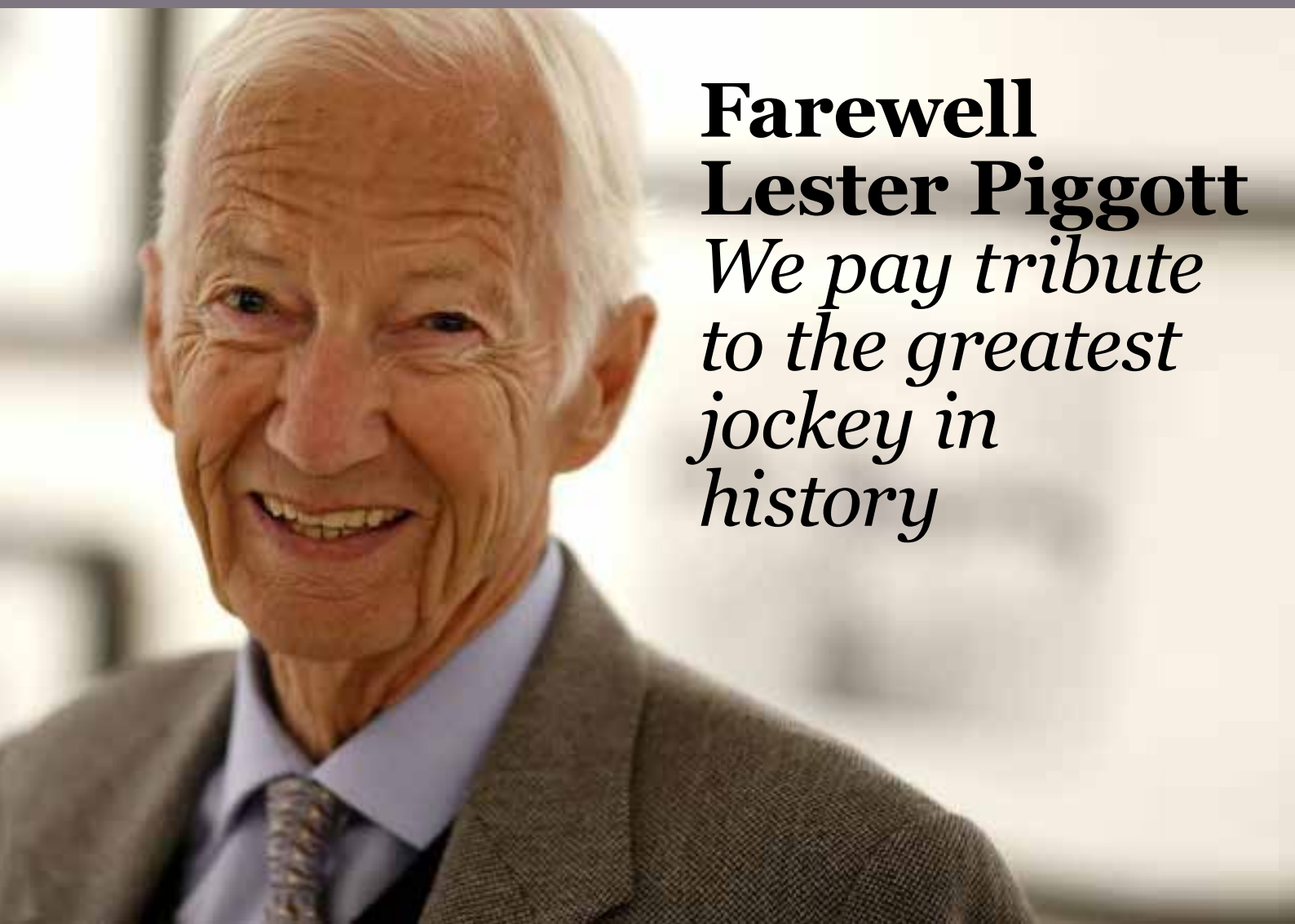


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# TRC



**Farewell  
Lester Piggott**  
*We pay tribute  
to the greatest  
jockey in  
history*

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# *‘The myths and the legend will last forever’ – farewell to Lester Piggott*

Steve Dennis | MAY 29, 2022



*Lester Piggott, the greatest jockey there's ever been, died on Sunday morning at the age of 86. Steve Dennis pays tribute to an iconic figure who bestrode the sport like a Colossus*

Where do you start with Lester Piggott? The 5,000 winners, the 30 British Classics, the nine Derbys, the 11 titles? The stories, the ice-cream, the five-pound ear, Wilson Pickett? The impact, the mythology, the hero worship, the legend? Lester Piggott defied easy categorisation, will forever defy the laws of perspective, for the further he recedes into history the greater his mystique will appear.

Piggott was born in November 1935, grandson of a Grand National-winning jockey, the heir of a decorated racing dynasty. He won his first race in August 1948, aboard The Chase at Haydock, grew up as a boy wonder – even riding with success over hurdles – and as the boy became a man the wonder never went away. He won his first championship in 1960 and his last in 1982.

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Cover image – Lester Piggott (1935-2022): horse racing giant won 11 jockeys' titles and 30 Classics in Britain, including a record nine Derbys at Epsom. Photo: Dan Abraham / focusonracing.com

This page – Lester Piggott: revered as the greatest jockey in the history of horse racing. Photo: Mark Cranham/focusonracing.com

‘We weren’t buddies in the beginning but we became buddies in the end’ – Steve Cauthen remembers Lester Piggott

His nine Derbys are a record, the first coming in 1954 on the outsider Never Say Die, the last in 1983 on Teenoso. His 30 British Classics are also a record, from Never Say Die through to Rodrigo De Triano in the 2,000 Guineas in 1992. Piggott’s career is easy to define in records, and if his winners worldwide are taken into account his tally exceeds that of Sir Gordon Richards.

The names of the great horses he rode are legion, would take up all the space available. Triple Crown winner Nijinsky, Derby winners Crepello, Sir Ivor, Roberto and The Minstrel, Arc winners Rheingold and Alleged, outstanding stayers Sagaro, Le Moss and Ardross, brilliant fillies Petite Etoile, Park Top and Dahlia, crack sprinters Right Boy and Moorestyle, to keep it necessarily brief.

Tall enough for a jockey at 5ft 8in, he spent practically his entire career subjecting himself to a fearsome regime of dieting and wasting, competing with his natural physical needs as effectively as he competed with his rivals on the racetrack, reputedly subsisting on cigars and ice-cream, although he wasn’t quite that ascetic.

He grew up with a minor speech impediment and deafness in one ear, which goes a long way towards explaining his famously uncommunicative manner, his monosyllabic approach to conversation. He was not simply being bloody-minded, although he made a point of it when it suited.

These physical issues forged his character and the flaws within it, the austerity of his lifestyle reinforced them, and his genius allowed him to exploit them.

Sir Peter O’Sullivan said that Piggott’s attitude resembled “the gunfighter’s delusion of being above the law”, but it is also fair to say that Piggott’s darker side – his ruthlessness, his miserliness, his indifference – served not to alienate him but to command respect,



to foster the awe, devotion and fascination in which he was held by the racing public, who delightedly viewed these defects as tough-guy glamour, a contributory aspect of his overall allure.

He was controversial, a bad boy, the antithesis of his saintly predecessor Richards – and in his great and prolonged heyday he was as big as the sport itself.

He was the first racing hero of the television age and arrived in it fully formed as an icon, making an indelible impression on this new armchair audience. Through brute strength and delicate finesse he won races other jockeys would have lost, won people money other jockeys would have lost. Put your last fiver on Lester, and he would get the job done for you. The faith he inspired in the everyday punter was extraordinary.

