



THE ART OF SIMPLICITY KEY TO KILDARAGH'S SUCCESS



Peter Kavanagh | Tattersalls

By Emma Berry

"Their welfare was our livelihood." Peter Kavanagh could easily be talking about the mares and foals out in the paddocks at Kildaragh Stud. In fact he is casting his mind back to childhood days on his family's cattle farm.

Though racing and breeding are increasingly observed through the prism of the data supplied by technology, a back-to-basics approach would stand any aspiring breeder in good stead, as would an hour spent listening to Kavanagh.

There's a touch of the John Cleese about him: long legs which could easily propel him straight into Monty Python's Ministry of Silly Walks sketch, and an uproarious sense of humour to boot. But don't let that lupine grin fool you into thinking that Kavanagh doesn't take this business very seriously indeed.

"I think that gave me an appreciation of stock and an appraisal of stock," he continues. "That's where a lot of the basics stem from. That you can care for them, and you're all the time working in close association with them and their needs. My father was a cattle dealer predominantly, so a lot of stock used to come out to the farm and then every three weeks or month he'd sell them off. We would end up driving them on the roads for 10 miles on occasions, either supplying to farms or racecourses at the time. So you had your chores to do before school and when you came home in the evenings, cattle to be fed."

No silver spoon, then, but an ingrained work ethic which would prepare him for a lifetime of work with similar discipline once his attention switched from bovine to equine.

"Work was sort of second nature," he says. "My father didn't call it work, just what was to be done. We didn't question it. I was always keen on horses. He didn't particularly like horses but I couldn't live without them. There was a couple of people who kept horses around and about, so I used to go to visit those, break them with some of the people and just get to know and be around horses. And then my father reluctantly allowed me to have a pony, on one condition that I could herd the cattle in the summer. I put a trap behind and fed them in the winter. So he was happy and I was happy."

There were no broodmares at the family farm, but Kavanagh eventually found himself on the Irish National Stud course. An early job in the local quarry had focused his mind on the fact he really must pursue his dream of working with horses. [Cont. p3](#)

IN TDN AMERICA TODAY

'24 VALUE SIRES - PART 2: STALLIONS UNDER \$10K

Chris McGrath takes a look at next year's Kentucky-based sire roster priced under \$10,000.

“I remember him vividly as a yearling... a most unbelievable physical and obviously what he did on the racetrack was phenomenal. I'm a huge fan of the Scat Daddy line” Alex Elliott



LITTLE BIG BEAR

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Tuesday, December 19, 2023



'Swift as a bird I flew down many a course.' So begins Paul Mellon's ode to Mill Reef, who retired to the National Stud after being European Horse of the Year in 1971 and Champion Older Horse in England in 1972. It was his Gimcrack Stakes victory of 1970 that inspired his owner-breeder's poem, which Mellon recited as part of his Gimcrack speech. The poem is inscribed on the plinth of Mill Reef's statue at the stud. | Emma Berry

HRI ANNOUNCED BUDGET FOR 2024

6

Horse Racing Ireland's newly-released budget will include an increase in prize money in addition to added support for integrity and equine welfare.

HALF TO BARNEY ROY DEBUTS AT WOLVERHAMPTON

8

Godolphin's Arabian Tribe (Dubawi), a Tattersalls October Book 1 graduate, gets his start at Wolverhampton Tuesday.

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From his studies he went on to work at Moyglare Stud followed by the sales in Deauville.

"I always wanted to learn French. I originally went to France for six months. I was supposed to do three months in Logis when it was owned by the Bozos, and three months at Mézeray, but I ended up staying three and a half years," he says.

"I just love France and it's been very good to me subsequently because of my contacts there. We sent fillies to be trained in France. With Richard Gibson in particular we had great success. There were a lot of owner-breeders there and I'd say French racing back then was the best in the world. The Bunker Hunt era, the Boussac era. There were a lot of owner-breeders which have since dwindled down to very few. The Wildensteins were a very big operation then, and the Wertheimers. They had beautiful farms and great tradition, and unfortunately we're losing that very quickly. There seems to be a dispersal every year with nobody really coming in



Alice, Peter, Roderic and Sophie Kavanagh | Emma Berry

on a serious level to take their place."

