papers of the time, along with other bloodstock bought and sold.

It was a considerable sum, but he was already by then known as a considerable rider. The arrangement by which he was allowed to ride races and travel to meets is unknown. The picture accompanying this piece is the only known image of a jockey who became famous from south to north to east of the vast semi-tamed continent of North America.

He was a small man, only the size of a child, and he had a speech impediment, which may have contributed to his silent manner. But he could talk with horses. He became known as 'The Black Prince' and 'The Dark Sage of Louisiana'.

The notorious Whale, an unbeaten racer but a horse no other man dared touch or try to handle, much less ride, would stand still under old Abe, until the rider closed his heels on him. Then he would spring to life and race, with Abe buried in his mane, sat forward and out of the saddle, maybe the first to do so. Which makes him perhaps, the father of all modern day jockeys.

The Civil War made him a free man. He went north to Saratoga a year later, took the last name Hawkins, and was famous before he arrived. He won the third running of the Travers in 1866, on Merrill, a horse trained by another ex-slave, Ansel Williamson – the man who just under a decade later would train Aristides to win the very first Kentucky Derby.

In a time when race results did not regularly include the riders name, old

Abe's would often be found beside his mounts' names, whether they won or not.

He made money and saved it. He seems to have been a man of modest appetites. A lifetime of rationed basic food probably stayed with him. There is no record of a wife or children, his parents are unknown.

His quiet manner probably left him lonely. With his stutter, lack of education and slight bearing, he probably found it easier being around horses. Maybe he was drawn to them for this reason. Many people who carry pain within them find solace in those big noble creatures. Perhaps they were the only other slaves he spent time with. He whipped those slaves for their white masters, and it made him famous and rich. We don't know if it made him happy.

Kenner lost his 500 slaves in the Civil War, and with it his wealth, temporarily. It is said that old Abe sent word to Kenner that he would help him if financial assistance was sought.

Who knows if that happened? What we do know is that, when old Abe became sick with the tuberculosis that would take him, he returned to the Ashland plantation where he was raised a slave. It is said Kenner tended to him as a parent to a child, and, after his death in 1867, he was buried not in the slave cemetery but in a brick tomb under a mighty oak overlooking the training track of Ashland.

Did he return to Ashland as a son returns home though, in need? No, he returned to Ashland because the place he was a slave was the only home he knew, his master and fellow slaves the only people he had ties with.

What was freedom to a man, born a slave, taken from his parents, allowed no possessions, given no choices, no education, no rights? What was freedom

really to a man, already older and sick, probably scared and tired and unable to convey his own feelings and thoughts, inarticulate except when astride the mighty beasts? Only then did the Black Prince have something to say to the world. Then he was bigger than other men, then other men cheered him, and sang his name, and he lived in the pages of the newspapers and telegraphs. But, once he stepped off the animal, he slipped once again, into the shadows.

He was lucky, to have died in some comfort, some care taken off his carcass, some memory of him to live on. Most slaves didn't experience that. I doubt if Kenner made such fuss of his 500 other slaves.

I don't really know what the morality of owning other animals is. Perhaps future generations will judge us harshly, breeding these animals for our sport. I do know that is why we have a moral duty towards these animals, raised in captivity by us, fed by us at our leisure, forced to labor for us. Sold and traded by us.

Many experts think now that horses, to a lesser or greater degree, possess probably the same six basic primary emotions we feel - fear, disgust, anger, happiness, sadness and surprise - and that they are adroit in recognizing those same emotions in us. If they have the same feelings as us, the same emotions, then our moral duty to their well-being is high while we put them to work for our purposes.

Old Abe and Whale, bound together, slaves together, talking together as they thundered down the track, whispering in the wind, shaking a fist to the world in those moments. Angry Whale, and quiet, sad, old Abe.

With thanks to Katherine Mooney and the Keeneland Library

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JUDDMONTE

Why the Golden Slipper just ain't what it used to be

Glen Latham | March 19, 2020

Once the focal point of the Sydney Autumn Carnival, one wonders just what the future might hold for the G1 Golden Slipper Stakes after it is run this Saturday at Rosehill in Sydney's west. Don't be mistaken, the Slipper is neither dead nor on life support, indeed far from it. But like a lot of 63-year-olds, bits and pieces just aren't working as well as they did in their prime and the race needs some alternative therapy.