Lester Piggott and Nijinsky, Britain’s most recent Triple Crown winner in 1970. Photo: [focusonracing.com](http://focusonracing.com)

It was said that a jockey couldn’t be confident of riding a big-race favourite until he walked into the parade ring wearing the colours, because of Piggott’s persistence and skill in persuading owners and trainers to employ him instead. His big-race temperament was as ice-cold as any gunslinger, his associations with great trainers Noel Murless, Vincent O’Brien and Henry Cecil gave him access to the best horses. A mythology grew effortlessly around him, and he revelled in it.

Everyone has a Lester story, most of them growing from the same seed of a preoccupation with money and a dry, laconic wit; some of the stories





even true. One day a down-on-his-luck valet approached Piggott and muttered in his ear “Lester, can you lend me five pounds?”. Lester shrugged. “I can’t hear you, that’s my deaf ear.” The valet moved to the other ear. “Lester, can you lend me ten pounds?” Lester shook his head. “Try the five-pound ear again.”

The Wilson Pickett story was given the mark of authenticity by the man himself in an interview several years ago. England, the 1960s, Piggott at the stratospheric height of his renown. Or not quite, perhaps.

Interviewer: *There are so many stories about you, and not all of them are true. Is the Wilson Pickett one true?*

Lester Piggott: *[Almost a giggle] Yes, that one’s true.*

Int: *You were driving up the Finchley Road [in London], a hot day, you fancied an ice-cream, spotted a kiosk, went in. The girl behind the counter said: ‘Aren’t you Wilson Pickett?’*

LP: *That’s right.*

Int: *And you said?*

LP: *Yes, I am [laughing].*

Int: *But Wilson Pickett was a black American soul singer. And you’re a little white English jockey.*

The old firm: Lester Piggott and Vincent O’Brien, the legendary trainer responsible for so many of his big-race winners. Photo: focusonracing.com

LP: *It seemed easier to say yes. I didn’t want to get into a long discussion about it, y’know.*

Long discussions were anathema to the taciturn genius, who used words as though they cost him money, who doled them out with the resigned reluctance of a bookmaker paying out fivers and tenners.

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*In a comeback almost out-Lazarusing Lazarus, one so dramatic and improbable no Hollywood scriptwriter would have given it a second glance, he won the Breeders’ Cup Mile on Royal Academy, a son of Nijinsky.*

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After victory in the 1969 Washington DC International on Karabas, reporters who had criticised his winning ride on Sir Ivor the year before now asked him when he thought he had the race won. "About three weeks ago," he replied, dismissively.

He retired in 1985, trained with success for two seasons, and was then sensationally convicted of tax evasion, which resulted in imprisonment for 12 months, something he described in true Piggott style as "a waste of time". His downfall was ultimately self-inflicted; he paid his dues to the Inland Revenue with a cheque drawn on an account he had left undeclared. He was stripped of his OBE but not of his status in the eyes of his followers, his reputation trapped in an amber that gleamed unendingly in the sunshine of his former glories.

In 1990, at the age of 54, he returned to the saddle. Less than a fortnight later, in a comeback almost out-Lazarus Lazarus, one so dramatic and improbable no Hollywood scriptwriter would have given it a second glance, he won the Breeders' Cup Mile on Royal Academy, a son of Nijinsky trained by his old ally O'Brien, past and present knitted adroitly together. "You never forget," he said, in that ever-imitable voice, a broad smile on his face, the world at his feet again.

Forgetting was something he was surprisingly concerned about, in his later years. In several of his final interviews he mentioned often that no-one liked to be forgotten, referring implicitly, poignantly, to himself, as though he was just another old geezer worried about overstaying his welcome, getting in the way of the future. It was funny and sad at the same time; as if Lester Piggott could be, will ever be forgotten.

In 1995 he retired again, this time for keeps. The annual British awards for jockeys were named the Lesters, in his honour, and he was occasionally called for interview, to give the old answers to the old questions, reliving his past and ours once more. Now, sadly, never again. But is this the end?

No, it doesn't end. His past is still our past, and as long as we are here then so will Lester be, his stone-faced gaze defying interpretation, the old aura of majesty encircling him, his significance and his legacy unaltered by the ruination of time. The myths and the legend of Lester Piggott will last forever.



Top – Legendary pair: Lester Piggott with Bill Shoemaker in 1982. Photo: Mark Cranham/focusonracing.com

Above – Lester Piggott and Rodrigo De Triano after the jockey's final Classic success in the 2,000 Guineas in 1992. Photo: Mark Cranham/focusonracing.com





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# The sport of queens: celebrating Her Majesty's 70-year reign as racing's number one supporter

Julian Muscat | MAY 31, 2022

*Ahead of the Platinum Jubilee weekend, when celebrations will continue at the Epsom Derby meeting, Julian Muscat offers an overview of the Queen's lifelong involvement in horse racing*







There was never much doubt the Royal Studs were in good hands when Princess Elizabeth succeeded her father, George VI, to the British throne in 1952.

The princess was five when she was given her first pony, Peggy, and quickly became an accomplished rider. Yet long before she reached her teens Elizabeth became a frequent visitor to the stud at Hampton Court, just south of London, where the young stock were raised. Thoroughbred racehorses were her calling.

It has been that way ever since. So much so that the Platinum Jubilee celebrations on June 3-6 are centred around Derby day. In her 70 years on the throne she has barely missed a Derby; the pity is that her homebred colt, Reach For The Moon, could not contest this year's renewal after he suffered a setback.

Her Majesty would have known that Reach For The Moon had the right bloodlines for Epsom. As a child she could recite the royal broodmares' pedigrees in the same way a young Einstein would reel off multiplication tables.

She did just that, aged 12, when the memory of her father's racing manager, Sir Charles Moore, failed him as he showed the King one of his mares. "She is by the Derby winner, Manna, out of Book Debt, by Buchan," the princess stated matter-of-factly.

The Queen has always immersed herself in the history of the Royal Studs, which had seen the nursery breed 1896 Derby winner Persimmon and

his full-brother, the 1900 Triple Crown winner Diamond Jubilee, out of the mare Perdita.

Another royal mare, this time King George VI's 1,000 Guineas runner-up Feola, almost gave the Queen an unforgettable baptism as an owner. Feola was dam of Aureole, who carried the royal silks in the 1953 Derby just four days after the Queen's Coronation at Westminster Abbey.

In the event, Aureole beat all bar Pinza to finish second. The Queen could never have known it, such was the Royal Studs' strength at the time, but she would never again come as close to winning the blue riband in seven decades of trying.

Aureole atoned handsomely for his Derby defeat. The following season he won the Coronation Cup, Hardwicke Stakes and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes to propel the Queen to the top of the owners' lists in her second full season as an owner. In that respect Aureole was abetted by Choir Boy and Landau, who posted a royal double at Royal Ascot.

In these early years it was noticeable how much the Queen enjoyed her visits to the races. She was invariably smiling as she interacted with jockeys and trainers, while any royal winner was cheered home with the zest of a passionate fan. Here was an opportunity for Her Majesty to shed the cloak of formality redolent of state occasions.

Success continued unabated throughout the 1950s. In 1957 Her Majesty owned the three best three-

Left – The Queen with royal trainer Ian Balding in the paddock on Derby Day at Epsom in 1965. Photo: Mark Cranham / focusonracing.com

Right – Royal Ascot: Britain's most prestigious meeting is an annual highlight of the Queen's calendar. Photo: Megan Ridgwell / focusonracing.com

year-old fillies in Almeria (Ribblesdale Stakes, Yorkshire Oaks, Park Hill Stakes) Carrozza (Oaks) and Mulberry Harbour (Cheshire Oaks). The homebred Pall Mall won the 2,000 Guineas the following year, while another Royal Ascot double in 1959 saw the Queen close the decade with 11 winners at the hallowed venue in eight years. Then the well ran dry.

