

The David Allan Column

Exciting Guineas weekend on Rowley Mile



Aidan Ó'Brien's Churchill (3), wins Saturday's Qipco 2000 Guineas on The Rowley Mile.

IT is difficult to imagine a better 2,000 Guineas than the great 1971 renewal in which the magnificent Brigadier Gerard defeated the wonderful Mill Reef, both rated TimeForm 141 at 3 and "The Brigadier" 144 at 4.

"The Brigadier" was a sports hero around the country. Unbeaten at 2 (including the Gr1 Middle Park), he won all his races at 3: 2,000 Guineas, St James's Palace Stakes, Sussex Stakes, Goodwood Mile and the QEII at a mile then the Champion Stakes (10 furlongs). At 4 he won the Lockinge, Prince of Wales and Eclipse and stepped up to a mile and a half to win the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes. In the inaugural running of the Benson and Hedges Gold Cup at York's Ebor meeting (now the Juddmonte International), narrow The Derby Winner Roberto got the better of him and that was that.

A reason for the national adulation of The Brigadier was that he was not the product of great capital expenditure. His breeding-expert owning couple The Hislops subsequently turned down many big offers for the result of their dreams, while John Hislop as a journalist and author described the racing world with great warmth and affection, demonstrating his love for it. He was known in racing circles as a top amateur rider over obstacles, finishing 3rd in the Grand National, and outside as having parachuted into France with the SAS and won a Military Cross.

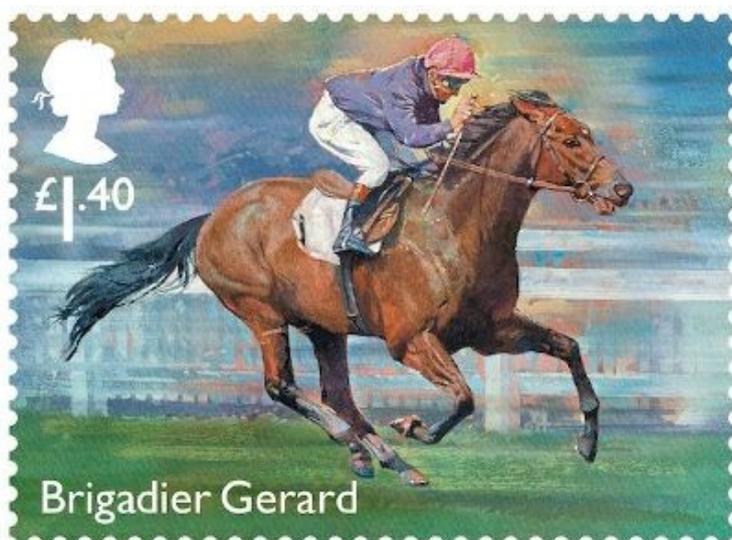
The horse was named for Brigadier Etienne Gerard, the central figure in a long series of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle short stories of a hussar on the enemy side at Waterloo.

Allowing for some license, those popular romances are of educational value when it comes to **(to p2)**



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Brigadier Gerard postage stamp.

the Napoleonic Wars. Gerard himself was as vain and complicated as another Conan Doyle character, Sherlock Holmes.

One of my own favourite Guineas Winners – Nashwan (a boy's name meaning something like ecstatic) – went from 66/1 to 3/1 on the strength of a couple of pieces of work on Newmarket Heath that had the dogs not just barking but howling.

He rocketed home on the Rowley Mile in then record time then stepped straight up to the Derby Distance. Nashwan pulverised the field with one of the most beautiful examples of a thoroughbred galloping – in this case for the line on the tip-you-sideways Epsom finishing straight. Find him on YouTube!



Nashwan (Willie Carson) wins 2000 Guineas, 1989.

Frankel's Guineas is alive in recent memory and was spectacular for the near lunatic manner in which he ran, or so

it seemed for the first half of the race. His pacemaker was completely irrelevant as the Henry Cecil charge demonstrated why the trainer would wistfully remark that Frankel was not the easiest. Of course, the superb horse did not falter and won by 6 lengths.

Although he could surely have won a July Cup (6 furlongs), masterful training channelled stellar talent into dominating mile and 10 furlong races in an all-time manner to be ranked with or better than Sea-Bird and ahead of the wonderful Sea The Stars, another brilliant Guineas winner plus Eclipse, Juddmonte etc., who – the more mischievous will say – also did it at the Derby and Arc distances.