Pierro, now world-ranked 9 in the TRC sires' rankings, winning the 2012 Golden Slipper under Nash Rawiller



One suspects the outside world won't have noticed any difference over the past few decades and has probably always viewed the total prize money of A\$3.5 million for 2-year-olds as an obscene amount of money. But the race that once rivalled the Melbourne Cup both in prize money and for column inches is a much different beast today than at its zenith.

Most of those changes were brought on by today's ultra-competitive environment for the entertainment dollar while others were self-inflicted by racing administrators. No matter which was the greater evil, their combined efforts have seen the Slipper lose both its gloss and public appeal. And this year Covid-19 has delivered the ignominy of a race where even the owners won't be permitted to attend.

For those who may not understand the significance of the annual scamper to the once racing-mad harbour city, the Golden Slipper was the brainchild of the former Sydney Turf Club (STC) Chairman, the late George Ryder.

In Ryder's day the STC was one of two race clubs in Sydney and definitely seen as the young upstart challenger to the establishment, the Australian Jockey Club (AJC) which, despite its grandiose national title, only ran two tracks in Sydney, but did administer racing across the state of New South Wales.

Ryder was looking for something to bring glamour to the STC and saw an opportunity with a 2-year-old race in the autumn at the club's primary track, Rosehill in Western Sydney, a geographical point of significance we will touch on later.

Dame Fortune bestowed her smile on Ryder and his committee as the first running of the Slipper in 1957 was taken out by the flying Todman, a champion in every respect. Todman put eight lengths on his rivals and the Golden Slipper was up and running.

In subsequent years, the race churned out gallopers of the calibre of the brothers Sky High and Skyline, the top filly Reisling and Vain, a horse so fast and so adaptable he would be feted as a superstar today. Then in the 70s we had champions like Luskin Star, still regarded by many as the most freakish 2-year-old to grace the Aussie turf, and just 12 months later the hulking Manikato, whose deeds would become the stuff of legends.

Halcyon days

Through the 1970s and 80s, the Slipper was the only weapon Sydney had when it came to the parochial battle with Melbourne for bragging rites as to who was the premier racing city in Australia. For firepower, Melbourne had the trifecta of the Melbourne Cup, Caulfield Cup and W S Cox Plate, which, when combined, dwarfed the Slipper, but they all fell in the spring so Sydney and the Slipper owned the autumn stage.

During those halcyon days, the race commanded the back page of the Sydney papers, led the sports coverage on television and radio and dragged in the once-a-year punters like those who only ever bet on the Grand National or the Kentucky Derby.

And it had something, in fact almost the only thing, the breeding industry craved - the stallion

prospect that displayed precocity. At least since the import of Star Kingdom in 1950, and probably some time before that, speed had ruled down under and there was no greater advertisement of that trait than a Golden Slipper-winning colt. In the days of 40 covers a season, Slipper winners attracted multi-million dollar offers for the winner's breeding rites from the established local farms, like the Kelly family's Newhaven Park Stud at Boorowa, the Thompson's of Widden Stud from the valley of the same name or the Ingham brothers' Woodlands empire. In that era Luskin Star, Marscaj, Rory's Jester and then Canny Lad all won the Slipper before leaving their mark on the local breed.

Throughout its heyday, and before racing became a 'product', the STC continued to promote the event, developing a whole carnival of four Saturdays, culminating in Slipper day, which then dovetailed neatly into the AJC's main event after they moved the AJC Derby from its traditional spring date to Easter.

A point probably not recognised at the time was the committees of the two clubs rarely forgot their roots with what can politely be described as a healthy rivalry always the order of the day. Said rivalry forced both clubs to innovate continually, from which racing in Sydney no doubt benefitted. The STC also enjoyed some brinkmanship with Melbourne's Victoria Racing Club, for several years continually trumping the VRC's prize money increases for the Melbourne Cup purse until the two clubs had to call a truce before they were both bankrupted.