The modern move away from the traditional owner-breeder operations to those driven with a more commercial bent has brought a vastly altered complexion to thoroughbred breeding, which is now very much an industry. There is a necessity to this, up to a point, and change must be accepted, if not embraced, but it is an adjustment which has taken its toll on the sport.

"The sales ring has become nearly more important than the racecourse and people mate their mares nearly accordingly, which is wrong too," says Kavanagh.

"The main focus is trading. That's fine. But back in the day, the sales ring was only for disposing of excess horses, whereas now it's become a total way of life. Finding people to race the horses now is becoming more and more difficult. Individuals seem to be becoming more and more rare."

3 first-crop 2YO Group winners bettering the start of his own sire KINGMAN

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Cont.

He continues, "Every year you look at the Derby field, at least a third of them don't stay, same with the Oaks. Whereas the great owner-breeders bred horses specifically for those races. Now it's almost by accident a horse ends up in the Derby. And you see the three very good horses [Adayar, Hukum and Westover] being exported to Japan, and Pyledriver becoming a National Hunt stallion without having a chance on the Flat. That wouldn't have happened before.

"You don't know where these horses are going to come from, these good stallions. Into Mischief, they couldn't raffle him initially when he went to stud. Every time they did a big promotion on him, people nearly went into reverse. But he had to do it the hard way and now he's an exceptional stallion. And there have been cases in point all through the years, and horses like this can get passed over very easily if you don't get some sort of an opportunity.

"I think we need to be a little more long sighted with regard to the future."

Kavanagh's own education was honed working at Kildangan Stud in the days of its founder, the trainer and breeder Roderic More O'Ferrall, who sold the Co Kildare farm to Sheikh Mohammed in 1986.

The mares owned by Gerry Oldham of Citadel Stud had been based there and were eventually split between nearby Kildaragh Stud, which was bought by Kavanagh and his wife Antoinette in 1984, and Knocktoran Stud. The example set by those two Classic-winning breeders made a deep impression.

"We bought into and picked up some of the Citadel mares along the way," says Kavanagh. "I suppose when you've worked with families for 20, 30 years, you get a bit of a feeling for them and you tend to realise what suits them best. And you're more passionate about them because you've been with them for so long. Mr Oldham was a remarkable man and he was very keen on his racing. He was a very easy man to work with and he had enormous success from a very selective broodmare band."

Top of that hill of success was Oldham's treble Gold Cup winner Sagaro (Ire), with 2,000 Guineas winner Zino (GB), Irish Derby-winning half-brothers Talgo (Ire) and Fidalgo (Ire), and St Leger winner Intermezzo (GB) being the key members of a significant supporting cast.

The Kavanaghs benefited themselves from their investment in some of Oldham's lines through their purchase of Malaspina (Ire) (Whipper), later the dam of G3 Nell Gwyn S. winner Daban (Ire) (Acclamation {GB}), and Zivania (Ire) (Shernazar {GB}), who produced seven black-type horses including the 1,000 Guineas third Hathrah (Ire) (Linamix {Fr}).





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Her line has been continued successfully by Shadwell, who bred from her the Listed winner Hadaatha (Ire) (Sea the Stars {Ire}), who is perhaps now better known as the dam of this season's G1 Nassau S. winner Al Husn (Ire) (Dubawi {Ire}).

"He had no interest in the sales ring, just the racetrack," says Kavanagh of Oldham. "That was always interesting, and Mr More O'Ferrall was equally interested in producing horses to run. In the eight years we were at Kildangan, from '78 to '86, we bred three Classic winners there with relatively old mares. It was a remarkable farm.

"It's only when you reflect back that you realise what we have lost. Someone like Gerald Leigh. Some of those families will have vanished forever."

