

MAY THE BEAT GO ON

Celebrated Australian author Les Carlyon, he of Gallipoli fame, penned a memorable preface to his book True Grit in which he distilled the essence of racing into one rhetorical question. What makes racing interesting? The answer, he opined, was horses and people. "These are the only things in racing worth writing about. The rest is drab".

Port Elizabeth, or PE as the Friendly City is more commonly referred to in racing circles, has along with Kimberley been dismissed as a racing backwater by the more affluent racing jurisdictions. But those who have raced there return with only praise for a close-knit community who welcome strangers and who enjoy every moment of their racing. So when one of their own hits the national headlines, the entire city basks in the reflected glory.

Hear The Drums, one short of equaling the all-time South African record for the most number of victories, is the undisputed darling of PE racing. Although bred by the country's leading stud, the Mooi River bastion of Summerhill, the son of Gold Press is of modest origins and fetched only 42 000 as a yearling when the hammer fell to the bid of owner Peter Fabricius. Six years down the line and 31 wins later, Hear The Drums has garnered just shy of R1,7 million in stake earnings and is on the verge of racing immortality.

Buried are the 30 victories of the "Iron Horse", the mighty Joe Joseph-trained Sentinel. Recently, Hear The Drums carted the country's popular champion jockey Andrew Fortune to a facile victory over the Arlington

five to emulate Riza, who those with memories that stretch back to the early 1950's, will tell you was a gelding who seldom won by more than he needed but defied the handicapper on 31 occasions.

Screech Owl, foaled in 1956, later eclipsed Riza's record by one. Hear The Drums is two away from that record and the manner of his victory on Friday suggests that the seven-year-old is far from done.

Trainer Des "Choppies" McLachlan, feigned nonchalance in the post race interview but the smoking stub of a cigarette gave it all away as the television camera followed his progress down the grandstand stairs on his way to the winner's enclosure. It told a story of a trainer immensely proud of his horse, and relieved that his charge had not let his legion of fans down.

It is a sad indictment of the mindset of many South African racing people that achievements of this magnitude cannot be appreciated for what they are. Hear The Drums has a host of detractors simply because he has not been able to assert his authority on opposition outside of his home territory. But they will never be able to expunge his record from the history books and just as a score of 300 not out against Zimbabwe counts in the records of Test cricket, so will the feat of Hear The Drums stand proud in the annuals of South African racing. The gelding has never felt better according to Fortune so 33 career victories are well within his compass and even blurred by the sands of time, it is a record that will stand no matter what. May the beat go on.

NOBLE HEIR

The lightning fast grey filly, the Dennis Bosch-trained Noble Heir, added valuable bold black type to her CV when leading from pillar to post in the Grade3 Tommy Hotspur Handicap run over 1000m at Turffontein.

This daughter of Kahal was bred by Brendan and Candice Norman's Connington Stud and has always seemed best suited to the minimum trip.

When there is a bit of cut in the ground she is particularly lethal so the showers that fell prior to the start of Tuesday's race and led to the abandoning of the two subsequent races would have been welcomed.

Turffontein has been a happy hunting ground for Noble Heir and she was voted the KZN Breeder's Champion Female Sprinter of last season thanks largely to her second place in the Grade 2 Camellia Stakes over 1160m at that course in April last year.

Noble Heir has been able to kick again late on in her last two 1000m

wins and on that evidence she will have an outside chance of staying the 1200m of the Grade 1 SA Fillies Sprint, particularly if the going turns out in her favour.

Noble Heir is the second foal of the four-time winning Kilconnel mare from 1300-1400m, Irish Honour.

Irish Honour's next foal was a colt by Connington's resident stallion, Tiger Hunt, who finished fourth in the Breeder's Cup juvenile.

He is called Honour The Tiger and is in training with Gary Alexander. The full-brother to Honour The Tiger will be offered at the KZN Yearling Sales in June which has switched venues to the TBA complex at Gosforth Park due to the World Cup.

TROPICAL EMPIRE

The Duncan Howells-trained Tropical Empire could soon be off to Australia for stallion duties.

