

# THE SHADE OAK NEWSLETTER: 2023

50th Anniversary



SHADE OAK STUD

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## INTRODUCTION

I have been rather tardy in starting the annual Shade Oak Newsletter; and for this I apologise to those anxiously awaiting an antidote to the daily news of disease, strikes and the cost-of-living crisis – and even more importantly of the terrible trials endured by Meghan and Harry as they seek to save the world from racism, climate change and intolerance to those suffering unimaginable luxury whilst confined to a mansion in Southern California, with just the odd spot of day release by private jet earned by their good behaviour.

But at last, here it is, filled not with the gloom of external events but with the hope felt by all NH breeders at this time of year, that whatever else is happening in the world we can at least look forward to seeing some of our horses win good races, some lovely foals born and our mares visiting top-class stallions to produce the champions of tomorrow – for which this newsletter makes some excellent and entirely unbiased suggestions.

There are several reasons for my tardiness in writing these words, one of which most of you will know; but not least of them is the laziness induced by the fact that I got out of the habit last year, when at great expense we employed ace reporter Ivor Scoop to publicise our new stallion, Logician. There were also important tasks around the farm that simply couldn't be delegated to anyone else, such as perching in a cherry picker attached to the extending-arm of a tractor and then clambering onto the roof of the barn to power-wash the solar panels as my personal contribution to renewable energy. Being a stud owner is not all posh parties, racecourse revels and champagne celebrations – at least it isn't for a NH stud owner.

## SHADE OAK STALLIONS FOR 2023



Our stallion man Yuriy shows how to handle an enthusiastic stallion. Don't try this at home.



## LOGICIAN



To say I have been delighted with the reception given to Logician in his first year at stud would be an understatement. When we purchased him from Juddmonte we thought he had all the assets one looks for in a new stallion, namely:

- He was an outstanding racehorse
- He has a great pedigree
- He has tremendous looks, walk and temperament.

To this we can now add some other rather important factors:

- He attracted a great book of mares in his first season
- He proved both enthusiastic and successful in getting them in foal.

A year ago we knew all about **Logician the racehorse**, that he won the St Leger in record time on only his fifth start, after taking the Great Voltiguer S with ease on his previous run, earning a Timeform Rating of 126p and the accolade of Timeform 3YO Stayer of the year. We also knew that he suffered a life-threatening attack of peritonitis and pleurisy at the end of that 3YO year, which prevented the planned assault on major international Group 1 prizes in his 4YO year. For Juddmonte this setback was a severe blow; for Shade Oak it was a blessing, for had he won any one of them we would never have been able to afford him.

Now let me quote some of the material so diligently unearthed by Ivor Scoop for the 'Shade Oak Welcomes Logician' brochure we issued last year, because some of you may have mislaid your copies. It will also save me the trouble of writing it myself. If you can remember the brochure word for word, you can skip this bit...

## From the Logician Brochure

A horse has to be exceptional to stand out at Juddmonte, and Logician was. European Racing Manager Barry Mahon told us: "From the start Logician was a special horse, a standout yearling among the Juddmonte crop that year. His size, strength and beautiful action, combined with good conformation, had everyone excited from an early stage and he didn't disappoint."

A 'slightly backward' 2YO, Logician made his debut at Newbury over 10 furlongs in May of his 3YO year. He won impressively. Five weeks later brought another good win, again over 10 furlongs but this time at Newmarket, where he gave 2021 Goodwood Cup (G1) second, Away He Goes, 6lb and a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  length beating.

Bigger targets were approaching and Frankie Dettori was somewhat surprised to be summoned to Newbury to ride a 1-5 shot in a 12-furlong handicap just two weeks later, in what turned out to be a 'getting to know you' encounter. Horse and rider seemed to get on very well indeed, with Logician's 9 stone 7lb top-weight giving no difficulty as he strolled home by 4 lengths, giving 15lb to the second.

It was now time to find out how good this immensely promising horse really was, and the first test came in York's Great Voltigeur S (G2). Here Logician met Gallinule S (G3) winner Constantinople, Irish Derby (G1) third Norway, Grand Prix de Paris (G1) third Jalmood and Gordon S (G3) winner Nayef Road - every one winner of a Black-Type race. Such was Logician's reputation that even in this company he started as 10-11 favourite. He gave his supporters not an iota of worry, striding clear as soon as his jockey asked him, to beat Constantinople and Norway by 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths and 6 lengths.



Logician strolls clear of the field in his very first Group race, York's Great Voltigeur S

The obvious next option was the St Leger, the world's oldest Classic race; and here Logician faced even stronger competition. All but one of the runners had won a Black-Type race and that one (Il Paradiso) had been beaten only 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  lengths by Stradivarius in the Lonsdale Cup



(G2) last time out. The other opponents were Group 2 winner Dashing Willoughby, Group 3 winners Sir Dragonet (later winner of the Group 1 Cox Plate), Sir Ron Priestley (later a dual Group 2 winner), Nayef Road (later second in both the Ascot Gold Cup and the Goodwood Cup) and Technician (who went on to win the G1 Prix Royal Oak).