A family which is unlikely to disappear from the scene anytime soon is Kavanagh's own. His and Antoinette's three children Roderic, Alice and Sophie are all very much involved in different aspects of

the business, with the former having been one of the breeze-up consignors behind this year's star juvenile Vandeeek (GB) (Havana Grey {GB}), who was sold through his Glending Stables.

"They're all equally passionate," says their father. "There's two at home on the farm full time. Alice looks after the broodmares and she does her own foal consigning with AK Thoroughbreds, and that dovetails into the activities on the farm. And Roderic has his breeze-up horses. He was fortunate to pick up Vandeeek and he's turned out to be a champion. Those sort of things just bring the whole game to another level."

He continues, "We actually sent them away to school just to show them there was another life out there. Every time they were always late going back because they were watching a mare that was about to foal, or there was something else.

"That sort of energy, it's needed to keep an operation going. It's a bit of a relay race, really. There needs to be somebody there to take up the slack and carry it on."

With his unconventional, though arguably more valuable, education having been started at home on the farm, just as his children's was, Kavanagh is well positioned to be able to offer a few pointers to those coming through, eager to learn.

"I think you just have to gravitate towards clever people and people that are well-informed and you've got to be a good listener, just keeping your head down and focusing on what needs to be done," he says of the business he still finds as

enjoyable as it has been rewarding.

"In particular, I love just seeing the foals. There's always that element of magic to it. You can never take things for granted. I do most of the feeding of the yearlings and the weanlings and just seeing them on a daily basis and how they develop, I think that gives great satisfaction. And then I suppose the ultimate satisfaction is when you produce a good racehorse."



Peter, Antoinette and Roderic Kavanagh at the sales
Tattersalls

He continues, "You don't hear stockmanship mentioned too often now, but good people that breed any animal, they're passionate about it and they spend a lot of time at it. They're not doing it remotely. Animals need careful attention nearly 24/7.

"One of my passions is land and pasture. We graze a lot of cattle on the farm. We run sheep on it in the winter. We're just trying to create the most favourable possible environment to raise stock on, and that's a passion in itself, just maintaining it.

Paddocks can either be overgrazed or undergrazed, so they've got to be appraised on a weekly basis, really. You don't just turn the horses out there and look over the gate every two or three weeks. If you get the land right, you can see it in your horses. You just see. The product becomes what you want it to be: good-boned horses, healthy coats, good feet. And one without the other, it just won't work."

There is no doubt that technology in varying forms has made our lives easier in some respects, but when it comes to rearing racehorses, Kavanagh holds on to the belief that the cleverest approach is also the simplest. It is bearing fruit, because on his farm's well tended acres have been raised the Group 1 winners G Force (Ire), Jukebox Jury (Ire), Frozen Fire (Ger) and Glencadam Gold (Ire) to name but a handful of the stakes horses to have graduated from Kildaragh.

He adds, "The biggest part of our game as a breeder, as a producer of stock, is observation. It's not technology. It's not rocket science. You watch how the horses move towards you at feeding time, whether they're outside or inside. Then you watch how they eat and how they interact with the others. And then when you've finished everything, you walk backwards towards the gate still observing.

"It's about keeping everything simple and practical, and learning to see what works best for the horse."

EUROPEAN NEWS

INTEGRITY AND WELFARE FUNDING INCREASES IN HRI'S BUDGET FOR 2024



Suzanne Eade | *Racingfotos.com*

Horse Racing Ireland boss Suzanne Eade says the industry is facing into a period of uncertainty in relation to gambling regulation and described integrity and equine welfare as "crucial areas" for investment in announcing the budget for 2024. Prize-money is an area that HRI have concentrated on and will be increased by €1.3m to €69.4m while a record 395 fixtures will be staged. However, while owners have "a record number of opportunities" to look forward to with their horses in 2024, administration fees are set to rise.

Eade said, "The value of the Irish Horse Racing and Breeding Industry was measured in 2023 and amounts to €2.5bn, an increase of over 30% since 2016, despite some challenging times in the intervening period. In framing the industry budget for 2024, Horse Racing Ireland wants to create the environment for that contribution to the economy to grow again.