The Australian-bred seven-year-old entire went very close to breaking Eldoriza's 1994 Greyville 1400m course record on Saturday night when producing an exhilarating finish from way off the pace to catch Thanks Dad on the line.

Eldoriza was carrying 50kg when recording a time of 81,50 seconds, while Tropical Empire carried 62kg to a time of 81,57.

For owner Chips Pennells Saturday's performance sorted out a long-lasting personal debate.

"I always used to think the best horse I ever owned was Tandaga, but Michael Roberts disagreed and said it was Dunmore," he explained. "But after Saturday night I now have no doubt that Tropical Empire is the best I've had. I haven't seen a finish like that in a long time. It reminded me of the terrific finish Jet Master used to produce. That's what racing is all about, the excitement of seeing finishes like that."

Pennells revealed that he had been approached by some Australian breeders with an offer for Tropical Empire.

"It's on the cards," said Pennells. "I think he will make a terrific stallion. He has all the attributes. I think he will be far better than his father (Second Empire). He has a tremendous dam line and has the conformation. Another thing about him is his superb nature. He really is a lovely horse."

Tropical Empire's immediate program includes the Grade 2 Drill Hall Stakes over his favourite Greyville 1400m in early May before he has another tilt at the Grade 1 Golden Horse Casino Sprint at Scottsville over 1200m, which usually falls at the end of May.

Tropical Empire finished a narrow second in the Drill Hall Stakes from a wide draw last year, beating recent J&B Met winner River Jetez into third. Two years ago in the Golden Horse Casino Sprint he suffered the worst luck of his career as he was caught in a pocket and had to be snatched up when travelling ominously well inside the final 500m.

Pennells continued, "If his next two runs go well it will be a done deal and he will be off to Australia."

Pennells and his wife Elma have a number of broodmares in the Mooi River area, but said that with each year they seemed further away.

In the same way he said it would be sad to see Tropical Empire depart,

but that it made economic sense. He will retain some shares in Tropical Empire. Pennells former stakes winning filly, Silver Empire, whom he bought at the same time as Tropical Empire, is already back in Australia. She has just had her first foal by Danehill Express.

Although Pennells no longer has a share in the mare he has the "first refusal" option on her foal, for whom he has received outstanding reports. He bought a Pegasus Flyer yearling at a recent Australian sale and is returning for the two-year-old sale in June where he hopes to buy "three or four" horses with the eventual aim of sending them to Basil Marcus in Singapore. "There are great incentives for owners and trainers in Singapore and the stakes are unbelievable," he said.

Maiden races in Singapore carry a stake equivalent of about R190,000. Pennells will first send the horses to former South African jockey, George Davies, who now trains in Perth.

Davies renewed contact with his old "guv'nor" Herman Brown Senior a few years ago after a chance reunion and Pennells bumped into the pair himself at an Australian sale.

If any of the horses prove good enough in barrier trials or in races under Davies' care they would be sent to Singapore.

Perth has many trainers who, like Davies, keep about 10 or so horses in their backyard. "It is similar to Turffontein in the old days," said Pennells.

He recalled in his youth being taken to Turffontein by his father to watch the horses walking through the streets to the track early in the morning and then being allowed by some trainers to "do a little bit of work".

Pennells' father later moved his successful furniture business to the industrial area near Clairwood, which was previously used as an army base.

Pennells' love of horseracing grew and he vividly recalled almost falling off the old second grandstand at Greyville in his excitement when Gay Jane won the Durban July in 1951. His father had an interest in Gay Jane. "It was a privilege to go to the races in those days," remembered Pennells. "I was a first year student but looked very young so had to wear a hat and dark glasses to help me get in!"

One of his other best racing memories was when he and his wife were very courteously congratulated by the Oppenheims after Michael Roberts had brought home Dunmore at Clairwood.