Before the race Logician strode around majestically, his combination of size, power and fluid movement creating an immense impression. It was the perfect preview of what was to come in the race itself.



Entering the straight for the St Leger, Logician is travelling well within himself

Going off at odds of 5-6, the big grey took a strong hold early on, but jockey Dettori dropped him back through the field to relax him. He was moved out after coming into the long final straight and made smooth progress, gliding effortlessly into contention on the stands rail. Two furlongs out Frankie asked for his effort; Logician quickly took the lead, opening up a three to four length advantage before being eased down towards the finish, which he reached 2¼ lengths clear of his rivals in a new course-record time.

It was a deeply impressive performance that stamped Logician as an outstanding 3YO, ultimately earning him a Timeform Rating of 126p and the title of 'Champion 3YO Stayer' of the year. The Timeform Flat Annual for 2019 later described him as 'a budding superstar, without doubt the most exciting prospect among the latest season's 3YO colts, with more than enough speed to be dropped back to a mile and a half, or even a mile and a quarter.'

After the race John Gosden added his own words of praise:

"He's a gorgeous horse, he's done nothing but improve through the year. He's amazing to be around, he's got this wonderful stride and this laid-back attitude."

Immediately after the St Leger Gosden suggested of Logician that: "He's come on a long journey to win a Leger in track record time. We'll put him away until next year now." A programme aimed at Europe's best middle-distance races was outlined, beginning with the Eclipse S over 1¼ miles, a distance more than half a mile less than that of the St Leger. However, it was not to be. Just over three months after his Classic triumph Logician was struck down by an attack of peritonitis, an inflammation of the inner lining of the abdominal cavity. It later transpired that he also suffered from pleurisy, in which the membrane that surrounds the chest wall and covers the lungs becomes inflamed. He was treated in Newmarket Equine Hospital but very nearly lost his life.

As Barry Mahon now says: "The illness left him fighting for his life but the same guts and determination he showed on the track thankfully helped him pull through."

### **Logician's Pedigree**

When we bought Logician we knew he had a really good pedigree – we wouldn't stand a stallion that doesn't – but it turned out to be even better than we realised.

Firstly, his sire **Frankel**, the most brilliant Flat racehorse I have ever seen, continued to prove himself a great sire, becoming Champion Sire in Great Britain in 2021 and Champion Sire in Europe in 2022. Amongst his recently successful progeny are the 2022 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner Alpinista (herself a magnificent physical specimen); 2022 Irish Derby winner Westover; 2022 Dewhurst S winner Chaldean; 2021 Derby and King George VI & Queen Elizabeth S winner Adayar; 2021 Irish Derby, Grand Prix de Paris and St Leger winner Hurricane Lane; and other major Group 1 winners in Onesto, Inspiral and Homeless Songs. Frankel's first major stallion son, the dual Champion S winner Cracksman, has got off to a flying start with his 2YO runners – and they will surely be better still as 3YOs.

So Frankel was not only a great racehorse; he is proving himself a great sire. A key feature that was vital to his own racing success was his enormous stride-length, measured at over 27 feet, considerably longer than the average racehorse. Among his offspring to have similarly advantageous stride length are Adayar and Logician. This is a trait of conformation that is passed on genetically. It was passed on to Logician by Frankel, and in turn Logician will ... yes, you're there in one!

Secondly, we knew Logician's dam Scuffle is a good broodmare but we didn't know just how good. She has now had 7 runners and 7 winners of 29 races. As well as Logician these include multiple Group 3 winner Suffused, Listed winner Collide and Listed-placed Battlement, which is pleasing enough. However, when I browsed more deeply into the data, as I do like to do when not busy on the barn roof, I uncovered more interesting facts:

- Every one of Scuffle's 7 runners achieved best Racing Post Ratings of at least 90, with four of them (including the very promising 3YO Okeechobee) rated over 100
- When you compare the RPRs of these runners with the average RPRs of all runners by their sires, every one of them achieved a substantially higher rating.

- The average RPR of Scuffle's seven runners was 104. The average RPRs of all runners by the sires of these seven runners was 79 (headed by Frankel's Average RPR for all runners of 86), a difference of 25lb.
- I worked out that the odds of seven runners from a mare each being rated above the Average RPRs produced by their sires, purely by chance, are 127-1. The odds of each being better by 25lb are about 2,000,000-1. Sometimes, I really don't know how I do it!

The obvious conclusion is that not only is Logician by a great sire but he is out of an outstanding broodmare. When you remember that Logician's grandsire, Daylami, was a top-class racehorse and that his grandam, Tantina, was a high-class racemare who went on to produce Cityscape and Bated Breath, it is not surprising that Scuffle (herself a good racemare) proved to be a good broodmare.

That she proved to be that good is remarkable; but it undoubtedly enhances Logician's prospects of proving himself an outstanding stallion. It is clear that Logician carries great genes from both sides of his pedigree!