During those halcyon days, the race commanded the back page of the Sydney papers, led the sports coverage on television and radio

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...the ATC just haven't been able to get those diehards or the atmosphere back to this day. Or maybe they haven't really tried...

But, come the 1990s, the winds of change were about to blow the Slipper down a different course.

Firstly, the local breeding industry's dependence on a Slipper-winning colt waned with the introduction of a new fad, the shuttle stallion. And, as if to emphasise the colonial-bred stallion could wait on the substitutes' bench, Danehill came along and sired three winners of the race from his first three crops and five winners in all before his sons Danzero, Flying Spur and Redoute's Choice took up the baton.

In time, the scramble for studs to snap up a potential Golden Slipper winner would also become a thing of the past with the major players now buying in at the yearling sale stage. By way of example, of the seven colts in this Saturday's field, four were either part or fully owned by studs when they had their first start, and Victoria's Yulong Stud bought into one other, Tagaloo, after he won the G1 Blue Diamond Stakes.

And, while racing couldn't do anything about changes to the breeding landscape, the other wound was self-

inflicted, wholly avoidable and to this day is yet to properly heal.

Events first took a turn in 2011 with the state government-prompted merger (or shotgun wedding, depending on which side you were on) of the STC and AJC into the Australian Turf Club (ATC) with their headquarters at Randwick in the east of the city. In the years that followed, the ATC worked in conjunction with Racing New South Wales to develop The Championships, Sydney's version of a Breeders' Cup- or Champions Day-type event, but in doing so threw the Golden Slipper baby out with the bath water.

Wonderfully successful, The Championships did come with the twin drawbacks of sucking the marketing dollar away from the Golden Slipper and disenfranchising those former STC members in the west who saw the Slipper as "their" race.

Try as they might, the ATC just haven't been able to get those diehards or the atmosphere back to this day. Or maybe they haven't really

tried, for, wandering into the general admission area, it becomes apparent they may not see the need to as the bottom line surely hasn't taken a hit, the new generation of racegoers - who wouldn't know a fetlock from a forearm but recognise a good party when they see it - having taken over.

So, the Slipper isn't what it used to be. Some more TLC from the ATC would help, but nothing brings atmosphere to a racecourse like a good horse. The Slipper desperately needs to feel that adrenaline jolt that comes when a Luskin Star accelerates away from an outstanding field and wins by seven lengths. Or we need the emergence of a perennial champion for, in the last 20 years, only the filly Miss Finland, the colt and outstanding young sire Pierro and, to a lesser extent, the gelded Dance Hero have given the punters a horse to follow and the scribes fodder to work with later in their career.

Early indications for 2020 are that drought might last a little longer and, while it does, the Slipper slips a little further from the sporting public's consciousness.