WAR ARTIST WINS MEYDAN GR3

Former Coolmore shuttler Orpen (Lure-Bonita Francita, by Devil's Bag) added a United Arab Emirates group success overnight when globe-trotting Australian-bred 6YO gelding War Artist (Orpen-Royal Solitaire, by Brocco) scored a 2.75-lengths victory in the US\$200,000 Gr3 Al Shindagha Sprint (1200m on all-weather) at Meydan in Dubai. War Artist (ridden by Olivier Peslier for UK trainer James Eustace) defeated fa-

voured US-bred Gr1-winning 5YO entire Gayego (Gilded Time-Devils Lake, by Lost Code) & Godolphin's fellow Australian-bred & multiple stakes-winning 5YO entire El Cambio (Commands-Chaparra, by Canny Lad) in his 2nd start since leaving Australia last year. War Artist was a \$57,500 yearling consigned by Attunga Stud at the 2005 Magic Millions January Gold Coast Sale & owner Rupert Plersch told racingpost.com:

WAR ARTIST *(cont)*

"He needed the run but we have the right trainer who has been so patient. The horse had colic last year & was dying; James (Eustace) has done a great job." Eustace added: "We thought he would need the run, but he is a very talented & versatile sprinter. We will probably revert to the turf with him now." During 2009, War Artist won both Germany's most prestigious sprint, the Gr2 Goldene Peitsche (1200m) at Baden-Baden & France's Gr3 Prix Du Petit Couvert (1000m) at Longchamp, as well as finishing 3rd in France's Gr1 Prix de l'Abbaye (1000m) at Longchamp.

And during 2008, War Artist notched European placings in the UK Gr1 July Cup (6 furlongs) at Newmarket, UK Gr1 Golden Jubilee Stakes (6 furlongs) at Royal Ascot, UJ Gr2 Duke Of York Stakes (6 furlongs) at York & UK Listed Lady Wulfruna Stakes (7 furlongs) at Wolverhampton. Back in 2007, War Artist won South Africa's Gr1 Mercury Sprint (1200m) at Clairwood, as well as finishing 2nd in both the Gr1 Golden Horse Sprint (1200m) at Scottsville & Gr3 Byerley Turk Plate (1400m) at Scottsville. Overall he now has 7 wins & 6 placings from 17 starts.

A NEW STALLION FOR KLAWERVLEI

IT is my great pleasure to announce the arrival in South Africa of our newest stallion for 2010: King's Apostle (IRE), a leading sprinter in Europe last season, writes John Freeman of the Thoroughbred Group.

So many of our past leading sires were Grade 1 winners or had at least useful Grade 1 form and were leading lights of their generation in racing. Basically it's all about breeding to Grade 1 winners and especially those with speed and/or precocity.

King's Apostle beat Europe's top sprinters in the Grade 1 Prix Maurice de Gheest (Deauville) earning a highest Timeform Rating of 124 in that event. He also won a Grade 2 race at Ascot and would have won the Grade 1 July Cup had he not been severely bowled whilst making his move close home. This handsome son of European Champion miler King's Best will be syndicated to stand at Klawervlei Stud.

King's Best won the Grade 1 2000 Guineas by an incredible 3.5 lengths and was TFR 132. He has bred 25 stakes winners and 11 Gr1 horses incl. Proclamation (TFR 132) and Creachadoir (TFR 126) - both recently retired to stud.

King's Best hails from one of the most active families in the stud book today - he is a 3 part brother to Urban Sea, dam of Champion sire Galileo

and 2009 Horse Of The Year Sea the Stars.

King's Apostle was a genuine, smart performer highly rated by his trainer William Haggis, who only raced him in Grade 1 races last season. His pedigree provides numerous proven matings for breeders to follow here. Consider that Galileo's pedigree has Sadler's Wells over a Mr Prospector daughter over great mare Allegretta; King's Apostle is a son of Mr Prospector line over Allegretta over a Sadler's Wells line mare.

King's Apostle's own family has plenty of top class speed and strength in it. He is the 1st foal of his dam (very few mares produce Grade 1 winners from 1st foals). His dam is out of the 1997 European Champion 2yo filly, Embassy - a very impressive winner of the Grade 1 Cheveley Park Stakes. She is a half sister to Tarfshi, the Irish Pretty Polly stakes winner. The next dam, Pass the Peace also won the Grade 1 Cheveley Park Stakes which secured her title as Irish Champion 2yo in 1998.