### **Logician's Other Attributes**

Just as I was when I first saw Logician, most visitors to the stud are deeply impressed when they meet him. He is big - at least 16.2½ h.h., deep-girthed, broad-chested and beautifully balanced, with powerful forearm, strong quarters and great bone. He really is the beau ideal of what I have always looked for in a NH stallion. When he walks he has a long, easy stride with great over-track, floating over the ground just as he did when winning his races. He is a rare combination of power and elegance, and it would not be difficult to visualise him as a Gold Cup (Cheltenham variety) winner, rather than a brilliant middle-distance Flat horse.

Logician's temperament too is excellent – as John Gosden said when we first met him: “ He has a great mind” - as one might expect from a logician (though to be honest we have not yet found him in his stable doodling the equation for Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity into his bedding). He quickly adapted to life at Shade Oak, enjoying a stroll around his paddock to view the mares and foals in nearby fields. He also found means of advising his neighbour Telescope that he too is an alpha male.

Of course, there was one thing we couldn't know when he went to stud, this being the most important thing of all for a prospective stallion – would he be any good at his new job?

Importantly, Logician approached his duties with both enthusiasm and dedication, showing both the determination and stamina to stand up (no pun intended) to a first season that would have proved too much for many new stallions, achieving an excellent season-end fertility rate of 83.6% (153 mares in foal on October 1<sup>st</sup> from 183 covered).

Often when an inexperienced stallion is first asked to cover three or four mares a day during the peak of the season, a degree of weariness kicks in and one has to ease off. This never happened with Logician. Unlike any other new stallion I have known he would graze calmly in his field, be brought in to cover a mare, relax as he was washed down and then return to graze contentedly until the next lady needed his attentions... and then the next. It was astonishing that nothing he was asked to do seemed to faze him - more evidence of his 'great mind', perhaps?

In his love life, as on the racecourse, Logician is now a consummate professional.





### Logician's First Book of Mares

The first book of mares covered by a stallion is important to his future success, as in the short term it will produce foals whose looks and pedigrees will influence his popularity in the early years. In what should become a 'virtuous circle', agents will look at his foals at the major sales and hopefully pay good prices for them; breeders will see these foals and their sales results and support him with more mares; and in due course their racecourse performances should drive his success in the middle years of his career.

On this basis Logician has got off to a pretty good start, His first book of 183 mares was the second-highest of any British stallion in 2022. Detailed investigations I delegated to one of my assistants indicated that, of the 153 mares in foal on October 1<sup>st</sup>:

- 89 (58%) were out of winning mares as against only 37% in the very best day (the Tuesday) of the Tattersalls Fairyhouse Sale in the same year.
- 17 (11%) were out of Black-type Winners and 29 (19%) out of Black-Type Winners or Black-Ty[e Placed Mares. A further 11 were dams of such horses.
- 41 (27%) of all Logician's mares in foal on October 1<sup>st</sup> were TBA Elite Mares, more than twice as many as were even covered by any other British stallion in 2022. -
- Overall, 42% of all the mares expecting Logician foals were either Black-Type winners, Black-Type placed or dams of such horses. No less than 83% were winners, dams of winners or had been Black-Type placed or bred Black-Type placed horses.

If you don't spend as many hours as I do perched on the roof cleaning solar panels whilst analysing breeding statistics, please just take my word for it. These are exceptional statistics. They were driven by Logician's exceptional racing ability, pedigree, looks and temperament, along with a most reasonable stud fee; and they are likely to lead to exceptional results as a sire.

Among the best mares expecting Logician foals in 2023 are the Jumps Black-Type winners Alasi, Amaretto Rose, Big Time Billy, Blue Buttons, Briery Belle, Dragon Bones, Got Away, Lifeboat Mona, Mia's Storm, Molly's A Diva, Mrs Hyde, Oscar Rose and Run Ructions Run, ; siblings or dams of such top-class horses as Sizing John. Galop Marin, Punjabi and Lady Buttons; and several winners or dams of winners of Flat Black-type races as well as siblings to a winner of Royal Ascot's Coronation S and a German Derby winner. All in all, this is a spectacular first book of Jumps mares - and a pretty good collection of Flat mares!



## DARTMOUTH



Dartmouth always made great appeal as a stallion, partly on the grounds of his pedigree, partly because of his racing record and conformation (of which more below), but more than anything because of his toughness, soundness and determination. He is now starting to show his ability to pass these on to his offspring.

Dartmouth did not retire to stud with the same high profile as Logician and Telescope, in part because, although winner of the Hardwicke S and Yorkshire Cup and placed in the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth S and Canadian International, none of his wins matched the spectacular triumphs of Logician in the St Leger and Telescope in the Hardwicke S.



However, very few horses at stud anywhere could match the immense determination Dartmouth showed when he outfought multiple Group 1 winner Highland Reel to win his own Hardwicke S (above). Guts, will-to-win and a touch of aggression were the characteristics he showed that day, and similar attributes in his offspring will surely take him a long way in NH breeding, where such characteristics are vital in the tougher tests Jumps horses face.

