



Pevensey Zariffia with filly Pevensey Zaraya, by Magic Prophecy in 2011



The Boomerang Plan

WORDS BY ANNE BROWN

bringing lost bloodlines back to Britain

Three committed British breeders are bringing over three pure Crabbet mares from Australia, to help restore valuable lines to the UK's depleted gene pool. As a bonus, all are in foal to pure Crabbet performance stallions

Keen riders Deborah Duncan and John Illingworth have joined breeder Anne Brown to expand her original importation of three bay Crabbet mares. More than a decade ago, Palma Benay by Pevensey Safari, Pevensey Zariffia by Ghazari and Inshallah Signature by Crenel settled into Gadebrook Stud and have all bred on very successfully. Indeed, a great grandson of Palma will soon stand at stud in the West Country, and her third

generation is flourishing in Spain and Sweden. Together, Deborah, John and Anne have recently invested in some outstanding bloodlines. The three new mares are descended from Arabians imported to Britain before 1920 and registered in the General Stud Book (GSB). These lines are long lost to the UK but preserved Down Under through the progeny of horses shipped over from Crabbet Park by



Above: Zaraelia covering by Fenwick Just Brilliant at Shanadarr
 Above left: Wollemi Park Amerah Al'Sara, classically bred by Arfaja Alexi x Fenwick Brilliant Diamond.
 Left: Pevensey Zaraya, in foal to Danjera Saroyan by Pevensey Safari

Mrs Dora McLean to her Fenwick Stud in Victoria. The first, Rafina, arrived in 1925 – exactly a century ago! Fortunately, Mrs McLean’s grand-daughter Vicki Johnson still runs the stud. The doyenne of the stud, Fenwick Brilliant Star, now 28, appears in two of the lines the Boomerang Gang have acquired.

The plan’s logistics have been time-consuming and costly. Sourcing the best mares, getting them covered in Australia’s autumn to foal in our spring, agisting them for months with cooperative breeders, arranging vetting, transport, quarantine, flights, inoculations, documents, cover (with thanks to Cheryl Dods at IRT Insurance) and a dozen other details, has been demanding. That two of the mares were maiden just added to the complications!

First choice was inspired by another of Australia’s influential Crabbet studs, Ron Ryan’s Arfaja Arabians. Kendra Park Zaraelia is by Arfaja Starfire (now in Tasmania with Ros Gladman) and out of Kendra Park Zefia by Arfaja Nassif. The gentle grey five-year old has been covered by athletic Fenwick Just Brilliant in the Australian summer but due to foal in January here. Brrrrr!

Another great find, Wollemi Park Amerah Al'Sara (by Australian WAHO-trophy winner Arfaja Alexi x Fenwick Brilliant Diamond), is scanned in foal to the prolific endurance producer, Inshallah Maximus.

The mature bay Pevensey Zaraya (by Magic Prophecy) unexpectedly became available with the reduction of Danjera Stud. Zaraya will replace her dam, Pevensey Zariffia, the wonderful mare whom Anne imported to Gadebrook in 2013, but who later tragically died foaling her fine colt Hadiya. With three sons at Danjera already, Zaraya had no problems conceiving to Danjera Saroyan who is by Palma’s sire, Pevensey Safari.

“I am so grateful that Zariffia’s outstanding line can flourish again,” confirms Anne.

A fourth import, the beautiful winning show mare Arfaja Bisharah (Mill Park Blaidd x Pevensey Baybe, full sister to Safari), is solely owned by John. She should prove just how beautiful and elegant a Crabbet horse can be. Back in 2018, Palma conceived from Blaidd’s frozen semen and foaled all-Australian Gadebrook Blade, now in Open endurance.

The mares move into 30-day quarantine in Melbourne in July and fly to Heathrow in August. The mares will initially live at Gadebrook Stud. The foals will be jointly bred, with ownership alternating between the partners.

The British breeders concede they couldn’t have done it without the generous support of the Australian Crabbet community. They are especially grateful to stallion owners Darryl and Steph King at Shanadarr, Gail Rooney at Danjera and Nikki Sample (joint winner of this year’s 100-mile Quilty Cup) at Stirling Performance Arabians.

Leon Bennett of acclaimed Pevensey Stud has offered



Arfaja Alexi, Amerah’s sire, multi-talented WAHO trophy winner for Australia



Mill Park Blaidd sire of Arfaja Bisharah and Gadebrook Blade



Show-winning mare Arfaja Bisharah by Mill Park Blaidd

invaluable advice.

“Let’s hope the results justify their faith in us,” says Anne who started the original Boomerang Plan back in 2007.

Teresa Edwards, the efficient Registrar at the AHSA, has helped hugely, transferring ownerships, and issuing the mares’ new passports, covering certificates and export papers.

Selwyn Wallace, the director at IRT (International Racehorse Transport), has patiently catered for the changes in ownership, pick-up venues and flight dates. The company also handles the



Palma Benay and five-day old Crabbet colt Gadebrook Blade by Australian Mill Park Blaidd (by imported frozen semen) with Anne Brown

legal side of travelling horses to Britain, and ensures correct payment of import taxes and VAT (a colossal 20% on the cost of both the horse and the flight). At least, as pure Arabian breeding stock, the mares avoid Duty, small consolation against the other hefty expenses.

The Plaister Charity, based on Imperial Stud’s core of Crabbet horses, supports the project.

“The latest Boomerang plan, led by Anne Brown, represents a significant investment in the future of the Crabbet Arabian in the UK,” confirms Mark Tindall, the Charity’s Chair of Trustees.

“Its importance cannot be over-estimated.

“At Crabbet Heritage and the Plaister Charity, we focus on breeding and encouraging others to breed pure Crabbet performance Arabians as there are so few left. We have a number of quality stallions but very few 100% mares.

“This importation brings in four of the best mares available from Australia, carrying classic bloodlines. These mares and their progeny should provide a valuable outcross, but within the 100% Crabbet gene pool.

“This will benefit breeders and riders who care about preserving the original Crabbet lines with all their important attributes for endurance, versatility and easy-going temperaments. The time, effort and money that Anne, John and Deborah have invested in this spectacular project for our Crabbet Arabian horses is to be applauded,” concludes Mark.

Deborah Duncan is very enthusiastic about the scheme.

“I wanted to do something constructive to widen the gene pool of our wonderful Crabbet Arabians here in the UK,” she explains.

“This joint venture seemed the perfect opportunity to achieve that.”

John is equally committed. With his own half-Australian Crabbet stallion, Binley Silvern Mujiza (Binley Ronaldo x Binley Silvern Grace by AHS Premium stallion Prince Sadik), John can provide his pride and joy with a ready-made harem! ‘Skippy’ as he is known, is a former Crabbet Champion and winner of last year’s AHS Novice Ridden Championship - at just four.

We wish them a safe journey and a successful foaling.

Inshallah – God willing – as the Arabs say. 