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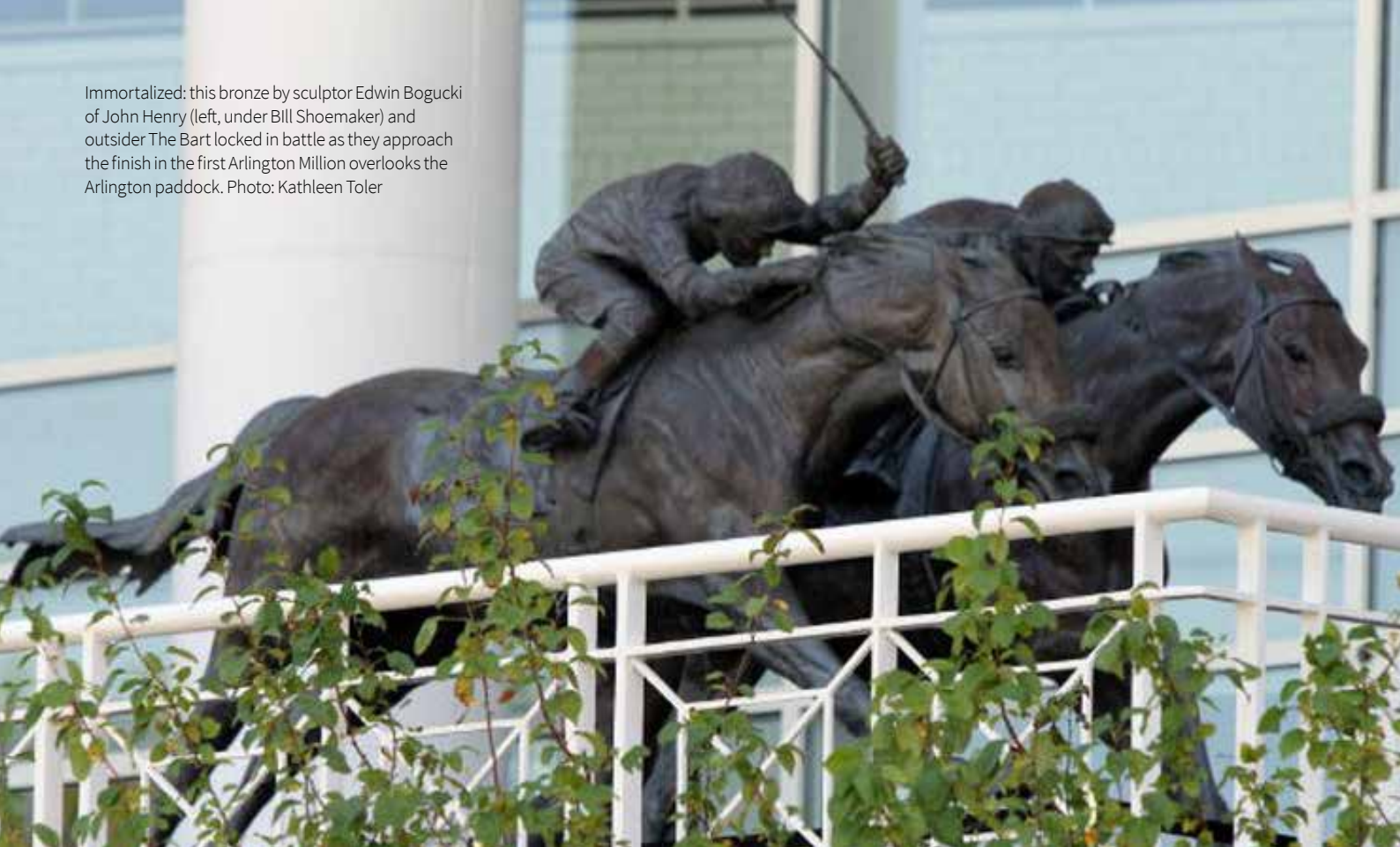
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Immortalized: this bronze by sculptor Edwin Bogucki of John Henry (left, under Bill Shoemaker) and outsider The Bart locked in battle as they approach the finish in the first Arlington Million overlooks the Arlington paddock. Photo: Kathleen Toler



Celebrating those glorious dinosaurs of the past - *America's great 'handicap horses'*

Jay Hovdey | March 09, 2020

Of all the rich memories this reporter still can summon from the first running of the Arlington Million – other than John Henry's operatic victory over The Bart that summer of 1981 – two linger like hard-learned lessons.

The first took place in the lobby of the Arlington Hilton Hotel, located a healthy walk from the racetrack, two nights before the running of the watershed event. Lewis Cenicola, John Henry's exercise rider and boon companion, was in a postprandial mood, heading for either the lounge or the lift, depending on the pull of social gravity. Cenicola and his small band of Californians suddenly intersected with a gang of celebrating Brits who were on the scene with trainer Paul Kellaway and Madam Gay, winner of the Prix de Diane.

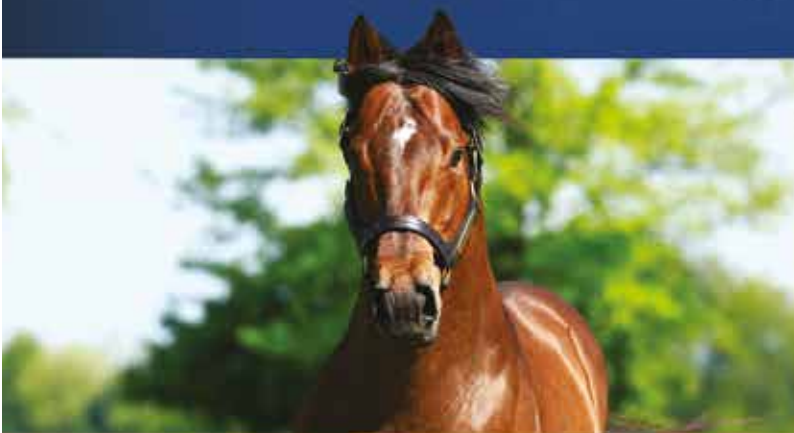
"What chance will John Henry have against a classic filly like ours?" said one of the lads, or words even more colorfully to that effect. "He's just a handicap horse."