During the years we have stood Dartmouth he has filled out into a very good-looking horse, as the earlier photograph will confirm. He has a good walk, great balance and sound limbs; and he throws foals that share these attributes, as well as his solid bay colour. Sir Michael Stoute told us that when he was in training he was a relaxed, rather lazy horse; but when on the racecourse he gave his all and fought like a tiger. He knew what his job was and he always did it with fierce determination. We expect his foals to do the same!

### **Dartmouth's Pedigree**

I might just have mentioned it once or twice before, but our criteria for selecting stallions are that they must be high-class middle-distance racehorses with strong pedigrees and excellent conformation, because these are the most likely to succeed. Dartmouth passes the pedigree test with flying colours.

His sire, Dubawi, was several times runner-up (to Galileo and then Frankel) as Leading Anglo-Irish Flat Sire, but gained a well-deserved first championship in 2022. In their early years at stud his sons Makfi, New Bay, Night of Thunder and Zarak have already proved to be successful stallions.

Crossed to mares by his great stud rival Galileo (also a great broodmare sire), Dubawi produced his highest-rated racehorse, Ghaïyyath, and one of his best stallion sons, Night of Thunder. Dartmouth is bred from the very same cross, from a Group 3 - winning mare that also produced a dual Group 2 winner and a Listed winner.

### **Dartmouth's Progeny**

Dartmouth retired to stud in the same year as Jack Hobbs and without the same Group 1-winning profile (though I would modestly suggest with a rather better pedigree!), so we were very satisfied when he attracted books of 60 or so mares in his first four years, though a number of these were from mares owned or boarded at Shade Oak. However, several of his early produce have attracted approval at NH sales, with recent prices of €62,000 and £42,000 being paid for stores, €32,000 for a yearling and €24,000 for a foal, these joining earlier foal prices of €35,000, €24,000 twice, €21,000 and €20,000. All of this has served to focus increased attention on Dartmouth's prospects.



Left: the 2019 gelding Catch Catchfire, by Dartmouth from Alflora's daughter Becky B, bred by Shade Oak and purchased from Peel Hall Bloodstock for €62,000 by Simon Cox in June 2022.

Right: Another good prospect by Dartmouth, Grand Sabre, out of the Robin Des Champs mare Unika La Reconce, bred by Bryan Mayoh and purchased by Kevin Ross for £42,000 in May 2022.



Interest in Dartmouth as a sire has also been stimulated by the results of two of his very first runners. Naval College, bred by Her Majesty The Queen from the Selkirk mare Sequence, was Her Majesty's second-last winner as an owner and placed in the first four in his other three races as a 3YO, earning a Racing Post Rating of 91 over 12 furlongs (equivalent to around 131 over Jumps).

Just when our confidence was rising that he would be a good thing for the 2022 Triumph Hurdle when transferred to Nicky Henderson, he was sold for 185,000 guineas at the Newmarket Horses in Training Sale to continue his career in Australia. Hopefully he will do very well there, but I'd have preferred a win at Cheltenham to one in Melbourne!

Dartmouth's first NH winner came at the first attempt in one of the new Junior NH Hurdles open to 3YOs that have not run under any Rules prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> – and she was the very first British-bred winner of such a race - proving it doesn't take a French-bred or -raised horse to succeed in 3YO tests over hurdles.

This was Sailing Grace, bred by Philip Hemmings from the Scorpion mare War Creation. Scorpion stood at Shade Oak for several years and bred some good horses in his career, but 'guts' and 'tenacity' would not be the first words to spring to mind in describing his progeny. Nonetheless these are the characteristics shown by Sailing Grace when she outbattled the odds-on Nichols-trained favourite for a debut win. Hopefully Sailing Grace's effort will be the first of many similar winning displays by Dartmouth's progeny.



Sailing Grace, Dartmouth's first NH runner and a determined first GB-bred winner of a NH Junior Hurdle, with trainer Anthony Honeyball on the left



## TELESCOPE



Telescope is now at the stage of his stud career when his runners must start to do the talking; so, after the brief reminder of his qualities that follows, this is what I intend to concentrate on.

As a **racehorse** Telescope had a touch of brilliance, as he showed by his spectacular victory over Group 1 winners Hillstar and Pether's Moon in the Hardwicke S. This was followed by a great display in the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth S when he finished second to the outstanding filly Tagrooda attempting to give her 15lb. Having also won the Great Voltiguer S (G2) as a 3YO he went on to finish third in the Juddmonte International over a 10½ furlong trip that was rather too short for him, and was fourth in the Breeders Cup Turf.

At the age of five he gained another impressive victory when pulverising the Saudi champion Dubday by 6 lengths in the Aston Park S. In all he won five of his 14 races, winning every season from two to five and placing in eight of his other runs. His most memorable win, though, remained that epic Hardwicke S performance shown below when, as the commentator suggested, you really did 'need a telescope to see the rest!'



