

# BLOODSTOCK WORLD



The third in a monthly series celebrating the achievements of ten breeders who have enjoyed outstanding success and played crucial roles in the development of the thoroughbred in the course of the last 200 years. This month's subject is **Viscount Falmouth**, who raised the winners of 19 Classics in 22 years from Mereworth Castle and formed a powerful alliance with Mat Dawson and Fred Archer in the late 19th century

**K**ENT is not a county that we readily recognise as a prominent centre of thoroughbred breeding these days, but in the second half of the 19th century two studs in the Maidstone area flourished famously. One was Leybourne Grange, where Sir Joseph Hawley bred two of his Derby heroes, while at nearby Mereworth Castle Lord Falmouth raised winners of 19 Classics in 22 years.

Evelyn Boscawen, eldest son of a country clergyman, was 26 when he married Mary Stapleton, a baroness in her own right, in July 1845. That union brought him an interest in Mereworth, and seven years later, through the death of an unmarried cousin, he found himself elevated to the peerage as the 6th Viscount Falmouth.

It was not until 1857 that he became involved with the turf. He adopted the nom de course of Mr T Valentine, becoming a patron of John Scott's formidable Whitewall stable at Malton, and in 1862 he had his first notable success as an owner, when Hurricane, a filly he had bought as a yearling, won the 1,000 Guineas.

By that time the Falmouth breeding operation was under way and 1863 provided the first home-bred Classic success. Queen Bertha, out of a mare acquired from William Blenkiron's Middle Park Stud – also in Kent – had ended her first season with an impressive eight-length victory over colts at Newmarket, but her early work at three suggested that her Oaks entry was over ambitious. This was said to be the only occasion when her owner, now racing under his own name, had a bet, and it was a loser – an even sixpence with his trainer's wife that his filly would not win. He paid up gladly when 40-1 Queen Bertha scooped the £4,845 prize in a tight finish.

Queen Bertha was the last of the record 40 Classic winners sent out by John Scott, and the Falmouth string was then based with Mathew Dawson, the leading Newmarket trainer. In 1870 Mereworth-breds achieved the rare double of victories in both Derby and Oaks, though only Kingcraft's win came in the Falmouth colours.

The successful filly, Gamos, had been sold cheaply out of the stud, her breeder perhaps thinking he had one better in Gertrude, who finished only fourth at Epsom, but did reverse the form in the Yorkshire Oaks.

Falmouth's next Classic winner was Cecilia, supposedly second-best of his contenders for the 1,000 Guineas of 1873,

## 'His integrity as an owner was matched only by his extraordinary gifts as a breeder'

### TONY MORRIS'S BREEDING GREATS



in which stable jockey Tom French rode the more fancied Silver Ring.

French, still in his 20s, died at the end of August that year, a tragic event that proved the catalyst for the rapid rise to fame of Dawson's stable apprentice, Fred Archer. The Falmouth-Dawson-Archer team was to dominate the racing scene for the next decade.

**C**ECILIA'S dam Siberia had also been a 1,000 Guineas winner, underlining the fact that Falmouth's game plan was to stock the Mereworth paddocks with the best-bred mares he could acquire and cover them with proven sires. Indeed, some of his select broodmare band – never large in numbers – were already those of his own breeding.

Atlantic, steered to victory by 17-year-old Archer in the 2,000 Guineas of 1874, was a daughter of Hurricane by Derby and Gold Cup hero Thormanby. In the following year he won both distaff Classics with Spinaway, Queen Bertha's daughter by dual-Classical victor Macaroni.

Guineas-placed Lady Coventry, bought from his trainer, became the dam of Lady Golightly, Falmouth's Yorkshire Oaks heroine of 1877, the year in which Silvio became another dual Classic hero for the formidable owner-trainer-jockey combination in the Derby and St Leger, and that feat was achieved for a third time in four years when Jannette collected Oaks and St Leger victories along with wins in the Yorkshire Oaks and Champion Stakes.

By now it was impossible to ignore any runner in the black, white sleeves and red cap in the top races, and 1879

provided an even more remarkable Classic treble with Gertrude's son Charibert collecting the 2,000 Guineas and the Adventurer filly Wheel Of Fortune, another out of Queen Bertha, establishing herself as the best of either sex, taking 1,000 Guineas, Oaks and Yorkshire Oaks before breaking down in the Great Yorkshire Stakes for the only loss of her career.

Wheel Of Fortune, almost certainly the brightest star among all the Mereworth-breds, was also lauded by Archer as the best horse he had ridden – albeit before he rode St Simon and Ormonde.

It would be a mistake to assume that Falmouth was operating in an uncompetitive era. The plain fact was that he had gained an edge over his rivals by developing a superior broodmare band, and then succeeded, by dint of judicious

matings, in extending his advantage.

Cantiniere, a regally bred mare by multiple champion sire Stockwell who descended on the dam's side from a sister to Derby and St Leger hero Voltigeur, achieved little in the ownership of Lord Ailesbury. For Falmouth she produced, in successive years, a champion juvenile filly in Bal Gal and a St Leger winner in Dutch Oven.