"Deloitte's research found that the industry fuels in excess of €500m of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) every year and we know that prize money remains the most significant lever in attracting investment into Irish racing. This FDI contributes heavily to rural economies all over Ireland, and so in increasing the fixture list to 395 fixtures in 2024, we do so by increasing the prize money fund to €69.4m and maintaining current race values.

"This budget for 2024 sees increases in the crucial areas of integrity and equine welfare; following the launch of HRI's Sustainability Strategy, it provides for an initial sustainability

scheme for racecourses; and it ringfences support for one of the greatest challenges our industry faces: the recruitment and retention of industry staff."

Integrity funding is set to increase to €17.3m (+7%) as HRI continues to invest in all aspects of Integrity (IHRB, point-to-points, as well as racecourse operational integrity needs). This figure, which includes €0.8m in business-critical IT capital funding to the IHRB, has increased from €16.1m in Budget 2023 and has grown from €12.4m in 2020.

The 2024 Budget provides for investment in equine welfare activities and welfare related grant funding of €3.5m, an increase of €0.8m on Budget 2023. The HRI Equine Welfare focus continues to be on Standards, Traceability, Safety Nets and Education.

On-going support of Treo Eile and the Irish Horse Welfare Trust will help to promote the versatility of thoroughbreds for alternative careers. 2024 activities also include phase two of the Equine Injury Risk Reduction (EIRR) project--actions to mitigate risk, continued monitoring and reporting including publication; the introduction of a Welfare Standards Assessment online learning course tailored for Irish Industry participants; and delivery of an Equine Welfare Conference in May 2024. HRI will also continue to support the IHRB with respect to their ongoing welfare activity.

Eade continued, "The IRE Incentive Scheme for breeders will continue in 2024 in recognition of the difficult market conditions at many sales in 2023, and HRI has extended its support for the Point-to-Point sector to include insurance specific grants in 2024.

"2024 will also be an important year for racecourses being the first year of the new media rights deal which will underpin their financial security for the next five years, against a backdrop of uncertainty with respect to gambling regulation. HRI will continue its significant investment in upgrading racecourse facilities with the short-term focus on improving industry infrastructure, while our Marketing team will continue to support racecourses' promotional activities with campaigns to grow interest in our sport and drive fan engagement and increase race day attendances."

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VOTING OPENED FOR RETRAINING OF RACEHORSES AWARDS



Voting closes on Jan. 19 | RoR

Retraining of Racehorses [RoR] has unveiled the finalists for the inaugural Sir Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust RoR Community Impact Award and the prestigious The Jockey Club RoR Horse of the Year Award.

The public will determine the winner of each award through voting for their favourites via www.ror-events.org.uk. Having received over 200 nominations from across the racing and equestrian worlds, RoR announced a shortlist of 12 horses for each award in November.

An independent RoR Judging panel then had the challenge of narrowing down the final three finalists for each award. The new Sir Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust RoR Community Impact Award aims to recognise any individual, former racehorse partnership, or organisation that has significantly impacted people's lives with a former racehorse.

Introduced in 2014, The Jockey Club RoR Horse of the Year Award was open to all RoR registered former racehorses who have successfully transitioned from racing to a new career.

Voting officially opened on Dec. 18 and closes at 5pm on Jan. 19, 2024.

David Catlow, RoR Managing Director, said, "We are thrilled to open the voting for both these awards. The exceptional nominations from across the UK made our job and the judges' decision incredibly difficult. All the stories shared highlight not only the adaptability of a former racehorse to a wide range of second careers but also the remarkable commitment to the horses' well-being of so many involved in aftercare."

All six finalists will attend the RoR Awards evening at The Jockey Club Rooms on Jan. 31, 2024, where the ultimate winners as voted by the public will be revealed. The evening also features presentations to this season's RoR Elite Champions in dressage, eventing, polo, endurance, showing and hunting.