Telescope's **pedigree** speaks for itself since he is by Galileo from a half-sister to Dubai World Cup winner Moon Ballad, his dam being by another outstanding sire and broodmare sire, Darshaan. In **looks** he is a big, beautifully-proportioned horse with a great length of stride – a characteristic that he passes on to many of his offspring and that has helped them bring excellent prices at foal and store sales.

### Telescope's Progeny

But as I said earlier, notwithstanding these many fine qualities Telescope now needs his progeny to show their ability on the racecourse to persuade breeders to continue to have confidence in him. It is clear that he can produce big, good-looking horses with great walk - but how swiftly they can run is what now matters most!

When we purchased Telescope, I suggested he was the best stallion prospect to retire straight to a British NH stud since Kayf Tara. Two years ago, in order to get an idea of what Tele's results might look like if Kayf Tara's performance were replicated, I got my trusty assistant to produce a chart showing how Kayf Tara's level of success (measured by the percentages of his runners achieving Racing Post Ratings of 120+ and 140+) changed as the years went by. We now know that; Kayf Tara was the most successful stallion in British NH breeding history, in terms of the number of sires championships he won – but actually it didn't always look as if things would turn out that way.

Indeed, I was so surprised by his early results that I told my assistant to double-check the figures. He replied that the figures were correct and I could double check them myself if I didn't believe him. I was convinced! Here are the words I then wrote:

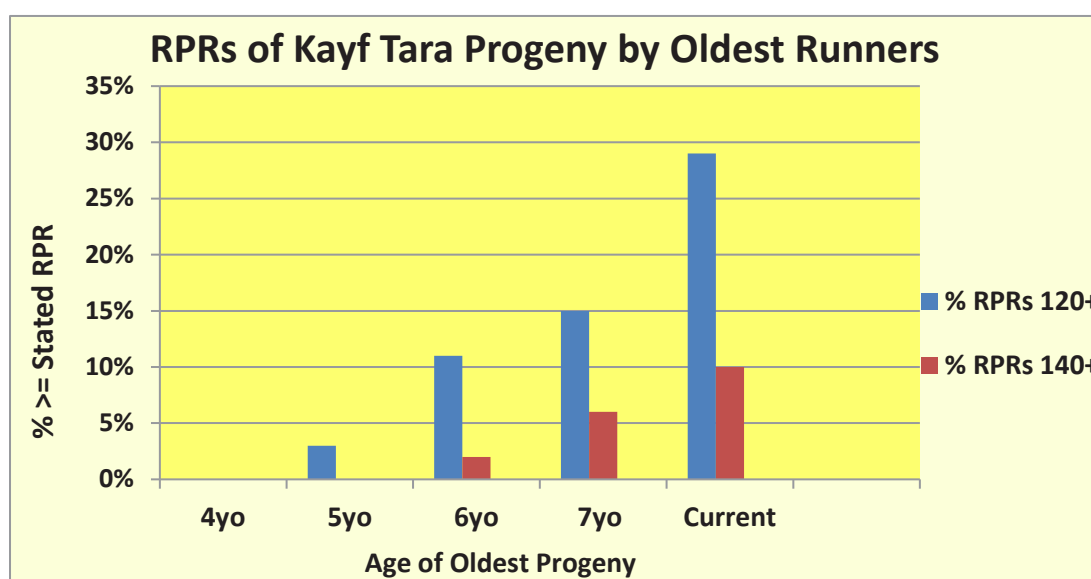
"Kayf Tara retired in 2001 with his first foals duly arriving in 2002, a year in which his prospects were further boosted when the Foot & Mouth outbreak prevented the movement of most British mares to Ireland. At the end of the 2005/06 NH racing season, when members of his first crop were 4YOs, none of his 28 runners had achieved a Racing Post Rating of even 120. His 2006 stud fee was reduced to £2,000 from the £3,000 advertised in his first five years, clearly indicating some market uncertainty about his prospects.

A year later (2006/07), when his oldest runners were 5YOs, just two out of 72 had reached RPRs of at least 120 (3%), with none attaining 140 or more. The fee remained at £2,000. Real hints of promise only emerged in the season (2007/08) that his oldest runners reached

the age of six. Two of his 131 runners achieved RPRs of 140+ (still less than 2%) with 15 reaching 120+ (11%). His stud fee crept back up to £2,500.

Only at the end of the following year (2008/09), when his oldest runners were 7YOs, was Kayf Tara firmly established as one of the more promising young NH stallions. Twelve of his 202 runners (6%) had best RPRs of 140 or more, with 30 (15%) reaching 120 or better. His stud fee duly rose to £4,500.

Even this was not the end of a bumpy road, for from 2013 to 2015 the fee was back to £3,000. Only in the latter years of his stud career, when evidence of his ability was indisputable, did his fee rise to £5,000 and then £10,000. By this time his percentage of 140+ runners had reached 10% and of 120+ runners 29%, almost twice the figures obtained when his first crop were even 7YOs.”



The chart above shows how Kayf Tara’s results improved dramatically as his runners matured. Basically it demonstrates how long it can take for a NH stallion to show his real capabilities. Telescope’s results will follow the same pattern, though we are yet to find out whether this will be at a higher or lower level.