King's Apostle is bred on one of the strongest crosses in current times, the Kingmambo/ Sadler's Wells cross. Most Kingmambo stakes winners rely on the cross which has delivered an impressive 21 stakes winners including El Condor Pasa, Henrythenavigator, Thewayyouare, Divine Proportions etc.

DE KOCK URGES INTERNATIONAL BUYERS TO LOOK AT SA-BREDS

LIZARD's Desire, the result of a self-mating experiment by his original owner Albert Boshoff and born from a mare he bought back from a riding school, posted his second successive win at Meydan in Dubai when easily accounting for Godolphin's Soy Librano in the \$US120 000 Wheels Handicap over 2000m.

Behind him were runners by world-renowned sires like Ride The Rails,

Cape Cross and Singspiel, to name but a few, but the son of Sabine Plattner's almost-forgotten stallion Lizard Island made them look ordinary is now shaping as a prospect for some of the bigger Carnival races.

"He's a bomb of a horse and very sound, Albert must be very chuffed with himself," trainer Mike de Kock told Racingweb from Dubai on Thursday night. Lizard's Desire, now owned by Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa

DE KOCK(cont)

Al Maktoum, received a 7lb penalty when he beat King Of Rome (a fluent winner since) a fortnight ago and De Kock said: "He'll probably pick up another 4lb penalty for this win and will then be rated higher than horses like Dan De Lago, who beat him back in South Africa. He has really blossomed and we are very pleased."

De Kock was full of praise for South African-bred runners, with Lucky Find coming back to his best for a second place in the Gulf News Broadcasting Handicap: "They've proven themselves over and over in Dubai, they are flying the flag. They are sound and make good value buys. Buyers are paying astronomical amounts for horses bred elsewhere who are not making the grade. Horses in training from Argentina, for example, are unrealistically priced. Those sellers need to reconsider what they are doing, they are losing their value."

He stressed the importance of these Dubai wins for the SA breeding industry and said: "International buyers should start to get serious about

South Africa now. Our breeds are tough and sound and have plenty of ability. If our breeders and owners stay realistic in their prices, the market will stay lively. I hope they keep their feet on the ground, because the overseas buyers will keep coming back for good deals."

Raihana (AUS), the stable's other major contender on the night, was beaten into fourth in the UAE 1000 Guineas and De Kock noted: "She gave 4.5kg to the first three runners past the post, all good Northern Hemisphere breeds, and was beaten under two lengths. It was a terrific run. We'd like to bump the same horses six months down the line!"

Back home the proud Albert Boshoff said about Lizard's Desire: "He makes my heart warm. I wanted to keep a small share but eventually decided to sell 100% to Sheikh Mohammed. Lizard's Desire's dam, Anfields (Northfields) is still alive with his full-brother at foot and another Lizard Island in her tummy. I'm hoping they can turn out to be as good."

ANDREW FORTUNE

Reigning Champion Jockey Andrew Fortune had another memorable day added to his growing career list as he marked his belated seasonal comeback with a perfect treble, while his governor, Joey Ramsden, continued his dominant form at Durbanville.

Ramsden sent out a five-timer, three of them brought home by Fortune and the other two by Richard Fourie and Bernard Fayd'herbe respectively.

It was not a record for Ramsden as he has had six winners in a meeting at Durbanville before, a course where he has a phenomenal strike rate. Fortune's weight had ballooned to as high as 72kg as he used a long suspension at the beginning of the season to take a break from the punishing schedule of gymn work and travel that had helped him win last season's Championship.

He had his first ride in the second race, a Maiden over 1000m, aboard the moderate Peter and Val Fenix and Ingrid and Markus Jooste-owned African Vision, jumping from draw four in a weak field of nine.

It is unusual to see the superbly balanced Fortune hard-riding a horse but he had to keep at African Vision for the entire length of the 600m straight as his mount got involved in a ding-dong tussle with his Ramsden-trained stablemate, Toga Bearer.