Archer, having won the 1882 Oaks on Geheimniss for another stable, wanted to ride her again at Doncaster, but Falmouth was paying a substantial retainer for the champion jockey's services and insisted on keeping him to his bargain.

Archer and the punting public gave Dutch Oven no chance, but she won at 40-1 in that unique season when all the Classics

were won by fillies.

Falmouth had his 16th and last Classic winner as an owner when Galliard, a son of Derby victor Galopin, scored a narrow victory in the 2,000 Guineas of 1883. That result meant that Galliard started favourite to provide the Falmouth colours with their third Derby win, but he finished only third behind St Blaise and Highland Chief, the latter trained by Archer's brother, Charles.

Rumour had it – wrongly in all likelihood – that Archer was keener to see success for his brother than for his employer, and when Falmouth made a sudden decision to sell all his bloodstock the following spring, the outcome of that Classic was freely cited as a possible reason.

**I**N FACT, Falmouth never felt a need to justify his action publicly, and kept mum. He was 65 years old, not in the best of health and maybe it seemed the appropriate time to get out. The sale of his horses in training took place on the eve of the 1884 Guineas meeting.

Busybody, a Petrarch filly

who was Spinaway's daughter and Queen Bertha's granddaughter, duly won the 1,000 Guineas and Oaks. She was saddled for her Newmarket Classic victory by Tom Cannon, but he could hardly be credited as her trainer; the filly had never seen his Danebury stable, and she had done all her work in Dawson's care.

Another who featured in the auction was Harvester, who joined Jimmy Jewitt's Newmarket string and who became a dead-heater in the 1884 Derby, carrying the colours of Sir John Willoughby.

Falmouth was rarely seen on a racecourse after that. He had bred the winners of 19 Classics, a feat that matched the record of the 4th Duke of Grafton and has been equalled since only by the 17th Earl of Derby. He remains the only breeder to have produced at least three winners of every Classic.

The 6th Viscount Falmouth was universally popular on the turf. He invariably ran his horses straight, had no interest in betting and his integrity as an owner was matched only by the general acceptance of his extraordinary gifts as a breeder, achieved with a small broodmare band. Wouldn't anyone have done equally well with his mares?

Perhaps. But it was a fact that once those routinely productive families left Mereworth, almost nothing happened. Yes, Busybody had a fine son in unbeaten Meddler, who twice became champion sire in North America, but the rest of it fizzled out. Even the great Wheel Of Fortune, who lived to the advanced age of 27, contributed nothing that mattered to the breed.

Falmouth, who died in 1889, may well have influenced the strategy of Federico Tesio, one of the greatest 20th century breeders. He let his best colts go elsewhere for stud duty and concentrated on the use of outside stallions. The policy paid off with exceptional results.

### FALMOUTH'S SENSATIONS NOTABLE HORSES HE BRED

▶▶b f **Queen Bertha** (1860, Kingston - Flax, by Surplice). Champion 3-y-o filly; Oaks S.

▶▶ch f **Gamos** (1867, Saunterer - Bess Lyon, by Longbow). Oaks S.

▶▶b f **Gertrude** (1867, Saunterer - Queen Bertha, by Kingston). Yorkshire Oaks.

▶▶b c **Kingcraft** (1867, King Tom - Woodcraft, by Voltigeur). Derby S.

▶▶b f **Cecilia** (1870, Blair Athol - Siberia, by Muscovite). 1,000 Guineas.

▶▶ch c **Atlantic** (1871, Thormanby - Hurricane, by Wild Dayrell). 2,000 Guineas.

▶▶b f **Spinaway** (1872, Macaroni - Queen Bertha, by Kingston). Champion 3-y-o filly; 1,000 Guineas, Oaks S., Yorkshire Oaks.

▶▶b f **Lady Golightly** (1874, King Tom - Lady Coventry, by Thormanby). Yorkshire Oaks.

▶▶b c **Silvio** (1874, Blair Athol - Silverhair, by Kingston). Champion 3-y-o; Derby S., St Leger S.

▶▶b f **Jannette** (1875, Lord Clifden - Chevisaunce, by Stockwell). Champion 3-y-o filly; Oaks S., St Leger S., Yorkshire Oaks, Champion S.

▶▶ch c **Charibert** (1876, Thormanby - Gertrude, by Saunterer). 2,000 Guineas.



Harvester and St Gaten dead-heating in the 1884 Derby

▶▶b f **Wheel Of Fortune** (1876, Adventurer - Queen Bertha, by Kingston). Champion 3-y-o; 1,000 Guineas, Oaks S., Yorkshire Oaks.

▶▶br f **Bal Gal** (1878, Adventurer - Cantiniere, by Stockwell). Champion 2-y-o filly.

▶▶br f **Dutch Oven** (1879, Dutch Skater - Cantiniere, by Stockwell). St Leger S.

▶▶br c **Galliard** (1880, Galopin - Mavis, by Macaroni). 2,000 Guineas.

▶▶b f **Busybody** (1881, Petrarch - Spinaway, by Macaroni). Champion filly at 2 and 3 years; 1,000 Guineas, Oaks S.

▶▶br c **Harvester** (1881, Sterling - Wheat-ear, by Young Melbourne). Derby S. [dead-heat].