Right now, with much of the 2022/23 NH season still to come, Telescope has four 120+ performers from 79 runners (5%), higher than Kayf Tara’s numbers at a slightly earlier time. Interestingly, three of these horses have raced only in Ireland, where the Point-to-Point field has proved fertile ground for Telescope’s progeny (of which more below) – these being Ferns Lock, Telecon and the mare Martha Divine. The three were produced by some of the better mares in Tele’s first crop, respectively the former Elite mare Smuglin, Black-Type Placed Lecon Benefique, and another Elite mare Tintera.

Of these I have been particularly impressed by Ferns Lock, a big gelding who won two of his first three Irish Points and was narrowly beaten in the other, but made all the running, jumping beautifully, in his first race under Rules to win by 12 lengths from a horse that had won two previous chases – a fabulous performance for a 5YO. He looks all over like a potential candidate for Black-Type honours, but unfortunately his owner favours hunter chases so we may have to make do with the Cheltenham or Aintree Foxhunters for now!



Telescope's best British runner is another daughter of an Elite mare (encouraging for the produce of the greater number of Elite mares he covered in later crops), this being Molly's A Diva's daughter I Spy A Diva, who won her first three hurdle races (and three GBB prizes) this season. Like her dam she was bred by John Perriss and is trained by Kim Bailey.



I Spy A Dive (left), in the lovely surrounds of Kim Bailey's yard at Andoversford near Cheltenham... Slade Steel (right) is a convincing winner of his competitive Irish NHF debut for Henry de Bromhead

I have always believed that Telescope's second crop (4YOs of 2022) was much stronger than his first, so hopefully over the next year these horses will drive his stud performance to the next level. So far, the early results are very promising. Excellent results have come in Irish Point-to-Points, with particularly encouraging performances from the geldings He's My Hero (bred by Shade Oak), Slade Steel (bred by Dina Arstall and subsequently a most impressive winner from two Mullins horses when making his NH Flat race debut at Punchestown for Henry de Bromhead) and the mare Seeyouinmydreams.

The latter in particular achieved a degree of fame in such a manner that I can hardly bring myself to mention her, just in case it reminds the breeder's wife about the whole unfortunate episode. Seeyouinmydreams was bred at Shade Oak by Bryan Mayoh from another TBA Elite mare, Sierra. It was always intended to race her, so she was broken and schooled as a 3YO, and for a while she was brought back here. However, the belief was that she would not be ready to race as a 4YO, so the decision was made to sell her at Ascot as a late 3YO, Here she brought 10,500 guineas; Bryan's wife Dorte had strongly argued against the sale.

Bryan was somewhat surprised when he heard that Seeyouinmydreams had won a Mares Maiden Point-to-Point in Ireland by 15 lengths just over four months later. A month after that, 10,500 guineas transformed into 235,000 guineas when she reappeared at the Tattersalls Newmarket May Sale, joining Paul Nichols for a syndicate including Sir Alex Ferguson and Fred Done. The trainer's comments in his Racing Post stable tour doubtless stimulated further animated debate in the Mayoh household:

*"She's a lovely prospect and I've been delighted with her, but we're in it for the long game with fillies like her and I'm in no rush. She was very impressive when hacking up by 15 lengths in a Irish mares' maiden point-to-point at Larcy in April, after which she was bought at the Tattersalls May NH Sale. She didn't come cheap but all the right faces were trying to buy her. She's from a great family, being related to three winners, notably the smart hurdler Songe. Two or three runs in bumpers will suffice for this season, but without doubt she's a name to remember for the future."*



(Left): Is Seeyouinmydreams smiling for the camera or telling her breeder what an eejit he was, as she is led around the Newmarket Sales arena? (Right): This is what a 235,000 guinea 4YO filly should look like, once she's won her Maiden Irish Point-to-Point by 15 lengths

Still at least Bryan received some compensation when the filly's full-brother was sold for €38,000 at Tattersalls Ireland in November – not bad going for the produce of a 23-year-old mare! However, it will not be an occasion of unalloyed joy in the Mayoh household even if this foal one day goes on to win the Champion Hurdle, since Dorte wanted to keep him as an entire under their ownership and then make him an NH stallion when he won that race.

Summing up Telescope right now, it is clear that his stock are taking rather more time than we first anticipated. The best of his geldings are big, rangy horses that appear ideally suited to chasing, with stride lengths that help them stay longer distances. It is probably no coincidence that the NH Flat races utilised for development in this country don't appear to be as appropriate to their needs as do three-mile Point-to-Points in Ireland. The parallel I drew with Kayf Tara's results two years ago seems to be more accurate than I expected at the time. The best horses produced by both are likely to be staying chasers; so if you are using Telescope, please consider choosing mares with the potential to breed chasers. It will work!

But enough of stallion promotion: now we come to a regular feature that some of my readers (well two to be exact) told me they greatly missed when I was stood down last year so the Scoop chappie could take over the show, namely carefully considered Hocky reflections on the state of NH breeding today...