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FIRST-SEASON SIRE WITH RUNNERS

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023:

UNITED KINGDOM

Inns of Court (Ire) (Invincible Spirit {Ire}), Tally-Ho Stud
169 foals of racing age
17:30-WOLVERHAMPTON, 8.75f, I Am The Fox (Ire)
9,500gns RNA Tattersalls Online June Sale 2023

FRANCE

Fas (Ire) (Fastnet Rock {Aus}), Haras de Saint-Vincent
30 foals of racing age
3-PAU, 1600m, Gee Whizzer (Fr)
9,500gns RNA Arqana December Breeding Stock Sale 2021 - English Version; €5,000 Osarus September Yearling Sale 2022

FOR THE RETRAINING AND WELFARE OF RACEHORSES

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OBSERVATIONS

on the European racing scene

HALF-BROTHER TO MG1SW BARNEY ROY IN LINE FOR WOLVERHAMPTON DEBUT

17.30 Wolverhampton, Mdn, £9,950, 2yo, 8f 142y (AWT)
 Godolphin's hitherto unraced **ARABIAN TRIBE (GB) (Dubawi {Ire})** is a 750,000gns Tattersalls October Book 1 half-brother to four-time Group 1 winner Barney Roy (GB) (Excelebration {Ire}) and he encounters nine in this debut. Opposition to the Charlie Appleby trainee includes Rabbah Racing's fellow newcomer **Ghostlore (Ire) (Frankel {GB})**, who is a €260,000 Arqana October half-brother to G2 Celebration Mile victor Duke Of Hazzard (Fr) (Lope De Vega {Ire}) out of a half-sister to G1 Racing Post Trophy hero Palace Episode (Machiavellian), from the Simon & Ed Crisford stable.

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Barney Roy | DRC

BRITAIN

Monday's Results:

2nd-Wolverhampton, £6,600, Mdn, 12-18, 2yo, 7f 36y (AWT), 1:29.74, st.

ROYAL VELVET (GB) (f, 2, Lightning Spear {GB}--Velvet Morn {Ire}, by Epaulette {Aus}), who posted a Dec. 6 debut sixth over this trip at Kempton last time, chased the leaders in a midfield seventh after the initial strides here.

Coming under pressure at the top of the straight, the 12-1 chance went fifth entering the final furlong and kept on strongly to deny Handsome Chap (Ire) (Camacho {GB}) by 3/4-of-a-length nearing the line, becoming the 11th winner for her freshman sire (by Pivotal {GB}). Royal Velvet is the first of two foals produced by a dual-winning granddaughter of Listed Round Tower S. victrix Lady Of Kildare (Ire) (Mujadil), herself out of G3 Royal Whip S. winner Dancing Sunset (Ire) (Red Sunset {Ire}). The March-foaled bay is half to a yearling colt by Time Test (GB). Lifetime Record: 2-1-0-0, \$4,522. O/B-Mrs Susie Hartley (GB); T-William Knight.

ADDITIONAL MAIDEN WINNERS:

Composite (GB), g, 3, Cracksman (GB)--Photographic (GB), by Oasis Dream (GB). Wolverhampton, 12-18, 12f 51y (AWT), 2:39.23. Lifetime Record: 3-1-0-1, \$6,733. B-Juddmonte Farms Ltd (GB). *5,000gns 3yo '23 TATHRA. **1/2 to Shutter Speed (GB) (Dansili {GB}), GSW-Eng, \$172,930.

FRANCE

CONDITIONS RESULTS:

6th-Lyon La Soie, €27,000, Cond, 12-18, 2yo, 9f (AWT), 1:54.80, st.

ZELMAN (FR) (g, 2, Zelzal {Fr}--Kitkarma {Fr}, by Turtle Bowl {Ire}) Lifetime Record: 4-3-0-1, €37,100. O-Anne-Sophie Allard, Daniel Allard, Jacques Bisson, Jeannot Andt & Mlle Elodie Douard; B-Alain Prudent, Mme Elisa Prudent & Alexandre Prudent (FR); T-Anne-Sophie & Daniel Allard. *€16,000 Ylg '22 ARQOCT.

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