

The David Allan Column

Shuttling North-South and Sideways!



Danehill, the late, great shuttling stallion.

THE thoroughbred breeding industry is based on the boys standing still while the ladies rush around the countryside to visit them. That is how we explain the situation to an uninitiated interested person who asks. In the context of a given country and season, this is correct.

However stallions actually traverse the globe to visit other mare populations by now-traditional shuttling or by temporary transfer. We wonder how South Africa might participate in the future?

In large scale thoroughbred producing countries, the standing of stallions has become concentrated into fewer locations. Coolmore's history is well recounted. For a time, Coolmore plus Rathbarry, The

Irish National and Derrinstown (Shadwell) Studs provided the majority of covering alternatives in an Irish line –Cork to Kildare via Tipperary – tracked by boarding studs easily “walking” mares in and out on the day.

Outposts standing one or two flat stallions reduced activities greatly as this commercial consolidation took hold. Darley's huge English centre at Dalham Hall, developed later in the early Noughties, is a force for centralisation in that country and Darley has added Kildangan to the Irish equation.

We tend to forget that thirty years ago when syndication was still commonplace, a stallion would cover 40 mares for the shareholders and **(to page 2)**



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another ten or fifteen to pay the bills. The picture today – painted with a broad brush - is of such a stallion covering around as many times then to deal with 50 mares as nowadays to deal with 150 because of the accuracy of ultra sound scanning.

This accuracy has increased a breeder's flexibility perhaps helping some lessening of centralisation. These days Irish operations such as Tally-Ho, Ballylinch, Morrinstown Lattin and Rathasker stand multiple stallions and spread the numbers around somewhat, but all within relatively short distances of each other.

Although local jumping sires survive, some big battalions would never abandon the National Hunt game. They stand many, some covering 300 mares in extended seasons with less concern about early covers. A popular flat shuttler would cover that sort of number in two seasons north and south.

As opposed to shuttling north-south, that epitome of the shuttle stallion, Danehill, also moved sideways under Coolmore operation.

He would have been 31 this year. Bred and raced for Juddmonte, Danehill was about to be syndicated when suddenly sold to a Coolmore/Arrowfield partnership to shuttle. His incredible success in Australia is well known but he did not "fire" with his Irish crops at first. For one season – 1996 – he was sent to do northern duty in Japan.

Danehill– moving on south from Japan to do his Australia season–was joining a new source of shuttlers on that trip. When we were trying to buy (back from Japan) Generous, the Royal Ascot 2 year old and Derby winner – a rare combination – we were thwarted by the JBBA having the new commercial opportunity to shuttle him due south to New Zealand.

Royal Academy was another to move sideways (also to Japan) for a season. Giant's Causeway went sideways but to USA and for a different reason. The Iron Horse stood his first very busy season in Tipperary then was off to Ashford (Coolmore America) where he stayed so successfully.

Giant's Causeway's move was a blow to some Irish/UK breeders but flying transatlantic to be covered expensively was no big deal at that level. Many American mares had flown to him in Tipperary – hence the swap. There was/is no export quarantine going from UK/Ireland or on arrival. There is 30 days quarantine (on a farm not lock down) in USA (if) coming back. Right now, there is less of such traffic because of the current fall in attraction of USA performance and pedigrees to Europeans. It will come round again.



Giant's Causeway at Ashford Stud.

Darley moves horses sideways between its battalions in UK and Ireland. Some go to France for a season and stay or not. Or to Darley Japan.

If export protocols are sorted out as discussed when "Daydreaming" a few columns ago, shuttling to South Africa will be looked at again. Based on the above, the prospect of intra-southern hemisphere transfers from Australasia or South America might be added in. Would the "global operators" even seek bases here?

"Why would you want to bring in stallions that would eclipse many of your local horses?" was a question asked in the ITBF lobbies at the Table Bay Hotel in January. So was *"Wouldn't you get Australian rejects?"*.

To the latter the answer is "that's fine". Australia more or less rejected Sadler's Wells and Galileo – the latter's aura making his name revered in South Africa in spite of the contradiction in the general SA preference for speed. Not all the current "hot" young sires were sprinters anyway.

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We might have such as Archipenko (a Newmarket horse with SA connections who shuttled to Argentina where he is a top first season sire but stopped going) or California Chrome (going to Chile).

To the former question above, the answer is that Australian breeders were hungry for something new while stallion masters were worried. But deals were done and bases created with results that include Australian-bred sons of shuttlers to stand and daughters to contribute to the gene pool.



Her Majesty The Queen unveils a statue of Generous, an early Japan-New Zealand shuttler.

Nowadays reverse-shuttling is successful. Danzero, an early example, misfired in Newmarket (UK) but Exceed and Excel (top class speed) and Helmet (looking good) are cracking examples. How would Captain Al and Dynasty have done? Might a South African owned stallion farm ever develop in Europe?

Just as the families of many recent mare imports to SA will filter into catalogues at large, so would the impact of a few shuttle stallions. They too, would be a centralisation factor - if and only if we sort out SA's unusual import protocols at the same time as export.

Standing Kabool throughout the season at Kenilworth gave an interesting model, but hardly ideal. Mind you, Kabool did not help by being extraordinarily slow in the shed. - tt.

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