### **BRITISH NH BREEDING TODAY**

Reflecting on the passing of my Dad, of which a little more follows shortly, got me thinking about the **changes in British NH breeding** since he started Shade Oak as a NH stallion stud almost 50 years ago. In those days, NH breeding was almost a hobby activity for most of its participants, who themselves had been raised on a diet of hunting and pointing. The stallions were usually Flat handicappers at best; mares were generally unraced, with the best often being sisters of winning chasers; whilst fences were tougher and weights were heavier.

There have been changes since then that, looking back, seem to be dramatic. Today, weights are lighter, fences more forgiving, and the sun is apparently lower and more inclined to shine in the horse's eyes on winter afternoons – doubtless it's all because of climate change. Races are run at a faster pace, so that high cruising speed and agility are the key attributes of today's best NH horses, rather than the ability to carry big weights, stand up to unforgiving fences and slog through bottomless ground.

**Jumps breeding** too has changed greatly in the past 30 years. Flat breeders have become obsessed with speed, causing them to move away from middle-distance horses (as well as stayers) as the preferred stallion base – even 10 furlong horses are in a small minority among Flat stallions. This means that top-class Flat horses are increasingly available to NH studs – and are increasingly necessary to NH breeders wanting to produce top-class horses.

At the same time the **mares racing programme** has evolved out of all recognition, and selection of mares on the grounds of proven racing ability is increasingly necessary for breeders wanting to succeed. (Nonetheless, of course, certain media megamouths continue to moan about the mares championship events held at Cheltenham, though in the 220+ years the Oaks has been run I am not aware of similar voices complaining about its effect on the quality of the Derby – unless this happened when Pretty Polly won the race in 1904). The **TBA Elite Mares Scheme** has further encouraged the idea that good racemares can become good broodmares; and the EMS plays no small part in making it possible to stand stallions such as ours in this country – and to help them succeed when they do.

Of course, NH breeders don't need to be able to afford to buy or retain an Elite mare in order to breed winners; but if they are determined to succeed on the racecourse or the sales ring, they do need to recognise how competitive NH breeding is and choose mares that have shown clear evidence of racing aptitude over obstacles, backed up by being produced by good sires and with close-up families in which high-class racing ability is present. The competition is far stronger than it was 40 or 50 years ago and the chances of producing a Desert Orchid from a non-winning mare sired by a Hunters Improvement Society stallion are much lower – though if you do want to try, I do know of one grey stallion with the combination of pedigree, racing ability and build-quality to give you a shot at it!

More recently, the disadvantage suffered by breeders when they produce a filly have been significantly reduced by the **Great British Bonus**, offering £20,000 prizes in hundreds of Mares-only races (with up to £4,000 going to the breeder even if the horse is sold) and £10,000 prizes in Any-Sex events – all for very reasonable nomination fees for TBA members. Whatever else you do, make sure you enter your filly foals in GBB (Foals by 30 September, Yearlings by 28 February, 3YOs by 31 August of the year in question) - and remember that you only win full bonuses for fillies by stallions based in Great Britain!

A new initiative that will take some time to achieve its long-term objective is the introduction of '**Junior NH Hurdles**' in Britain from October 2022. The aim of these races is to give NH-bred horses racing in Britain the same opportunity to gain experience of jumping obstacles at an early age that for many years has proved so important to the successes of French horses, and to Irish Pointers more recently – without having to face much more experienced Flat racehorses in ordinary juvenile hurdles.

It has been shown that it is early jumping experience, rather than pedigree, that has underpinned the results of French-raised horses, not a better selection of stallions or mares. Horses bred in Britain and Ireland for Jumps racing are perfectly capable of obtaining outstanding results after running over obstacles as 3YOs and early 4YOs, as demonstrated by Honeysuckle, who began her career in an April 4YO Maiden Point-to-Point; whilst two of the best winners raised in France in recent years - the 4-time winner of the G1 Grand Prix d'Automne Hurdle, Galop Marin (by Black Sam Bellamy), and L'Ami Serge (by King's Theatre) - both first ran over hurdles in the Autumn of their 3YO year.

Earlier training over jumps seems to develop the horses' minds and 'muscle memories' so they are far more effective at the top level later on. NH Junior Hurdles are designed to encourage horses raced in Britain to follow the same route as is available to those in France (via 3YO hurdles) and Ireland (via 4YO Points), whilst carrying full GBB bonuses for fillies and the benefit that winning such a race will not affect the horse's novice status next season. In the last couple of years we have begun to break the fillies we intend to race far earlier than formerly, giving them ridden exercise and teaching them to jump. I have been staggered by the improvement this has wrought in their physiques. I hope to be equally delighted by the success it brings on the racecourse, some at least in Junior NH Hurdles!.



## DAVID HOCKENHULL

2023 will be Shade Oak's 50<sup>th</sup> year of owning NH stallions and sadly my Dad, who started the whole thing back in 1973 with the purchase of Pamroy, will not be with us for a double celebration of Shade Oak's 50<sup>th</sup> and his 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays, for he died at home shortly after his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday in November.

