

MY LIFE

with the Crabbet Arabian

We have introduced this series as there are still many long-established Crabbet breeders and experts who have spent a lifetime with Crabbet horses, the 'living history' descended from the original horses of the Crabbet Stud founded in 1878.

Many of their stories disappear, never to be told, and remain only in the memories of friends and loved ones or in posthumous tributes. We wanted to capture their fascinating stories and, to echo those immortal words of Lady Anne Blunt, we thought it would be *'an interesting and useful thing to do and we would much like to try it!'*

These often-well-known figures have a huge amount of knowledge and expertise so we wanted to find out more about who they are, which horses influenced them and how they became involved with Crabbet Arabians.

We begin 'My life with the Crabbet Arabian' with one of the longest established breeders in the UK, the charismatic Anne Brown. Anne really needs no introduction as she is known world-wide and founded her Gadebrook Stud back in 1969 so here we present the first part of her story.

Well, this is a welcome excuse to take a long trip down memory lane to my first encounter with Arabians! My e-mail message sign off is www.gadebrookstud.com – established in 1969 to breed world-class Arabian performance horses. It was a dream 55 years ago, now it is a reality – and most of the stud's success is due to Crabbet horses.



As I missed those two most influential Crabbet Arabian ladies, may I shamelessly drop the names of some of the gifted, committed Crabbet breeders whom I HAVE met. So many have kindly given me their time and encouragement over the years – and even their horses, as in the case of Iona Bowring and Jean and David Peck.

Iona (the daughter of Mrs Pam Murray, founder of the Foxbury Stud, and so sister-in-law of Caroline Murray), keenly promoted Crabbet bloodlines and created HABBA, Heritage Association of British-Bred Arabians of which I was privileged to be a founder member. Since those early days, Gadebrook has bred or owned some outstanding Arabian horses.

But I'll start with the original 'one that got away'. On a 1967 visit to the Blunt Stud at Newbuildings Place, Lady Anne Lytton offered me an Indian Magic colt out of the classic Oran daughter Mifaria. However, he looked too feisty for me, so Majal passed to other hands and became successful for Penny Pace at Heritage Stud.

Unexpectedly, my husband gave me a chestnut TB mare, Istorya, for my birthday that year. As my work commitments didn't allow enough time to ride her, I put her in foal to Ayton Royal (Grand Royal x Zehraa) and registered her Anglo Arab filly Gadebrook Royal in 1968. On my initial visit to Barton Lodge Stud, Sir Henry and Lady May Abel Smith had asked their stud groom George White to bring out the other stallions, mighty Rajmek and moody Darjeel. I would have preferred to have used one of them, but maybe because my mare was not an Arab, they would only allow covering by Ayton Royal.

Later in 1967 a chance meeting with actress Sarah Miles gave me the opportunity to use her impressive 16hh Palomino stallion Roundhills Golden Cavalier on Istorya. Sarah was off to film 'Ryan's Daughter' in Ireland for David Lean and asked us to look after her horses and her home at Byfleet Mill while she was away on location. So we moved lock, stock and in-foal mare to sunny Surrey while Sarah and her screen-writer husband Robert Bolt and the crew suffered one of the wettest summers on record in the west of Ireland.

Anne pictured with Star Gem aged 33. Gem first alerted Anne to CID



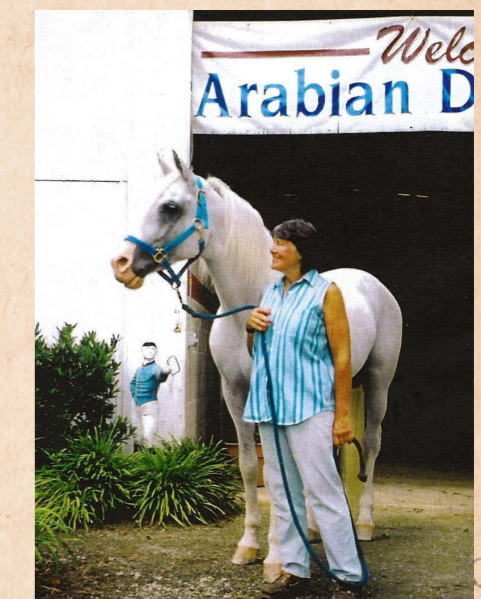
Silver Aura (Ben Rabba x Silver Sheen) with breeder Iona Bowring and owner Anne Brown at Gadebrook's 35th anniversary in 2004

Istorya produced a lovely tall palomino colt, Gadebrook Saraband while we were still at Sarah's the following year. He proved to be extremely fertile and sired many Palomino foals for other mare owners before we sold him to concentrate on pure Arabs.