Cenicola, an Italian of the New York persuasion, leveled an icy stare. The rest of us stood back.

"A handicap horse? A handicap horse!?" he demanded, building in volume. "You mean like the Santa Anita Handicap?"

Clearly, their common language was worthless in the face of fundamental differences in racing cultures. Two days later, Madam Gay finished third behind

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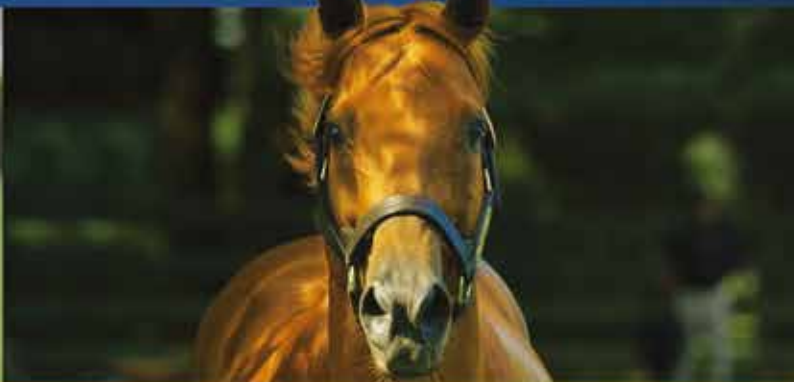


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When Sam Riddle asked what kind of weight Man o' War might expect as a 4-year-old of 1921, Vosburgh was said to have replied, "The heaviest weight a horse has ever carried."

that mere handicap horse, although she was beaten barely two lengths. Her jockey, Lester Piggott, was not able to do the assigned weight, given the allowances afforded a 3-year-old filly against older males in August, and came in four pounds heavy. During the NBC post-race interviews, Michael O'Hehir, of all people, broached the subject.

"You don't think the four pounds overweight made any difference?" O'Hehir asked Piggott, a robust 45 at the time.

"Well," mumbled the jockey, "she might have been a lot farther back."

Point. Set. Maestro.

Floodgate of memories

The recent death of Tommy Trotter, at age 93, opened a floodgate of memories that flowed from his tenure as one of North America's most widely respected racing officials. His career flourished in an era when 'handicap' horses stood shoulder to shoulder alongside classic 3-year-olds as the stars of the U.S. sport, elevated in prestige by not only the races they won, but the weight they carried.

Those weights came down on high from racing secretaries like Trotter and his forbears. They commanded a begrudging reverence unfamiliar in today's racing suites, where managements do not have the advantage of captive racing inventories, and elaborate betting menus have suppressed the winning imperative.

They were executives like Edward W. Maginn, who once studied for the priesthood before becoming racing secretary at tracks throughout the American heartland in the late 19th century and into the 20th. Faced with betting syndicates and horsemen who thought nothing of holding a runner until the odds were right, Maginn would

levy the same stern weight in race after race until the poor trainer was forced to turn his horse loose.

Walter Spencer Vosburgh, a one-man star chamber through the first third of the 20th century, cloistered himself nightly when compiling weights for races under the jurisdiction of the Jockey Club in New York. He rarely shared his methods, except to insist that champions had to continually prove themselves worthy of the designation by carrying far more weight than their inferiors. When Sam Riddle asked what kind of weight Man o' War might expect as a 4-year-old of 1921, Vosburgh was said to have replied, "The heaviest weight a horse has ever carried." Man o' War was promptly retired.