1960 was an annus horribilis that yielded just two nondescript winners, while Aiming High's Coronation Stakes triumph in 1961 was one of only two royal winners at the royal meeting during that decade.

Gaulois's 1966 Goodwood Cup triumph was trainer Capt Cecil Boyd-Rochfort's last royal big-race winner before he retired in 1968, to be replaced by Dick Hern. The benefits of Hern's recruitment were soon apparent: in 1974 he saddled Highclere to win both the 1,000 Guineas and Prix de Diane (French Oaks), the latter triumph triggering delirious scenes at Chantilly as turfistes jostled around the winner's enclosure. Local gendarmes were overwhelmed by an extraordinary outpouring of joy for the Queen's homebred filly.

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*Height Of Fashion made an immediate impact as a broodmare. Having thrown two Group winners from her first two foals she bequeathed Nashwan as her third.*

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Three years later Hern again came up trumps when he saddled Dunfermline to win the Oaks and St Leger in the Silver Jubilee year of 1977. The great pity was that Her Majesty was unable to be present for either race; her diary was saturated with official engagements. In winning the St Leger, Dunfermline became the only horse to beat Alleged, a colt who went on to win back-to-back runnings of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

That red-letter day would be the last savoured by Her Majesty for some time. It would be another 36 years before the royal silks captured another G1 race in Britain, courtesy of Estimate's hugely popular success in the 2013 Gold Cup at Ascot. So while the 1970s closed with a flourish when Expansive (Ribblesdale

Stakes) and Buttress (Queen's Vase) landed a Royal Ascot double, thunder clouds were on the horizon.

The early 1980s saw the influx into Britain of numerous Middle Eastern potentates with inestimable wealth, headed by the ruling Maktoum family of Dubai. Traditional owner-breeders wilted under the onslaught, and the Queen was not immune. Her horses were competing against a slew of regally-bred animals that had been bought en masse as yearlings, while on the breeding side, many established broodmares and promising fillies on the track were bought to join the Arabs' burgeoning studs.

Among them was Her Majesty's Height Of Fashion, the joint top-rated two-year-old filly of 1981 after her victories

in the May Hill Stakes and Fillies' Mile. After winning the Princess Of Wales's Stakes at three, Height Of Fashion was sold to Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum for a seven-figure sum, a deal which looked well timed after the filly ran poorly in two subsequent starts. It also allowed the Queen to buy West Ilsley stables, where Hern trained, with the proceeds.

However, Height Of Fashion made an immediate impact as a broodmare. Having thrown two Group winners from her first two foals she bequeathed Nashwan as her third. But that was only part of a sorry story that would see Hern, then confined to a wheelchair after an earlier hunting accident, dismissed from West Ilsley on health grounds towards the end of 1988.



The monarch and the Maestro: the Queen leads in her first Classic winner, the Lester Piggott-ridden Carrozza, after the 1957 Oaks. Photo: Alamy/Great British Racing





Above left – Epsom success: Dunfermline (Willie Carson) beats Freeze The Secret (Gianfranco Dettori) in the 1977 Oaks. Photo: Mark Cranham / focusonracing.com

Above – The late Duke of Edinburgh presents the Queen with the Queen's Vase after Estimate's victory in 2012. Photo: Dan Abraham / focusonracing.com

Left – Royal success at Royal Ascot: Estimate (Ryan Moore, left) fights off Simenon to win the Gold Cup in 2013. Photo: Dan Abraham / focusonracing.com



Hern quickly rebutted that suggestion when he saddled Nashwan to land the 2,000 Guineas in 1989. The rousing reception he received from racegoers at Newmarket told its own story: the public had taken Hern's side over the Queen's in an episode that was debated in the highest echelons of the royal household. It was the biggest controversy to confront Her Majesty in her long association with the Turf.

And all the while, the Royal Studs were in the doldrums. The Queen's inability to compete with petrodollars – all her spend on thoroughbreds comes out of her own private purse – was exacerbated by her inability on security grounds to send her mares to be bred to stallions in Ireland, where the best of them stood.

For all that, Her Majesty's enthusiasm remained undimmed. While she is enamoured by big-race success, she takes greater pleasure in the belief that each foal born to the Royal Studs is given every opportunity to achieve its full potential – even when that potential is below the requisite level to compete in the best races.

When the Troubles in Ireland subsided, however, the Queen, by now into her eighth decade, embarked on a comprehensive overhaul of the broodmare band early in the new millennium. She continues to invest significantly in new bloodlines, emboldened by the knowledge she can mate them to worthy stallions.

The Royal Studs are thus in the ascendent once more. They are increasingly productive with each passing year, and the quality of blood Her Majesty has now sown into her broodmare band suggests the best is yet to come.

Despite her successes down the decades, the Queen is seen within the horse racing community as an owner who is rarely afforded Lady Luck's embrace. The latest instance is the untimely injury to Reach For The Moon which ruled this immensely promising colt out of Derby calculations in this of all years.

Rain or shine, however, fair wind or foul, the Queen remains in thrall to the sport of horse racing. She is the embodiment of Rudyard Kipling's fabled poem about treating triumph and disaster just the same.

## Fit for a queen: five of the best to carry Her Majesty's colours

**Aureole** Her Majesty's only winner of the race named after her parents: the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes. She has also had four runners-up.

**Doutelle** Among Doutelle's sterling achievements was his victory in the 1958 Ormonde Stakes, in which he beat Ballymoss, subsequently winner of the Eclipse, King George and Arc.

**Dunfermline** Victories in the Oaks and St Leger made the perfect accompaniment to national celebrations in the Silver Jubilee year of 1977.

**Height Of Fashion** Following her sale to Sheikh Hamdan, Height Of Fashion became a broodmare in a million. In addition to her celebrated son Nashwan, she is ancestress of Japanese sire sensation Deep Impact and champion miler Baaeed.

**Highclere** Another dual Classic winner for the Queen, Highclere was a great granddaughter of Feola, who was the Royal Studs' most prolific broodmare in the 20th Century.





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Newbury blockbuster:  
Baaeed's Lockinge  
Stakes win was his  
seventh win out of  
seven career starts and  
confirmed his status as  
an outstanding miler.  
Photo: Dan Abraham /  
focusonracing.com



# Baaeed looks brilliant but is he the new Frankel?

Graham Dench | MAY 19, 2022

*They're both outstanding racehorses – but only one of them is an equine legend. So how close is Baaeed to following in the great Frankel's footsteps? Graham Dench assesses the evidence*

The superlatives were certainly flying after the brilliant Baaeed extended his unbeaten record to seven with a sparkling display at Newbury on his four-year-old debut in the Al Shaqab Lockinge Stakes.

But although pundits have so far stopped short of suggesting the new world #1 might be as good as the legendary Frankel, the 'F-word' came up repeatedly after the four-year-old dismissed the classy Real World – never before beaten on turf – in the one-mile contest.

The William Haggas-trained colt is now odds-on for his next assignment at Royal Ascot in the Queen Anne Stakes,

where he is set to bid for his fourth successive G1 triumph.

Rightly or wrongly, the idea that Baaeed is the best since Frankel is already gaining serious traction. If he can stay unbeaten – maybe following the Frankel path via the Sussex Stakes, Juddmonte International and perhaps the Champion Stakes – then such comparisons will only increase.

So how do the pair stack up? Let's examine the evidence.