African Vision, a three-year-old gelding by Rabah, got the upperhand in the final strides thanks to Fortune's vigorous attentions to win by 0,25 lengths.

The inimitable Fortune must be the first jockey to pull up a chair for himself during the post-race interview and exclaimed, "I'm exhausted."

He continued, "I've been keen to get back but I got so heavy. I've really had to work to get down. I had to train three or four hours after track and just eat fruit during the day. Once you back at stable you realise how much goes into it and I've been at stables for a while. I must thank them, Joey's still sticking with me, I'm grateful for these things. Today I'm clean if I'm not clean these things would never ever happen."

The intensity of a race is different to track and Fortune added, "I could hardly walk after the race, but I'm here and that's the important thing. I'll

feel better tomorrow."

The third race, a Maiden for fillies over 1400m, saw Fortune at his brilliant best aboard the Graham Beck-owned Medicean three-year-old filly, Natural High, who had been knocking at the door in trips from 1200-1600m.

She had the widest draw of all, but Fortune first managed to slot her into a midfield position from where he was able to dive for the inside coming off the false rail.

He eased her to the front hands and heels before giving her a reminder at the 300m as the Justin Snaith-trained Miss Mayhem put her nose in front and threatened to draw further clear.

Natural High responded, as they always seem to do for Fortune, and he then pumped her out into a one length lead with his hands until he drew the stick at the 150m mark to keep her up to her task. She won by 0,5 lengths. In his third and final ride Fortune rode the Giselle Burg, Martin Wickens and Wilgebosdrift Stud-owned Cressida in a Fillies and Mares MR 72 Handicap over 1000m and was confident of victory.

The National Assembly four-year-old filly, won by a comfortable 2.25 length victory after lying handy from a pole position draw and Ramsden said after the race, "She just loves a round track. She'll get 1000m at Kenilworth, not a yard further, but might go 1200m here."

Fortune added, "I was reasonably bullish. She's done well at work and if you look at her form at Durbanville it's quite strong. She had everything in her favour."

Fortune's remarkable comeback didn't draw many wows from the commentators, perhaps because they are used to it, but the Champion said, "A start like this ... you dream about things like this. I really don't think people have seen the best of me. I will still come and do something wonderful. I want to get my weight down to be competitive. I take 2 to 3kg off every meeting, it's about time that I matured and acted like a grown up."

He concluded with a smile to Tellytrack interviewer Stan Elley, saying, "You'll be surprised how good I am, Stan."

MJ ODENDAAL

MJ Odendaal, who was Champion Jockey in the 2004/2005 season, is riding the crest of the wave at present simply due to being injury free at last.

After winning the Championship he had a fall in which he tore the sheath of his stomach and also damaged knee ligaments.

A three-month stint in Hong Kong after that bore no fruit.

"You just can't compete with the world's best jockeys when you're carrying injuries," he said at Clairwood where he had three rides yesterday. "I never got going and after three months I informed them that it would be better if I went home to recuperate completely."

Odendaal took five months off which allowed all of his injuries to mend. He came back and formed a lethal partnership with Weiho Marwing in Durban. "We were flying," he recalled. Then came the fateful day of 3rd October 2007.

He was riding a horse called Royal Calibre when its leg suddenly broke. Odendaal was thrown in front of the horse and a fraction of a second later it rolled over him.

It all happened in a flurry but he had sustained a broken leg, a fractured right shoulder blade, a right collar bone broken in three places and multiple fractures to his left collar bone. At least three doctors told him that he would never ride again.

"I never gave up and owe it to Dr Joe de Beer of Cape Town who never gave up either," said Odendaal. "Today I am 100% fixed and in hindsight the two year rest allowed all the other injuries I was carrying to heal fully too. I am feeling as strong as an ox and this is the first time in years that I have been completely injury free." All the metal plates that Odendaal was forced to carry for two years have now been removed.

His left collar bone proved to be the biggest obstacle to his comeback.

He had six operations on it but the bones just would not knit.

