



*Mondays* with DAVID ALLAN



*A packed Newmarket crowd sees Saxon Warrior home in the 2,000 Guineas.*

## What's a proper horse?

*"He's a very, very good horse. A proper horse. He'll stay a mile and a half."*

So said Donnacha O'Brien, jockey son of Master Trainer Aidan and brother of, amongst others, ex jockey Joseph who on Saturday at Newmarket supervised the running of Saxon Warrior on whom young Donnacha was sitting after winning the 2,000 Guineas. Dad – and Ryan Moore – were across the pond at Louisville getting washed away by the deluge that produced flash floods downtown, while horses and jockeys turned chestnut coloured in the Churchill Downs slop.

In contrast, the current three day May Bank Holiday weekend in the UK will be the warmest such Spring break since just after the War. It has already provided the enormous crowds on both Guineas Days with idyllic conditions, as well as drying ground since the "Good to Soft" of earlier in the week.

Two word-playing owners own a grey gelding the call Grey Britain. There was nothing grey except

his coat when he strode clear to win the Sunday opener at 50/1.

The inference of the understatement "*proper horse*" is that he/she is a Classic contender/winner which of course includes the Derby Distance of a mile and a half or 2400 metres.

Not every racing jurisdiction embraces these performers, but when we look at the Epsom and Irish Derbies, the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe to name but a few, these are the races that spawn legends.

Saxon Warrior (JPN) was bred where they don't spend much time sprinting. The great stallion Deep Impact whose blood Coolmore now has through Saxon Warrior won at various distances including one of the two Group 1 Tenno Sho **(to page 2)**



*Grey Britain wins the Sunday opener under blue skies.*

## **DAVID ALLAN (..cont fm p1)**

(Emperors Cups) run each year.

He set a world record for 3,200 metres in one of them, around 3 seconds quicker than the quickest Melbourne Cup and not to be compared with the UK Cup races of which the times are only a curiosity, varying greatly depending on the topography of the particular course, the precise distance and the ground.

Saxon Warrior probably did not win the greatest Guineas, but for a horse that had won a Group 1 Mile at 2 – usually signalling “not speedy enough” for a Guineas six months later, after the winter break – didn’t he do well! He is now odds on in some places for the Derby, and is being discussed as a potential Triple Crown horse.

The last was Nijinsky. Camelot won the Guineas and the Derby, just failing to complete the Triple in the oldest Classic of them all, the St Leger (2800 metres). Much as the commercial concern is that stamina is not what the quick-results brigade want, Camelot’s progeny have sold well in Europe although in South Africa, his imported-in-utero yearlings did not set the sale ring alight. This may have something to do with his sire Montjeu being seen as a soft ground influence as much as concerns about trip.

Although sometimes there are murmurs about Coolmore winning so much and so often at the top level when variety is the spice of life, their dedication to breeding and racing to win Classics as opposed to dozens of races on the undercards is both remarkable and very valuable to us all. Also

producing superb milers, they completely respect the Derby distance.

**Sadler’s Wells kick-started this era although he himself won the Irish 2,000 Guineas (a mile, but an early mile in a 3 year old’s life – like Saxon Warrior), the Eclipse (a mile and a quarter admittedly up Sandown’s Hill), and the Irish Champion Stakes (same trip). He did, however, finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in the King George and the French Derby at the full trip.**

His stallion sons Montjeu and Galileo were a match for each other until the former died prematurely at 16. Galileo continued to become a phenomenon built on mile and a half performance while producing world beating milers upwards.

Who’s next? Australia? Gleneagles? Churchill? The Ghurka? What an array of hopes, not to mention the wonderful fillies and mares.

Another miler from a different line emerged in the 1,000 Guineas yesterday. Grey Britain was not the only very long odds winner on the day.

While at Turffontein on Saturday, the huge starting prices of the winners of *both* SA Nurseries baffled the experts, and Elusive Fort (a mile and a mile and a half Grade 1 winner) sired an Oaks Winner but also sires speed, the 2018 1,000 Guineas winner Billesdon Brook by Champs Elysees started at 66/1 to become the longest priced winner ever of a race first run in 1814.

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*Champs Elysees standing at Castlehyde Stud (Coolmore) at a fee in 2018 of €6,500.*

## DAVID ALLAN (...cont)

Bred by the greatly respected Bob McCreery who sadly passed away too soon to see this filly win a Classic, Billesdon Brook had been retained and put into a big partnership of people who were entirely justified in going bonkers on the Rowley Mile yesterday. Their filly out of Coplow had been retained and named because Billesdon Coplow is a circa 1800 house in lovely local Leicestershire countryside.

There was much scratching of heads when Juddmonte sold her sire Champs Elysees to be a "dual purpose" but mostly jumping stallion. He was a respectable sire at a modest fee standing alongside Bated Breath at Juddmonte's Banstead Manor - the two lower cost horses compared to more pricey Oasis Dream, Kingman, Frankel and Champs Elysees' older full brother Dansili whose workload is kept within limits.

Yes, Champs Elysees did tend to sire more middle distance that his brother, but – hey – he's just sired a 1,000 Guineas winner.

To whom did Juddmonte sell him? Ah! To Coolmore who stand him at Castlehyde where he also attracted flat mares immediately and will attract more now. Coolmore did not win the 1,000 Guineas with any of their squad of runners. But then again, maybe they did. - **tt.**

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## Rupert's rough diamond



*LESEDI La Rona (9-2) got the upper hand from her more fancied stablemate Nous Voila in Saturday's Listed Perfect Promise Stakes over after a protracted duel. "They are both lovely fillies, but won't be going to Durban at this stage. Nous Voila works better in the sand at home, but Grant (Van Niekerk) was very confident about Lesedi's chances," said trainer Candice Bass-Robinson. Lesedi La Rona, by Trippi, is named after the third largest diamond ever found (at the Karowe mine in Botswana in 2015), and herself is clearly something of a diamond in the rough. She was bred and races for Gaynor Rupert's Drakenstein Stud. –TAB News.*