## The basics

**Frankel pedigree** bh Galileo - Kind (Danehill)

**Foaled** February 11, 2008

**Owner** Khalid Abdullah

**Breeder** Juddmonte Farms Ltd

**Trainer** Sir Henry Cecil

**Jockey** Tom Queally

**Baaeed pedigree** bc Sea The Stars - Aghareed (Kingmambo)

**Foaled** April 18, 2018

**Owner** Shadwell Estate Company Ltd

**Breeder** Shadwell Estate Company Ltd

**Trainer** William Haggas

**Jockey** Jim Crowley

## Career details

**Frankel 14 wins from 14 runs (10 at G1); retired with career earnings of £2,998,302 (approx \$3.7m)**

Widest win margin: 13 lengths (Doncaster conditions race on second start)

Aggregate win distance: 75¼ lengths (average 5.35)

Most spectacular win: incredible 2,000 Guineas romp (just ahead of sensational Queen Anne)

Best win on TRC figures: Juddmonte International 138

Shortest odds: 1-20 for second Sussex Stakes

Longest odds: 7-4 on debut

**Baaeed 7 wins from 7 runs (3 at G1); earnings to date £1,147,822 (approx \$1.4m)**

Widest win margin: 7½ lengths (Newmarket novice event on second start)

Aggregate win distance: 24 lengths (average 3.43)



Most spectacular win: brutal Lockinge demolition (just ahead of tremendous 6½-length G3 success at Goodwood)

Best win on TRC figures: Lockinge Stakes 129

Shortest odds: 2-5 for Goodwood G3

Longest odds: 6-1 on debut

## At this stage ...

Baaeed did not make his debut until June of his three-year-old career, by which time Frankel was already six out of six. This included two major G1s in the Dewhurst at two and the Guineas at three – before Baaeed was even out of the blocks. With seven straight wins Baaeed has done a bit of catching up, although by the same stage of his career Frankel had added a further four wins (all of them G1) to make it ten from ten.

## Shall we talk about it?

### Frankel

Sir Henry Cecil (trainer): *"He's the best I've ever had, the best I've ever seen. I'd be very surprised if there's ever been a better horse."*

Teddy Grimthorpe (racing manager): "We are living the dream. You get so spoiled that you expect this from him. The expectations are just enormous, but the fact is he keeps delivering time and again. Each time he runs we say 'That was amazing', then the next time. 'That was fantastic'. That is Frankel. I've never seen anything like him." (speaking after Juddmonte International)

Classic spectacular: Frankel produced a sensational display to win the 2,000 Guineas under Tom Queally in April 2011. Photo: British Champions Series

### Baaeed

Jim Crowley (jockey): "It was like a piece of work. He is a serious horse. It's very exciting. I am sure Sheikh Hamdan, who spent a lifetime trying to breed a horse like this, is watching down. He has everything you want in a racehorse. I can't think of a weakness. He looks like he could be the best I've ridden." (speaking after Lockinge)

William Haggas (trainer): "I wouldn't go so far as to say he's the best horse in the world – it's not the sort of thing I'd say – but he's done very well and it was a strong field. I was impressed. He is a good horse and has a great temperament. He will go for the Queen Anne Stakes and if we step him up in distance he will go for the Juddmonte. Frankel arguably was at his most imperious when he ran in the Juddmonte on that unforgettable day. So we will try it at some stage." (speaking after the Lockinge)



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# *“Baaeed’s current TRC Global Rankings portfolio stands at a respectable 2108pts – enough to be clear world #1.”*

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## On the numbers

### TRC Computer Race Ratings

#### Frankel’s best 138

#### Baaeed’s best 129

“Baaeed is now the 19th different world #1 since we started ranking horses in 2014 and he could end up as one of the best, though he has some way to go yet to reach the same company of Winx, American Pharoah and Enable. Frankel had been retired when our classifications began, but the computer did score his performances at 138. So, comparisons with the great horse are a little hasty in my book, but that is to no horse’s detriment – it is like comparing human sprinters with Usain Bolt.” James Willoughby, rankings expert

### TRC Global Rankings points

#### Frankel not available

#### Baaeed 2108pts (best portfolio)

“Baaeed’s current TRC Global Rankings portfolio stands at a respectable 2108pts – enough to be clear world #1. However, there have been 19 different world #1s since 2014, with portfolios ranging from 2035pts [Nature Strip in April 2022] to 2796pts [Winx in April 2017], with the median being 2408pts. Frankel’s exploits came before the first full list was completed in 2014 and thus we don’t know how many points his portfolio was worth. But it would have been significantly better than anything since – probably close to the 3000-mark.” Nicholas Godfrey, TRC editor

### Timeform

#### Frankel 147

#### Baaeed 134

“For the second year running Newbury’s Lockinge Stakes went to the previous season’s top three-year-old miler, though Baaeed (134 from 130) won even more convincingly than 2021 winner Palace Pier (whom he’d beaten at Ascot on his final start last year) and took his form up a notch. As an unbeaten Lockinge winner, some

might be tempted to draw comparisons between Baaeed and Frankel, but while the similarities between the two end there, it’s still a big compliment to rate Baaeed the best Lockinge winner since Frankel.” John Ingles, Timeform

### Official ratings (BHA/IFHA)

#### Frankel 140

#### Baaeed 125

“Baaeed did no more than what the best of his form last year entitled him to, and I don’t believe that mathematically he improved on his 125. He went into the race with 7lb in hand of Real World and beat him 3¼ lengths, and with 13lb in hand of Chindit, who he beat five lengths. But I have no doubt that he is a 130 horse – given the right circumstances and the right opposition.” Dominic Gardiner-Hill, BHA head of handicapping

### Racing Post Ratings

#### Frankel 143

#### Baaeed 129

“Baaeed looked better than ever in making an impressive return to action in the Lockinge, laying down a daunting marker for the rest of the season with a slightly improved Racing Post Rating of 129+. The Lockinge wasn’t the strongest of runnings and Baaeed really did only what he was entitled to on the figures. However, it was hard not to be impressed and he looks well worth the small upgrade on his three-year-old levels. It will be a surprise if Baaeed doesn’t rate higher still, but in terms of figures he’s still a stone behind the highest-rated racehorse in RPR history.” Paul Curtis, Racing Post

### Similar in some ways ...

1. Both are unbeaten.

2. Both have impeccable pedigrees and were bred by two of the foremost breeding operations of the last 50 years. They raced for their breeders, or in Baaeed’s case his dependents.

3. Frankel is by Galileo, and Baaeed is by a half-brother to Galileo, Sea The Stars.

4. Both trained in Newmarket by acknowledged masters of their trade.

### ... but they’re really quite different

1. Frankel was a champion 2yo (officially joint champion, with Dream Ahead, but outright champion to most eyes). Baaeed was not ready to race at two and did not see a racecourse until the following June.

2. Frankel’s domination spanned three full seasons. Baaeed has been racing less than a year and is only now being widely recognised as at the top of the tree.

3. Baaeed is already a G1 winner abroad, whereas Frankel spent his entire career in England.

4. Frankel got the job done even when he was thought to be at his most vulnerable, beating Cirrus Des Aigles in really soft ground in the Qipco Champion Stakes on his final start. Baaeed has yet to encounter extremes of going.

5. Frankel was a headstrong, free-going type who benefited from the assistance of a pacemaker – older half-brother Bullet Train – both at home and in many of his races. Baaeed is a more naturally amenable individual and looks a more straightforward ride.

6. Frankel was a most imposing individual with huge charisma, who stood out in every parade ring as the embodiment of the perfect specimen. Baaeed is a good-looking colt with no obvious flaws, but he lacks Frankel’s stature.