Although Dad had not been actively involved in the running of the stud for several years, he continued to take an interest in all its activities. He would help out in any way he could, collecting and delivering horses until fairly recently and continuing to ensure that the lawns were kept in excellent order. I'm sure many of you will miss his friendly greeting when you visit the stud. A smile was rarely far from his face, being the true gentleman that he was!

Dad had an interest in horses from his youth, riding in various equine competitions and gaining a reputation as a fearless rider prepared to mount the most difficult of horses. One of these was Housewife's Choice, who despite temperament problems Dad managed to ride into fourth place in the Cheltenham Foxhunters, when he arrived late after first having to milk the cows at home and with no time to walk the course.

Dad's father died when he was twelve and he left school as soon as he could, to help with the farm. Initially Shade Oak was a dairy farm, with around 100 cows, but the prize pedigree herd was wiped out by Foot and Mouth in 1967 and, although Dad restocked, his heart wasn't in it so he gradually turned to his real interest, breeding horses.

Shade Oak's first stallion purchase was Pamroy in 1973; with a Timeform Rating of 98 he was some way short of the levels required later! Establishing the stud took time, with Rymer being the first of several other stallions before Gunner B arrived in 1989. 'Gunner' was a 16YO and intended as a 'fill-in' before better prospects became available, but in his first year at Shade Oak his son Royal Gait won the Champion Hurdle, making his NH stallion career. The Grand National winner Red Marauder was sired at Shade Oak, and Gunner B became Champion British NH Sire. He was followed in this by Alflora, the stud's first major stallion purchase - and one on whom we almost bet the farm!.

Dad's all-time favourite stallions, though, were those of former times, such as Straight Deal, Above Suspicion, Reliance and Ardross; and he liked to see their names in pedigrees – although in more recent times this would be some way back!

Dad and Mum married in 1958 and my sister Denise was born nine months later, followed in fairly swift succession by me and another sister, Jacquie. David and Anne were recognised for their contribution to NH breeding when they were awarded the TBA Queen Mother's Silver Salver.

As I said at his Memorial Service: "Dad grew up in a different world from today's. He was a good, honest, fair and loyal man who said it as he saw it. He would say: 'Don't be impressed and admire the horsebox, it's what steps out the back that counts.' He was determined and daring, but most of all he was fun. He always had time to chat and listen to everyone. He brought joy and laughter into our lives and we will all miss him greatly."

Acknowledgement: Grateful thanks are given to Michael Harris for many of the photographs of Logician and Telescope used in this brochure

## FOALING ALARMS

I am regularly asked by clients about what foaling alarms we have found to be reliable and easy-to-use. I can strongly recommend SAFEMATE. Do not be put off because they are based in Denmark as they have been nothing but accommodating.

Here are the email details: [shop@safematefolealarm.dk](mailto:shop@safematefolealarm.dk)

Or if you have any questions contact me.

### THE SHADE OAK OPEN DAY

Barring a further outbreak of plague, pestilence or a blockade of all roads around Bagley by the 'Just Stop Oil' eco-w\*\*\*\*\*s (does this read 'warriors'? - Ed. No - PH), the Annual Shade Oak Open Day will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, when we will once more be showing our stallions, along with some fillies being prepared to go into training and hopefully (this being the real reason for the date) some lovely new foals – a few perhaps already turning grey. Everyone who receives this newsletter is invited but PLEASE, so we can sort out the catering, tell us a week in advance that you are coming!

## STALLION TERMS

**Logician** is owned by a syndicate of five people that have agreed the rules for discounts and these apply equally to everyone, regardless of who they are and however nicely they ask.

The terms are:

- Advertised fee: = £4,000;
- Prompt payment discount (payment by 30<sup>th</sup> November): £200 off = £3,800
- Logician Loyalty Bonus (for breeders using Logician in 2022): £500 off = £3,500;
- Multiple Mare Discount: 2 mares: £500 off = £3,500;
- Multiple Mare Discount: 3 or more mares: £750 off: = £3,250;
- TBA Elite Mare: Category 1 (£4,000) voucher = £ Free
- TBA Elite Mare: Category 2 (£3,000) voucher = £1,000;
- TBA Elite Mare: Category 3 (£2,000) voucher = £2,000.
- Note 1: Only one of the above concessions will apply to each mare, that giving the lowest cost to the breeder.
- Note 2: In order to contribute to multiple mare discounts, the relevant number of mares must either be scanned in foal on October 1<sup>st</sup> or have been presented for covering on at least three occasions during the stud season.
- Note 3: TBA Elite Mares vouchers involve the stud giving a 25% discount to the Levy Board (which funds the scheme). Accordingly, these mares cannot contribute towards quantity discounts for other mares.

**Telescope** and **Dartmouth** stand for fees of £3,000 (which I notice is a fee now being quoted for stallions with somewhat lesser credentials). Here, I have more flexibility; so if you want to make me a reasonable offer, call to discuss. The better the mare and the more mares you book, the better will be the deal.