With the help of Dr de Beer he obtained some medicine from Canada

that promotes the knitting of bones.

He had to inject himself everyday for four months and also had to put an ultra sound apparatus on his shoulder.

Against all the odds Odendaal made his comeback to the saddle on 20 January this year. In 80 rides since he has already had 12 winners.

In Johannesburg he has been riding for Weiho Marwing, Geoff Woodruff, Gary Alexander and Lucky Houdalakis.

He has decided to travel to Durban for rides too to get himself ready for the Champions Season. His agent Alan Reid organizes his Durban rides. "I am riding at 52kg which has been great in enabling me to get rides," he said. "I am setting up a platform at the moment and the way I finish this season will determine how far I go next season."

Odendaal will be staying firmly put in South Africa.

Although he has won many Grade 1 races he is yet to win the Vodacom Durban July or the J&B Met, his best finishes in them being second and fourth respectively.

"I think it is every jockey's dream to win the July and the Met", he said. "But my real goal will be to chase another championship. I enjoyed the travel and loved that year when I did it." Being a lightweight this goal looks very realistic.

Odendaal's confidence is surely growing by the day and he even had a positive outlook on a recent fall he had at the start of a race at the Vaal. The horse stumbled and he went over its head.

"It was a good test to see how strong I now am," he joked, while showing the bruised forearm upon which the horse trampled.

Odendaal has overcome what many thought was the impossible and his always positive outlook would have increased as a result.

He is certainly on a steady upward curve at the moment and one to watch, particularly next season.

A MEMORABLE EVENING

THE UAE Oaks is the latest Classic to be added to Mike de Kock's roll of honour after the smooth success of Raihana in the 1m1f Tapeta Classic. Ridden by Christophe Soumillon, she won on her local debut before finishing fourth in the UAE 1000 Guineas but always looked likely to prevail on this occasion and reverse form with Godolphin's Siyaadah who was third. De Kock said: "She is a lovely filly and one we have always thought was a Classic prospect. The Guineas just did not work out for her but Christophe has given her a great ride and we will bring her back for the UAE Derby on World Cup night." Kevin Shea had set a steady pace on stable companion Jodi which certainly aided her stable companion.

Raihana's win provided her owner, Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Maktoum, with a memorable Guineas-Oaks double, made even more special in that he bred both Musir (Redoute's Choice) and Raihana (Exclusive Quality). "This was an extraordinary achievement by Sheikh Mohammed, who predicted from the start that both would be good horses," De Kock said.

Shea had won the previous race, a 1m2f Tapeta handicap, on the very impressive Mr Brock who was recording his second Carnival win of 2010 and may just have done enough to get himself an invite for World Cup night. Shea said: "He is a great horse who has thrived on this new surface. He never runs a bad race and can hopefully keep improving."

Mr Brock is owned by Mauritian-based Serge Seenyen.

Zirconium then ran a great race to finish third in the Group 3 Balanchine Stakes, over 1m1f on the turf. Burdened with a Group1 penalty, she was conceding weight to the two who beat her, having led briefly two furlongs out. Shea was in the saddle and said: "She has run well and the slow early pace was not ideal. She is a quality filly and will bounce back."

Shea and De Kock enjoyed the perfect end to their evening when Lucky Find won the concluding mile handicap. Winner of Maktoum Challenge II in 2008, he has been a great servant to the yard and Shea said: "He deserved that after a great run on turf last time."

FRED RICKABY

Fred Rickaby, one of the great racehorse trainers in South African history, died in his home town of Newmarket in England aged 93.

Rickaby came from a great English racing family and his great grandfather, also Fred, trained the winner of the 1855 Epsom Derby, Wild Dayrell.

His grandfather, Fred, rode the 1896 Epsom Oaks winner, Canterbury Pilgrim.

His father, also Fred, won the 1000 Guineas four times.

Rickaby himself was the British flat racing Champion Apprentice in 1931 and 1932, but after becoming too heavy changed codes and rode over the jumps. He has the distinction of having ridden in both the Epsom Derby and the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham.