7. Despite never racing abroad, Frankel’s name clearly resonated on the world stage, where he was mentioned in the same breath as Secretariat and Phar Lap as an all-time legend. Baaeed doesn’t yet register beyond Europe.



## Graham Dench's conclusion

Baaeed may yet be capable of more and achieve a higher rating, both according to TRC Global Rankings and conventional handicapping techniques. But he has some way to go before he is breathing anything like the same air as Frankel.

As visually impressive as Baaeed was in the Lockinge, it is a plausible argument that he did no more than he was entitled to do. For example, the BHA's mark of 125 following the Lockinge was no improvement on Baaeed's end-of-year rating for 2021 on the sport's de facto official figures, as published in the World's Best Racehorse Rankings.

Moreover, whichever ratings system is used, he remains well down the pecking order among European-trained horses since Frankel. Cracksman, Golden Horn and Ghaiyyath all achieved ratings of 130, Enable peaked at 128, Adayar and Roaring Lion were both rated 127, and Kingman and Battaash both got to 126. That might not be a comprehensive list either.

For perspective it's also worth remembering Baaeed's own sire Sea The Stars – pre-Frankel of course, but most

definitely among the modern greats – earned a lofty WBRR mark of 133, having won six of Europe's most prestigious G1s in a year, including the 2000 Guineas, Derby and Arc.

Admittedly, other ratings systems – including TRC Race Ratings and Timeform – have taken a much more positive view of the Lockinge form. But even these new ratings still leave Baaeed respectively 9lb and 13lb adrift of Frankel at his zenith.

Baaeed's current portfolio on TRC Global Rankings isn't startling compared to other world #1s since Frankel. He is well below the median among the 19 horses to have attained top spot since 2014 – though it is worth remembering that these are world rankings, so the likes of American Pharoah and Winx push up the average.

What distinguishes Baaeed from Sea The Stars and all of the others – bar Frankel – is that he has never been beaten. So long as he remains unbeaten, and particularly if his programme continues to follow in the footsteps of Frankel, then comparisons will only increase.

Ascot triumph: Jim Crowley celebrates after Baaeed completes his three-year-old campaign with victory in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes. Photo: Dan Abraham / focusonracing.com

However, while it's not too hard to see Baaeed pushing himself further up the list before too long, it will be a huge stretch for him to even get close to Frankel's imposing status.

That said, we almost certainly haven't seen Baaeed's limit yet, and he could well make significant improvement when he steps up to a mile and a quarter or more and meets the pick of what looks an exciting three-year-old crop.

If he can overcome increasingly difficult tasks, as Frankel did, and remain unbeaten then we might well be able to say he's the nearest thing we've seen since.

But the new Frankel? Not yet for sure, and probably never. Frankel was equine perfection and surely a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon.



# 15 Tattersalls 2022 Royal Ascot Winners



## ROYAL ASCOT

### STATE OF REST

PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES, Group 1  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 2 *by*  
Whatton Manor Stud  
*to* Aiden O'Ryan / Joseph O'Brien  
*for* 60,000 gns  
*also sold* Tattersalls December Foal Sale *by*  
Tinnakill House *to* Diamond Bloodstock *for*  
45,000 gns

### SAFFRON BEACH

DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE STAKES, Group 2  
*sold* Tattersalls December Foal Sale  
*by* Ballylinch Stud *to* Norris/Huntingdon  
*for* 55,000 gns

### MAGICAL LAGOON

RIBBLESDALE STAKES, Group 2  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 1  
*by* WH Bloodstock  
*to* BBA Ireland / Yulong Investments  
*for* 305,000 gns

### BRADSELL

COVENTRY STAKES, Group 2  
*sold* Tattersalls Somerville Yearling Sale  
*by* Bearstone Stud  
*to* Highflyer / H Dunlop  
*for* 12,000 gns

### CLAYMORE

HAMPTON COURT STAKES, Group 3  
*sold* Tattersalls Ireland  
Goresbridge Breeze Up Sale  
*by* Ardglass Stables  
*to* Mutlaq Menahi Almutairi  
*for* £10,000

### COLTRANE

ASCOT STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 1  
*by* Rockfield Farm  
*to* Andrew Balding  
*for* 50,000 gns

### BROOME

HARDWICKE STAKES, Group 2  
*sold* Tattersalls December Yearling Sale  
*by* Croom House Stud  
*to* MV Magnier  
*for* 150,000 gns

### HOLLOWAY BOY

CHESHAM STAKES, Listed  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 2  
*by* Cheveley Park Stud  
*to* Karl & Kelly Burke *for* 60,000 gns  
*sold* Tattersalls December Foal Sale  
*by* Cheveley Park Stud  
*to* Peter & Ross Doyle Bloodstock  
*for* 60,000 gns

### DARK SHIFT

ROYAL HUNT CUP  
*sold* Tattersalls October  
Yearling Sale, Book 2  
*by* Airlie Stud  
*to* Highflyer Bloodstock /  
Eve Johnson Houghton  
*for* 50,000 gns

### SECRET STATE

KING GEORGE V STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 1  
*by* New England Stud  
*to* Godolphin  
*for* 525,000 gns

### INVER PARK

BUCKINGHAM PALACE STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls October Yearling Sale, Book 2  
*by* Cheveley Park Stud  
*to* Mick Quinn Racing  
*for* 95,000 gns

### LATIN LOVER

PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls Ireland  
September Yearling Sale  
*by* Glenvale Stud  
*to* De Burgh Equine  
*for* £21,000

### ROHAAN

WOKINGHAM STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls Autumn Horses in Training Sale  
*by* George Scott Racing  
*to* Martin Wanless / David Evans  
*for* 20,000 gns

### MISSED THE CUT

GOLDEN GATES STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls February Sale  
*by* Barton Sales  
*to* Hurworth Bloodstock  
*for* 40,000 gns

### STRATUM

QUEEN ALEXANDRA STAKES  
*sold* Tattersalls Autumn Horses in Training Sale  
*by* The Castlebridge Consignment  
*to* Harold Kirk / WP Mullins  
*for* 160,000 gns



Tattersalls Ireland



Tattersalls



# ‘I was a heroin addict and a crackhead, coupled with severe alcoholism’ – trainer on the long road to recovery

Jon Lees | MAY 25, 2022

*From a well-known Kentucky racing family, Will Walden saddled the first winner of his fledgling career earlier this month at Churchill Downs. However, his route there has been anything but smooth, as the trainer tells Jon Lees in an unflinching account*

At around 1.20pm on May 13, Will Walden became the latest new trainer to lead his first winner into the hallowed Churchill Downs winner's circle beneath those famous Twin Spires.

As a third-generation Kentucky horseman and the son of Elliott Walden, one of the most successful US trainers towards the turn of the century and now CEO of the powerful WinStar Farm, the landmark may have appeared nothing out of the ordinary.

Will Walden: 'I don't mind talking about my past, especially in public, because there were people that put themselves out there when I was going through what I went through.' Photo: Keeneland/Coady





After all, a career as a Thoroughbred trainer seemed to have been mapped out from birth – yet Will's arrival in the spot that his father's runners visited more than a thousand times was not the culmination of years of careful preparation.

For much of the preceding 12 years Walden veered right off the given pathway and onto the fast lane to drug addiction. It was a route that nearly took him to the grave.

On that basis the success of the two-year-old filly Dazzlingdominika, Walden's fourth runner since receiving his licence in April, under jockey Gerardo Corrales in a maiden special weight, Race 2 on the Churchill card, was pretty extraordinary.

### **'It was surreal – and very rewarding'**

"It was surreal," agrees Walden. "I've been in that winner's circle plenty of times with my Dad when he was training. He trained for 22 years and the bulk of it at Churchill Downs.