Saturday saw Churchill get the run of the race on the near side under the noses of the crowd who got the always thrilling sight of a top thoroughbred powering up and out of The Dip to win a Classic at Headquarters. They may have been pleased to get this one into the bag and move on because the colt got very warm under the saddle beforehand. Maybe he had a bumpy flight over from Ireland that morning, but then the plane was carrying another plane - Lancaster Bomber (4TH) – who was cool.

If that lovely horse named for the iconic aircraft doesn't go on to win something big, I'll eat my hat – which means that it looks like Churchill won a good Guineas. The 2nd, Barney Roy ran a blinder going down by only a length having got seriously unbalanced on the downhill part of The Dip, recovering bravely. Much to come from this field.

Coolmore names runners bravely. Churchill at stud may sire progeny named from hundreds of alternatives ranging from "V for Victory" perhaps to part of one of his most famous quotes "SoberintheMorning".

Lancaster Bomber if he becomes a professional father will have the whole lexicon of Bomber Command and many Dam Busters references from which to draw.

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DAVID ALLAN

BRIGADIER GERARD v FRANKEL

Owned & bred: John Hislop
Trained: Dick Hern
Ridden: Joe Mercer
Named after: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's swashbuckling hero
Wins: 17 from 18 races at distances ranging from five furlongs to a mile and a half
Prize money: £253,024
Classics: 1971 2,000 Guineas
Major race wins: Middle Park (1970), St James's Palace Stakes (1971), Sussex Stakes (1971), Lockinge (1972), Prince of Wales's Stakes (1972), Eclipse (1972), King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (1972), Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (1971 & '72), Champion Stakes (1971 & '72)
Timeform rating: 144

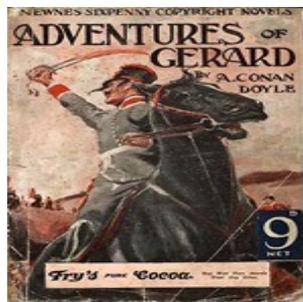
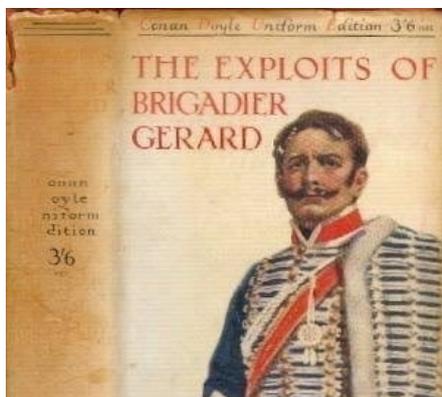
Owned & bred: Prince Khaled Abdullah
Trained: Sir Henry Cecil
Ridden: Tom Queally
Named after: the late American trainer Bobby Frankel
Wins: 12 from 12 races at distances ranging from seven furlongs to a mile
Prize money: £1,849,924
Classics: 2011 2,000 Guineas
Major race wins: Dewhurst Stakes (2010), St James's Palace Stakes (2011), Sussex Stakes (2010 & 2011), Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (2011), Lockinge (2012), Queen Anne Stakes (2012).
Timeform rating: 147

A comparison between two greats .

This afternoon (yesterday when you read this) we anticipate the Battle of the Flower Bushes as Rhododendron and Hydrangea re-oppose, with stable companion Winter joining them, in the 1,000 Guineas to be worthy successors to such as Minding and Oh So Sharp.

But before turning attention back to the Rowley Mile (with Greyville on my hand-held, hoping for Victorious Jay by Jay Peg to run well in the Drill Hall), I leave you with an illustration of naming humour 200 years ago being not dissimilar to that of today. An 1809 Classic Winner bore the Joan of Arc name "Maid of Orleans". She was by a son of no less than Eclipse named *Potoooooooo*.

If you count the letters "o" after the "t", you can see why some documentation shows him as Pot-8-Os and why he was meant to be Potatoes until, the story goes, a mischievous stable lad wrote Potoooooooo on his feed bin and the owner loved it. - tt.

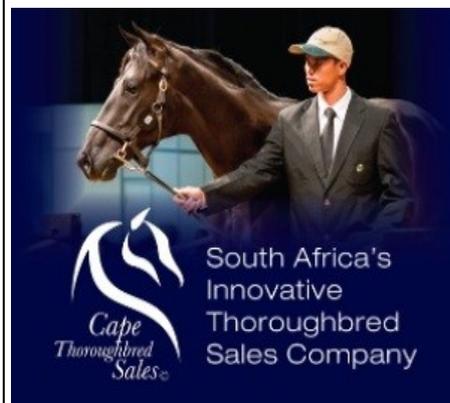


Conan-Doyle books inspired a name.

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