He is said to have been probably the last person to have ever sat on Hyperion, the Derby and St. Leger winner who became a legendary sire.

His brother Bill was one of the top flat jockeys of his time and achieved a rare 1000 Guineas-Epsom Oaks double on Sweet Solera in 1961 before winning the 2000 Guineas on Privy Councillor in 1962.

Rickaby was the cousin of the great Lester Piggott.

His father's sister, Iris Rickaby, is Piggott's mother having married Keith Piggott, who rode a Champion Hurdle's winner and trained a Grand National winner.

Rickaby served as an RAF fighter pilot in WW II. In 1947 he emigrated to South Africa and was crowned champion trainer in 1976-1977, two years before his retirement.

Rickaby's chief patrons were the Saunders family and Cyril Hurwitz, while Michael Roberts was his stable jockey in the 1970's and they shared in many big race victories.

Roberts recalled yesterday: "He was highly respected and one of the greatest trainers we've had. He was probably the best I've worked for and was unbelievable in preparing horses. He was a very good horse-man and an absolute perfectionist. His horses were turned out immaculately and his Summerveld yard was always in showpiece condition. Everything had to be perfect. You could never be late for work. When the horses walked to the track the string resembled soldiers going to war, in a straight line. The workriders always had to keep exactly the same order."

Roberts has always maintained that the Rickaby-trained Met and Queen's Plate winner, Sledgehammer, was the best horse he ever rode in South Africa.

Another top Rickaby horse he rode was Majestic Crown, whom he believed would have been a great had he not been born in the same year as Sledgehammer.

Other horses Roberts remembered were Abbey Boy, Kruger Rand, Haiti, King Of Tonga and Bold Tropic, although the latter joined Buller Benton as an early three-year-old after Rickaby had retired.

Rickaby trained two Durban July winners before Roberts' time, both for the Saunders family. Jollify dead-headed with the legendary Sea Cottage in 1967 and Naval Escort won in 1969.

Rickaby returned to Britain in the late 1980s and continued to ply his skills as a self-taught chiropractor and physiotherapist with an encyclopedic knowledge of the horse's muscle system.

He was married to Molly Rheinhardt, a well known journalist, who was the first to write a book on the history of The July.

Rickaby himself wrote two books, "Are your horses trying" and "More trying horses".

TAB PAYOUTS

Gaming Laboratories International (GLI) Africa has completed an independent audit of the TAB computerised betting system and found that no bets are placed after an event is closed.

TAB recently completed a thorough investigation into the differences between dividends at the start of a race and the final official payouts. Phumelela and Gold Circle were totally satisfied that no bets were being placed into pools after the close of a race, but in order to further reassure TAB customers GLI was commissioned to carry out an audit of the wagering system.

GLI is a global company with its headquarters in the USA. It has long been the leading independent gaming industry testing and certification laboratory and is utilised by more than 450 gaming regulators in jurisdictions all over the world.

GLI is also approved by South African regulatory authorities to certify systems for use within the South African betting and gaming market.

WORLD'S BIGGEST PUNTER

Headline-avoiding billionaire Zeljko Ranogajec "is the biggest punter not only in Australia but in the world" declared The Daily Telegraph. The newspaper revealed his betting "accounts for between 6-8% of Tabcorp's \$10 billion Australian betting turnover (or between \$600-800 million) & bets tens of millions more with local bookmakers. But that is just the start. Once the overseas betting turnover of his 24-hour, 7-days-a-week operation is taken into account, his total annual betting spend globally is believed to be well over \$1 billion." Ranogajec, 48, employs

"anything from 30 to more than 100 staff just to analyse form" & "betting markets anywhere in the world are selected, based on large pools where his team can bet unlimited amounts at the last minute". The newspaper also noted: "Intriguingly, part of his operation takes up a large portion of the top floor of the NSW headquarters of Tabcorp, the organisation with which he bets hundreds of millions a year." Computers "linked to the tote allow his team to bet late, preventing average punters from following his bets".