"To go in there with our own horse after what me and these guys have been through and see a plan come to fruition the way we saw it in our minds eight months ago was very rewarding."

As well as from his father, Walden had been learning the ropes working for many of the country's top trainers such as Jonathan Sheppard, Dale Romans, Bill Mott, Todd Pletcher and Wesley Ward. Yet it was what he got up to outside training hours that took him in another direction.

"Drugs and alcohol became an everyday part of my life from the age of 18 or 19," says Walden, now 31. "It kind of started out with your typical college partying and I liked to take it to the max. At the end it was a full-blown heroin and crack cocaine addiction coupled with severe alcoholism.

"I couldn't really figure out how things had gotten so bad but by that time I was more than just mentally attached to it, I was physically addicted to it. When you get to that point it's nothing but the grace of God and the help of a lot of people that can break you away from that."

After leaving high school, Walden went to Asbury University in Kentucky on a basketball scholarship, but much as he excelled at the sport, he dropped out and returned to the racetrack.



### **'I didn't care about anything'**

"I bounced all over the east coast for different trainers," he says. "I don't think they knew of my addictions. I thought I hid it well – I could suffer through the sicknesses or the hangovers for most of the morning.

"Then when I got home late morning I would start my day off substance-wise. Towards the end I am sure some of them knew. At that point I didn't really care who knew; I didn't care about anything, including my own life."

Top – Third-generation horseman: trainer Will Walden comes from a well-known Kentucky racing family.

Bottom – Off the mark: two-year-old filly Dazzlingdominika (Gerardo Corrales) provides a maiden success for Will Walden. Photo: Churchill Downs/Coady



Walden's drug abuse took him to many dark places, often ending up in the hospital ER or a jail cell. "I went to jail a few times," he says. "The first time was in my early 20s for various things, public intoxication, DUIs [driving under the influence], assault, stuff like that. I was a pretty grimy human being.

"I went to treatment rehabs several times and ended up in hospitals with nurses and doctors bringing me back to life with defibrillators, with me not sure how he ended up there.

"At that point you are so delusional about existence in general. Practical and logical thinking don't come into play. There is no self-preservation whatsoever, nor do you care about what anybody else thinks. Once you're addicted you are so zeroed in on substance, you don't care what means or avenues it takes to get there."

Walden's campaign of addiction was broken occasionally for periods of treatment but he could only last three or four months on the program before returning to his old habits with heroin and crack cocaine top of his shopping list.

"I was taking in copious amounts every day, enough to kill a horse," he says. "It was bad. I would be up for three or four days, weeks at a time, with no sleep."

It was only when he stopped hearing from friends calling in to check up on him that he finally recognised he had to break

the cycle for good. "I was as alone as one could possibly feel and being alone in hell is one of the worst places to be," he says.

Walden's saviour was armed forces veteran Christian Countzler, who worked at Shepherds House, a drug treatment program in Lexington. "Up until then it had been everyone else's idea," says Walden.

"Christian didn't beat down my door, he just said, 'Whenever you're ready, whenever you want to change, give me a call'. That day came on November 23, 2020, and I haven't ingested a drink or substance since."

### **Regimented routine of sober living**

Walden spent two weeks of painful detox under careful monitoring before being transferred to an outpatient facility where he stayed for 30 days before entering the Shepherds House on a year-long program.

"At that point there was no more medication to help ease you off drugs and alcohol," he explains. "You had to sign in and out. You had daily chores, you worked a full-time job, you had to make seven AA meetings a week. It became a very regimented daily routine of sober living which at the end of the day left me completely exhausted. But it worked.

"There was nowhere for my mind to run to, to go and do something silly. Everything was planned out for me. While a lot of it was tedious and elementary, it served its purpose."

Left – Will's father Elliott Walden, a former leading trainer with more than 1,000 winners to his name, is now president and CEO of racing operations for the WinStar operation. Photo: Keeneland/Coady

Right – Family values: Will Walden with his sister Megan. Photo supplied

Walden found a job at a branch of the Wendy's fast food restaurant, close to the University of Kentucky campus. "I would walk about a mile to work at about 4am in the snow and do a full shift," he says. "I was sweeping up the parking lot, flipping burgers, sea-salting fries. It was bottom-level work and a humbling experience.

"I keep my Wendy's hat and uniform in my truck as a reminder of where I could be. At that point of my life I was just so grateful to have some semblance of purpose. There was someone counting on me to show up and I was able to do that. There is a sense of pride."

During his time in the Shepherds House, Walden met Frank Taylor, of leading horse sales consignor Taylor Made, who ran a program helping recovering addicts from the Shepherds House with jobs on his farm.

Towards the end of his stay, Walden put the proposal to Taylor that he could buy some cheap horses to run in auction



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racers. Two of the friends he had made, Mike Lowrey and Tyler Maxwell, joined him from the Taylor Made program, having had no prior experience with horses.

#### **'There is still trust to be gained'**

He has nine horses in training, including one named Sergeant Countzler, all cheaply bought. "That's what it is supposed to be early on," he says, "especially with somebody who has been absent from the sport of horse racing and wasn't that stellar of an individual when he was on the racetrack."

What about the prospect of taking on more expensive, better-bred horses? "There is still trust to be gained," he says.

Walden blames only himself for the gruesome depths to which he has sunk. "Self-will got a needle in my arm and a crack pipe to my lips and a bottle down my throat," he says, adding that he is able to stay clean and sober thanks to "a relationship with a God of my understanding, a healthy support group of friends, people that were in recovery, AA meetings and an ability to stay humble."

He adds: "I'm not sitting here gripping

the walls at night, hanging on to the side of my bed, praying to God I don't have to go out and drink or take drugs. It doesn't cross my mind today as a solution to deal with a problem.

"That's because people who have been living this life showed me the way to do it. I swallowed it hook, line and sinker and stuck to it. They say the obsession will be removed and by the grace of God it has.

#### **Spiritual maintenance of daily life**

"The spiritual maintenance of my daily life is key. I come to the barn first thing in the morning, I feed my horses, I go grab a cup of coffee and sit up by the track by the quarter pole, have my morning prayer and surrender everything out of my own control and give it over to God. It's worked today and hopefully it will work tomorrow."

Early success on the track with a filly broken by Lowrey and Maxwell has already shown Walden what he can achieve in the short term but in the long run he aspires to reach the heights of his father, who won the Belmont Stakes in 1998 with Victory Gallop.

"The goal is to be the biggest training operation in the United States," he says. "There is no ceiling. We are not here for any participation trophy. We don't want pats on the back because we are group of guys that have rearranged our lives.

"We want to compete with anybody out there. We show up every single day ready to do so. But right now we work with what we have."

There is another goal behind his frank telling of his story. "The past was the sword they used to stab me, but now I use it to defend," he says. "I don't mind talking about my past, especially in public, because there were people that put themselves out there when I was going through what I went through.

"In a lifestyle where there was absolutely zero hope, there was a beacon of light from those people that were able to get past getting vulnerable and saying what their lives were like now.

"So it's not about me. Do I like telling everybody I was a heroin addict and a crackhead? No, I don't. But on the off-chance that it could help somebody, it's completely worth it."