John Blanks Campbell came along after Vosburgh and didn't miss a beat. Campbell, from Louisiana, cut his teeth on the rough tracks of the old southwest, so New Yorkers failed to impress. He dumped 130 pounds and more with regularity on Devil Diver, Whirlaway, and Stymie. Campbell also spun the handicappers' version of the Golden Fleece in the 1944 running of the Carter Handicap at Aqueduct when Bossuet (127 pounds), Wait A Bit (118), and Brownie (115) finished in a triple dead-heat at the end of the seven furlongs.

Frank Eugene 'Jimmy' Kilroe was an urbane New Yorker who served in a U.S. Army intelligence unit entering Germany in the immediate aftermath of World War II. After that, his inspired reinvigoration of the racing programs in New York and California was child's play. Kilroe's best handicaps were replete with horses like Round Table, Ack Ack, Affirmed, and John Henry, embellishing their winning records with serious weight.

Trotter did some of his finest work weighting the popular gelding Forego in New York's historic handicaps. Commencing with the 1974 Metropolitan

Handicap, in which Forego finished second while giving the winner 22 pounds, Trotter asked the gelding to carry 130 pounds or more in 22 races over parts of five seasons, topping out at 137 twice and 138. Forego's owner, Martha Gerry, considered it an honor to be asked. Her horse won 12 of those 22, finished second in five, and third on two other occasions.

Proud moment

In the 1976 Suburban Handicap at Aqueduct, Trotter assigned Forego 134 pounds. Foolish Pleasure, the 1975 Kentucky Derby winner, carried 126 pounds and beat Forego by a nose, while Lord Rebeau, a capable trial horse, carried 116 and finished third, a nose behind Forego.

"I was pretty proud of that one," Trotter said. Rightfully so.

"I'd certainly feel bad when a highweight would finish up the track," Trotter once said. "Then something would come out in the next day or so that had nothing to do with the weight they carried."

Today's racing secretaries are handicappers in name only. Only a handful of Grade 1 handicaps remain in North America. Even the fabled Santa Anita Handicap went through a period recently when a 126-pound maximum was demanded by the owners' association, which only served to increase jockey overweights.

As a result, the modern Thoroughbred must prove his worth in ways not measured by champions of the past. A brief, carefully calibrated career now is valued over a long and testing campaign that might chance the occasional defeat. International prizes carve out huge hunks of recovery time for domestic travelers. Speed figures are being touted in stallion advertisements.

And so it goes. In Europe, a handicap horse is still a handicap horse. In America, he is a dinosaur.

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What They're Thinking **Craig Evans: ban jockeys a month for every hit over the whip limit – then they'd learn to count**

Sally Ann Grassick | March 17, 2020

Craig Evans: the Australian will call his third
Dubai World Cup at Meydan on March 28



It will be the biggest day of the year for race-caller Craig Evans, although it will feel slightly different this time when he commentates on the world's richest race-day - Corvid-19 means there will be no public in attendance when he calls his third Dubai World Cup on Saturday week (March 28).

Evans, who has provided commentaries in seven different countries during 32 years in the business, has been the commentator for the Emirates Racing Authority since 2017, after spending the previous ten years as senior race-caller in Singapore.

He has been shortlisted in the past for full-time positions at Santa Anita and Melbourne. He called his first race at the age of 14 in Western Australia.

Who do you think is the most important figure in the history of racing around the world?

For me it would probably have to be figures rather than just one figure. I think it would be hard to go past the vision of several owners from the Middle East.

Led by Sheikh Mohammed and his Godolphin operation, the amount of money injected into racing from the Middle East in the last 30 years has been significant. If you pick up a race guide anywhere in the world today, there is a good chance of seeing horses owned by Godolphin, or several other high-profile owners from the region, racing in large numbers. Almost all racing jurisdictions benefit from sponsorship, and their influence on breeding on a global scale is unprecedented.

What is your favourite racing venue and race?

Growing up in Australia, I've always considered the Cox Plate as Australia's best race, and by extension my favourite race. If you own a very good racehorse you program your entire year around having that horse compete in the Cox Plate.

Run at weight for age, it always attracts the best horses in training and, being run at probably the most unique major racecourse anywhere in the world, nearly always produces something special. Moonee Valley is an absolute racing gem, and you really get the feeling that you are part of the

action. Packed to the rafters, it only takes about 25,000 spectators with the city of Melbourne as the backdrop. The home straight is less than 200 metres long so it's a very tactical track and race.