SIRE ROCKY MARRIAGE DIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, long-serving KwaZulu-Natal based Ivanhoe Stud stallion Rocky Marriage (Riva Ridge-Exciting Divorcee, by Candy Spots) died aged 30, reported racingpost.com. Rocky Marriage (pensioned from stud duties 5 years ago) was out of Exciting Divorcee "whose half-sister Lemhi Love produced last year's US Gr1 Breeders' Cup Sprint winner Dancing In Silks". After winning the UK Listed Donnington Castle Stakes

at Newbury, he was transferred to the US, where he won 10 races (including the Gr2 Bold Ruler Stakes & Listed Berkeley Handicap, plus 2nd in the Gr1 Carter Handicap). After 1 season at stud in America, he was sent to Ivanhoe Stud in 1988; his best South African-bred progeny were Gr1 Mabaleng Golden Spur winner July Day & Gr1-placed Cherry Tree Hill.

SUN CLASSIQUE AT EXPANDED INGLIS BROOD-MARE SALE

The Inglis Australian Easter Broodmare Sale has been extended to 4 days (Tuesday April 13-Friday April 16) "owing to an outstanding response from vendors" with 948-lots now catalogued, including international multiple Gr1-winning Australian-bred 6YO mare Sun Classique (Fuji Kiseki-Elfenjer, by Last Tycoon). Inglis bloodstock director Jonathan D'Arcy noted: "With entries topping 900, we decided to extend the sale to 4 days, with quality from start to finish. A General Session of 131 mares will conclude the sale, following 817 mares in the Select Session. Some of the high end mares are sure to command attention from international quarters. We are honoured to be offering champion international mare Sun Classique (born & raised at Widden Stud in the NSW Hunter Valley prior to her export to South Africa in June 2004) in-foal to top European stallion Oasis Dream. This represents a full circle, as she was also sold

in-utero at this sale." Sun Classique was retired after her undefeated Dubai campaign in 2008, where she won both the Listed Cape Verdi Stakes (1600m) at Nad Al Sheba & Listed Balanchine Stakes (1777m) at Nad Al Sheba, before defeating her male rivals to win the Gr1 Dubai Sheema Classic (2400m) at Nad Al Sheba & take her record to 9 wins from 15 starts. During the previous 2006-07 season, Sun Classique was named South Africa's Champion 3YO Classic Female (1600m+) at the annual Equus Awards. During 2007 she won both the Gr1 Woolavington 2200 (2200m) at Greyville & Gr1 Majorca Stakes (1600m) against older rivals at Kenilworth; & in 2006 she won the Gr1 Cape Fillies Guineas (1600m) at Kenilworth & Gr3 Diana Stakes (plus finishing runner-up in both the Gr1 Paddock Stakes & Gr1 Thekwini Fillies Stakes).

TINKLER SUES CUM-MINGS FOR \$6.4M OVER "Broken-Down Horses"

Sydney trainer Anthony Cummings "is fighting claims he worked horses so hard they were unable to race, took sale commissions he should not have & bought horses for a client that were not fit for competition," reported The Sydney Morning Herald. Documents filed in the NSW Supreme Court reveal Nathan Tinkler's Patinack Farm "is seeking \$6.4 million from Cummings & his companies Cummings Thoroughbreds & Something Fast" & claim that figure "is the loss in value of horses Cummings bought on its behalf & trained until they were broken down or lame, preventing them earning winnings". The claim was made after Cummings "sought \$173,000 from Patinack for unpaid training fees & costs". Tinkler "refused to pay, saying Cummings had not performed all the work he was

charging for". In a cross-claim, Patinack alleged Cummings "breached his duty of care when training the horses & profited at its expense when he was supposed to be acting for it at sales in 2008, where he allegedly bought more than 100 horses for the company". Cummings denies the allegations. Patinack lists 15 thoroughbreds as "horses that have broken down due to negligence", including 5 that allegedly "had no chance of racing". The remaining 10 horses "allegedly have a 50% chance of racing, including Siderus purchased for \$2.5 million & Metallurgical bought for \$2.2 million. The matter is due before the court for directions on March 9.