# Success on a global stage

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## Thesis

2019 c **KINGMAN** - Nimble Thimble (Mizzen Mast)  
won Britannia Stakes, 8f, Ascot  
Bred by Juddmonte Farms Ltd

## Candleford

2018 g **KINGMAN** - Dorcas Lane (Norse Dancer)  
won Duke Of Edinburgh Stakes, 12f, Ascot  
Bred by Barnane Stud Ltd

## Inspiral

2019 f **FRANKEL** - Starscope (Selkirk)  
won Coronation Stakes **Gr.1**, 8f, Ascot  
Bred by Cheveley Park Stud Ltd

## Noble Truth

2019 g **KINGMAN** - Sperialita (Frankel)  
won Jersey Stakes **Gr.3**, 7f, Ascot  
Bred by Jean-Pierre Dubois

## Masen

2018 g **KINGMAN** - Continental Drift (Smart Strike)  
won Poker Stakes **Gr.3**, 8f, Belmont Park  
Bred by Juddmonte Farms Ltd

## Nashwa

2019 f **FRANKEL** - Princess Loulou (Pivotal)  
won Prix de Diane **Gr.1**, 10.5f, Chantilly  
Bred by Blue Diamond Stud Farm (uk) Ltd

## Westover

2019 c **FRANKEL** - Mirabilis (Lear Fan)  
won Irish Derby **Gr.1**, 12f, Curragh  
Bred by Juddmonte Farms Ltd

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JUDDMONTE







Up close and personal: Charlie Thornycroft at the Polish shelter with one of the horses rescued from Ukraine.

# ‘The Russians don’t seem to like anything that lives in Ukraine’ London hospitality exec helps equine rescue effort

Jon Lees | MAY 10, 2022

*Charlie Thornycroft, former PA to Khalid Abdullah, is currently running a Polish hub for horses rescued from Ukraine – and for vital veterinary supplies going the other way. She tells Jon Lees about her experiences as part of the relief effort*

Poland: In March this year Charlotte ‘Charlie’ Thornycroft was working on preparations for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations when her life suddenly changed.

Russia invaded Ukraine and in an instant created not just a humanitarian crisis but one that engulfed the country’s equine population as well. While Ukraine’s citizens were able to flee over the border to escape the bombardment, getting horses out of the country or simply getting help to them was an altogether different challenge.

Thornycroft contacted the British Equine Federation, keen to explore what she could do to help the relief effort – and ended up running a horse shelter in Rzeszow, the largest city in southeastern Poland about 80km from the border with Ukraine.

### Fact-finding mission

“I came out to Poland for three days on a fact-finding mission on March 11 and I seem to still be here,” she explains.

Thornycroft, 39, formerly worked for three years as personal assistant to Khalid Abdullah and Juddmonte chief executive Douglas Erskine-Crum. Renting out her London flat, she resigned from her job as executive assistant and head of hospitality with H Power Event Management to take up an unpaid volunteer’s role at the Rzeszow shelter, which was established by a group of British equine organisations.

It’s a 24-hour day, seven-days-a-week commitment – and already more than 200 horses have come through the hub from Ukraine and over £100,000 in veterinary supplies have been sent in the other direction.

“We are rescuing horses from up and down Ukraine and bringing them here, where we get them back to health and send them onto new destinations across Europe,” Thornycroft explains.

### About £1,000 per horse

“It sounds very easy but actually the problem is getting them across the border because they don’t have refugee status and you still need all the same documentation to get any horse from a non-EU to an EU country and that has not been relaxed, despite a huge amount of pressure from Britain on Brussels and Poland.

“So it still costs about £1,000 per horse in fees and takes between 16 and 48 hours to get them across the border. That means not everything can leave, either because of the cost or because they are not up to the journey.”

Rescued horses are collected at two hubs in Ukraine, in Lviv and near Chernobyl, before travelling to Poland, where there is capacity for 64 horses. Donations also arrive at the Polish base to be sent on to Ukraine.

Donations and offers of help have flooded in from all over Europe with Britain’s racing community heavily involved. Newmarket trainer Gay Kelleway, for example, is making a second visit to Poland, bringing two horseboxes full of supplies and returning with two horses to drop at destinations in Germany and Ireland.

Boxes have been filled with supplies of feed, bedding, head collars, rugs, vet kits and even fire extinguishers – whatever is needed for Ukrainians to deal with the devastation wrought by the Russian military.

“I sent over 200 fire extinguishers last month because there are no firemen left in Ukraine to put out fires,” says Thornycroft. “Fire is everywhere. You can see it at night.

### ‘The Russians are slashing horses’

“The Russians are slashing horses and burning the ground and we have evidence of that,” she goes on. “They don’t seem to like anything that lives in Ukraine. It doesn’t seem to matter whether it’s human, dog, cat or horse.”

Rescue missions are inevitably dangerous yet the five drivers who shuttle down to Dnipro in the south, then back to Lviv and onto Poland haven’t yet been deterred.

“It’s an absolutely dangerous mission,” says Thornycroft. “One of our drivers has a Russian passport. He’s gone missing twice while collecting horses. Thankfully he’s fine now.

“Another got stopped by the Russians, was dragged out of his lorry and beaten up. The horses were turned free, the Russians smashed all the glass in the lorry, cut all the cables and dumped it.

“The driver found his lorry, found the horses and, using a crocodile clip, connected the wires back together and drove another 250km across the border to Poland. Other lorries have bullet or shrapnel marks on them.”

She goes on: “When the horses arrive, they are pretty stressed and distressed. I have a lot of young stallions coming through and they are either completely agoraphobic or claustrophobic.



Ukraine flag flying at the Polish equine hub in Rzeszow.

“We are quite near a military base and anytime a plane goes over, all hell breaks loose for the first few days. Then they settle down, but for a while they are pretty traumatised by any loud bangs or sudden movements.”

### ‘You have to keep moving’

Horses are drawn from all over Ukraine and, once collected in Dnipro, are driven 13 hours non-stop to Lviv. “You have to keep moving,” says Thornycroft.

“Once they’re in the box, you’ve just got to drive. The roads are terrible and are being blown up all the time, tanks are everywhere. We can’t let the drivers stop – it’s not safe. So standard welfare has to be put to one side to get them from danger to safety.”

The horses are given at least three days to recover from the journey in Lviv before they embark on the final leg of the journey, a 170km trip to the Polish border where there is a 16-48 hour wait for processing. The boxes sometimes arrive not just with horses but pets and people, with harrowing tales to tell; they also need Thornycroft’s attention.





Vets at work at the Rzeszow shelter run by Charlie Thornycroft, who left her job in London in March to aid the Ukraine rescue effort.

Despite her experience of organising events such as the Royal Windsor Horseshow, Thornycroft says she had none of the requisite qualifications for her current role, aside from her equine knowledge gained from hunting and team chasing.

"I'm picking up bits of Polish and Ukrainian but Google translate is a godsend," she says.

### **'I had none of the skills'**

"I literally came out to fact-find to see what was happening and what was needed and I've stayed. I had none of the skills to run a yard or livery or a humanitarian aid centre or donations

depot, all of which I am now doing."

She explains: "I couldn't keep watching the news and not do something and I didn't feel that just sending second-hand clothes and nappies was enough.

"I could go out at short notice so I contacted the British Equestrian Federation offering admin help and from there went to Poland. You could say the job description has changed!"

She continues: "It's fairly amazing. It's also unbelievably frustrating with all the paperwork and the time it takes to do anything but you have to keep remembering that if the tables were turned, someone would do the same for your horse or dog.

"It's 24/7 and my average day is between 18 and 24 hours. If horses leave Lviv on a Monday they would reach here on Wednesday some time between midnight and 4am.

"I need to make sure I am here to meet the lorries, do a basic health check on the horses, give them water, hay, check their microchips against their passports and then settle them down.

"It can take an hour and a half to unload 20 horses and then I have to be back to do morning stables. Then there is admin to do, lorries of donations to unload and reload onto a lorry going to Ukraine, then do the same in the evening. I try to graze or lunge the horses every day so they have some outside time.