The honour role is the best of any race in Australia, which is highlighted by Winx equalling the record of three wins by Kingston Town, and then going on to create history with a fourth. See Kingston Town's amazing third win in 1982 below.

What is your fondest memory in racing?

My father was a part-time bookmaker in country Western Australia, and along with his business partner would fly to weekend race meetings in a light aircraft that they owned but would charter out during the week.

In 1982, I was just getting interested in race-calling and he took me on a flight to Ascot racecourse in Perth (about a three-hour flight) to watch the Western Mail Classic, a race with similar attributes to the Cox Plate, run at weight for age and attracting the best horses. Ascot was packed, and I squeezed into a spot on the stairs of the grandstand to watch the race. It was the most incredible atmosphere I had ever experienced as Kingston Town, having his final race start, charged down the outside to a memorable victory. I often wonder if I hadn't experienced that race would I have been so passionate about pursuing race-calling.

What is the biggest challenge that racing faces today?

Without a doubt, it would have to be public perception. I think racehorses are generally looked after particularly well, but I don't think the general public see it that way. Racing needs a concerted effort to alter public opinion as I think many people are nudged away from participating in racing before they get the chance to see what a wonderful sport that it is.

The whip rules need to be stringently adhered to for two reasons. Firstly, public perception and secondly it is one of the most blatant forms of cheating in sport I can think of. If the guy abiding by the rules is edged out in a photo by the jockey who uses his whip even once over the limit and only gets a small fine, then it is not okay. \$10,000 and a month suspension for every hit over the limit – they would learn to count very quickly.

If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?

Somehow get the best colts to race on. I fully understand the financial realities of quality colts being rushed off to stand at stud, but it does not help the sport long-term. I have no idea what the answer is, but imagine the best 3-year-olds returning to do battle at four and then five. That would build rivalries that could be marketed as in other sports, capturing the imagination of racegoers and the public.

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29 March 2020

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1082
2	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1070
3	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1069
4	William Buick	Great Britain	1048
5	Zac Purton	Hong Kong	1043
6	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1039
7	James McDonald	Australia	1037
7	Joel Rosario	USA	1037
9	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1034
10	Mike E Smith	USA	1028
11	Flavien Prat	USA	1025
12	Mickael Barzalona	France	1024
13	Javier Castellano	USA	1019
14	Yuga Kawada	Japan	1016
15	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1015

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1083
2	John Gosden	Great Britain	1070
3	Chad C Brown	USA	1065
4	Bob Baffert	USA	1036
5	Aidan O'Brien	Great Britain	1033
6	Brad H Cox	USA	1019
6	James Cummings	Australia	1019
6	Jamie Richards	New Zealand	1019
9	Steven Asmussen	USA	1013
10	Andre Fabre	France	1011
10	Chris Waller	Australia	1011
12	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1007
13	John Size	Hong Kong	1004
13	Saeed bin Suroor	UAE	1004
15	John Moore	Hong Kong	999

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Godolphin	Australia	1081
2	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1041
2	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1041
4	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	USA	1031
5	Silk Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1027
6	U Carrot Farm	Japan	1025
7	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1021
8	Phoenix Thoroughbreds Et Al	USA	1015
9	White Birch Farm / Peter Brant Et Al	USA	1014
10	Peters Investments Et Al	Australia	1013
10	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1013
12	Danox Co Ltd	Japan	1012
13	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1011
14	Bernard Kantor Et Al	South Africa	1008
14	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	1008

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1077
2	Galileo	Ireland	1044
3	Shamardal	Great Britain	1042
4	Lord Kanaloa	Japan	1039
5	Deep Impact	Japan	1038
6	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1037
7	Frankel	Great Britain	1035
8	Pierro	Australia	1023
9	Not A Single Doubt	Australia	1022
10	I Am Invincible	Australia	1021
11	Curlin	USA	1020
11	Lookin At Lucky	USA	1020
11	Scat Daddy	USA	1020
14	Medaglia D'oro	Australia	1019
15	Street Cry	Australia	1018