"I do it on adrenaline most of the time. I will be exhausted when I go home but until then there isn't the chance to stop so you keep going."

### **'This is going to be for the long haul'**

Thornycroft says the public response has been amazing but believes the rescue effort will continue even after the war is over and cash donations remain urgently needed. "We need money to buy hay locally, pay for blacksmiths and vets when the horses get to us," she says.

"It's a cash culture here. A lot of the money is spent on fees to get the horse across but demand will change. Now that the grass is starting to grow here, I'm getting a lot of requests for electric fencing so they can create mini-paddocks. What I'm hearing is that nearly half of farmland in Ukraine has either been ruined by mines or taken back by the government.

"This is going to be for the long haul. Even if the war stops, Ukraine is not going to recover by the winter. These horses will be in much more dire straits because they will have been without proper food and attention since February."

She adds: "I'm not sure I will still be here then but I hope to still be involved. I couldn't do this without everybody's donations and support. The UK and Sweden have been amazing and we have had lorry loads from Germany. It's very reassuring to know you are making a difference."

# *What They're Thinking* **Chris Waller: The higher we raised the bar for Winx, the higher she went**

TRC | JUNE 24, 2022

*Winx's trainer Chris Waller, who enjoyed Royal Ascot success last week with the blistering Nature Strip, answers the questions*

Chris Waller's name will forever be associated with the legendary Winx, who numbered 25 G1 successes among her amazing 33-race winning sequence. Photo: Australian Turf Club





*After resisting repeated overtures to take the mighty mare Winx overseas, Australia's premier trainer Chris Waller fulfilled a long-cherished ambition when he made his Royal Ascot breakthrough with Nature Strip's outstanding victory in the King's Stand Stakes.*

*A dairy farmer's son from Foxton, New Zealand, Waller is clearly the dominant force in Australian racing. The 49-year-old trained his first winner in New Zealand in 1997 before moving his business three years later to Rosehill in Sydney, where he initially rented 20 boxes with little financial backing.*

*Moving gradually up the ranks, he trained his first G1 winner in 2008 and hasn't looked back since, winning the last 11 premierships in New South Wales with a succession of stars headed by the legendary Winx, who won 33 successive races including an incredible 25 at G1 level.*

*Last year he trained Nature Strip to win the Everest, the world's richest turf race; he also saddled 11-time G1-winning mare Verry Elleegant to win the Melbourne Cup.*

### **Which racing figure, past or present, do you most admire?**

There are several. I am in awe of those previous great jockeys and trainers, the ones that made me dream about racing. It's too hard to mention names because there have been so many great people. Basically that is why I am in racing. I was amazed by it. Along the way I have been able to meet a few of these people and it's been a humbling experience to catch up with those that you admire so much. That's what racing does. It brings people together and people are accessible.

In terms of naming a person I would have to say from where I am now [in Britain] Aidan O'Brien, for the way he meticulously runs a big operation working with the calibre of horses and clients he has. I am very much in awe of what he has achieved and continues to achieve.

### **Which is your favourite venue and race anywhere in the world?**

The great carnivals are parallel to each other and if you have big-race success during those carnivals it certainly puts them on a high pedestal. From my perspective in Australia I'd have to say it is my home track of Rosehill. It's a beautiful track. By Australian standards it's a fair track with decent straight, a good circumference and our horses love racing there. There is racing 26 weeks of the year, including some of the biggest races in Australia.

There have been so many great memories but I'm happy to go to any of the feature tracks. Royal Ascot is an example of that. When I first came with Brazen Beau I got quite emotional when he walked around the parade ring in such a picturesque place.

### **Who is your favourite racehorse and why?**

That would be Winx. Why, would be simply because she was very fast and ran fast for a long time. She was a lovely horse to work with, very straightforward, very sound but what she could do year in, year out, was simply amazing, basically going unbeaten for four years. The higher we raised the bar, the higher she went. She was a very special horse and always will be in our hearts.

### **What is your fondest memory in racing?**

Winning the King's Stand Stakes with Nature Strip is in my top five, but I think it has to be training my first G1 winner, which was Triple Honour in 2008 at Royal Randwick. He won the Doncaster, which has been a very good race to us.

That win gave me the confidence to know that I didn't need to change anything. Our system was working efficiently and it just needed the right horses to come along. I was well into my training career. I'd been in Australia for at least eight years and finally had that G1 winner. We've been lucky enough to win quite a few G1 races on the back of that.



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

It would simply be that the work starting times in Australia change. They are not social; they do not provide longevity to the workers and it is not a healthy nor sustainable lifestyle. It's really hit home since I've been in England over the past week. The stable staff over here are fantastic.

They just live for their horses, as my team does in Australia – but they basically start at 6am instead of 3.30am. Yes, they finish later, so it therefore becomes part of their life. They go back in afternoons and evenings to do their jobs so they work similar hours but in my opinion more social hours. It still gives them a chance to have dinner with their family, go out with their mates and still be fresh and safe for the morning.

I've tried unsuccessfully to encourage other trainers to put their starting times back and there is growing support for it. It's my one desire in racing.

*Chris Waller was speaking to Jon Lees*

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# TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



10 July 2022

## Horses

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Baaeed GBR	GBR	2185
2	Nature Strip AUS	AUS	2023
3	Life Is Good USA	USA	2016
4	Golden Sixty AUS	HK	1971
5	Jackie's Warrior USA	USA	1929
6	Flightline USA	USA	1904
7	Titleholder JPN	JPN	1899
8	Zaaki GBR	AUS	1830
9	Vadeni FRA	FRA	1821
10	Desert Crown GBR	GBR	1814
11	Mishriff IRE	GBR	1804
12	Verry Elleegant NZL	AUS	1789
13	Jack Christopher USA	USA	1782
14	State Of Rest IRE	GBR	1781
15	Coroebus IRE	GBR	1775

## Jockeys

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	James McDonald	AUS	2033
2	Flavien Prat	USA	1974
3	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1954
4	Joel Rosario	USA	1937
5	William Buick	GBR	1932
6	Frankie Dettori	GBR	1763
7	Christophe Lemaire	JPN	1737
8	Ryan Moore	GBR	1735
9	Luis Saez	USA	1655
10	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1604
11	Florent Geroux	USA	1585
12	Yuga Kawada	JPN	1547
13	Jim Crowley	GBR	1514
14	Christophe Soumillon	FRA	1499
15	Vincent Ho	HK	1456

## Trainers

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Chad C Brown	USA	2806
2	Charlie Appleby	GBR	2693
3	Brad H Cox	USA	2546
4	Bob Baffert	USA	2458
5	John & Thady Gosden	GBR	2330
6	Aidan O'Brien	IRE	2274
7	Chris Waller	AUS	2108
8	Todd Pletcher	USA	1930
9	William Haggas	GBR	1925
10	Jamie Richards	NZL	1755

## Owners

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Godolphin	AUS	3291
2	Coolmore Partners	IRE	2644
3	Shadwell Estate Company	GBR	2089
4	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1830
5	White Birch Farm / Peter Brant Et Al	USA	1776
6	Juddmonte	USA	1681
7	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	1668
8	Silk Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1602
9	Peters Investments Et Al	AUS	1592
10	H H Aga Khan	FRA	1568

## Sires

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Dubawi IRE	GBR	2200
2	Galileo IRE	IRE	2152
3	Deep Impact JPN	JPN	2098
4	Frankel GBR	GBR	1983
5	Sea The Stars IRE	GBR	1852
6	Kingman GBR	GBR	1806
7	Into Mischief USA	USA	1789
8	Curlin USA	USA	1565
9	Lord Kanaloa JPN	JPN	1564
10	Uncle Mo USA	USA	1516