My first Arab mare, Salonica, (Blue Sun x Safia) came from Dick and Margaret Johnson's Rishmars Stud where they stood Carrick Crystif whom I had originally seen at his breeder Mrs Wolf Perry's Carrick Stud in the 1970s. As my work as a Fleet Street travel editor took me abroad much of the time, I kept Salonica at livery with Angela and David Angold (later AHS President) at nearby Pinnerwood Stud. They stood the versatile Crabbet stallion, Blue Ludo – coincidentally, full brother to Salonica's sire, Blue Sun. The two stallions loathed each

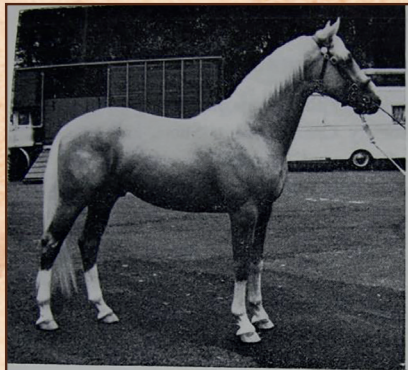
other – nevertheless they managed to win the Ridden Pairs one year at Ascot! Salonica made a terrific ridden horse and an efficient brood mare. One daughter, Japonica by St John, has only recently died, aged over 30.

In the late-1960s, Eileen Jones' rich red Radfan with a wide white blaze and four gleaming stockings (Dancing King x Bint Yasimet) impressed me. Years later, Eileen kindly lent me Crystal Lazuli (Crystal Magician x Bint Ludoet). I bred her to my Silvern Sceptre and she produced the boisterous Crystal Magic who has bred many successful endurance horses and Futurity progeny and



Above: Anne with Magic Domino at Arabian Dream Farm, USA

Left: 'Queen Anne' on Magic Domino in the Fancy Dress class at the Crabbet Show in Virginia, 2005

GADEBROOK SARABAND
 3 Years 16 Hands
Sire: Roundhills Golden Cavalier
Dam: Istorya G.S.B.
 B.P.S. vol. 4 No. 827
 P.B.A.R. vol. 9 No. 456
 Min. licence 21190

True gold colour — superb temperament

Advert for Gadebrook Saraband 'at stud' from 'Palomino' magazine, 1972



Left: Silver Aura and son Bright Sceptre by Silvern Sceptre with Anne at Gadebrook
Below: Remynisce and rider Susan Hawes after the Golden Horseshoe 120kms in 2015 when they won a Gold Award and the Farhanoush Trophy



has achieved AHS Premium stallion status. He came back to Gadebrook to cover my HOYS champion ridden mare Kumasha. The result was the highly successful FEI endurance mare Kalish, ridden by Susan Hawes and featured in 'Horse & Hound'. Beatrice Paine and her Bowdell Stud in Kent were another huge influence and benefit to Crabbets from the 1970s, particularly with her initiative to loan Ben Rabba from the USA. I was honoured to own his gentle daughter Silver Aura (from British National Champion Silver Sheen), until her death in 2001. Aura herself was British National Champion Brood Mare at Ascot in 1984. She gave me a string of delightful foals by Silvern Sceptre including Bright Sceptre ('Chester') who turned his hoof to most disciplines.

Ben Rabba was originally due to stay in England for just one season (1979) but Foot and Mouth Disease prevented any movement of stock off farms, and so blocked his return to his devoted, but elderly, owner Ed Hubbert. However, a note from Beatrice to the US President - and former cowboy film star - Ronald Reagan - at the White House secured Ben Rabba's release, via the US Embassy. On Beatrice's behalf, I was able to pick up the 'Overseas Breeder's Award' at the ECAHS (Eastern Crabbet Arabian Horse Society) Convention and show in Virginia in 2005, on my way back from supporting the Gadebrook bred Crabbet stallion Magic Domino at his 'Living Legend' presentation in Denver after he won the US National Sports Horse Sire title **over all breeds**. Another breeder to whom I am eternally grateful was Monica Calvert at Harwood Stud, the breeder of my Jazmyn by Kasadi, herself a successful show jumper for Kit Rolfe, and an AHS Premium mare. She produced Endurance champion Remynisce by the American WAHO trophy winner Remington Steele (his first UK progeny from frozen semen which I still represent) and then so many lovely foals by the Russian bred stallion Sambist for Gadebrook. When I first met Jane Pointer at her Cranham Stud, she was caring for an elderly Bright



Anne reserved Pure Crabbet Binley Prince Salim when he was just two weeks and he stood at stud at Gadebrook. Pictured above at the end of FEI 2-star 120kms Royal Windsor Endurance Race in 2014

Left: Influential Crabbet sire Shaded Silver with son Blue Shadow

Shadow soon after the dissolution of Crabbet Park Stud. Jane's stallion barn boasted Indian Star (by Indian Magic) and his four sons from Dalika: Dargee Star, Diamond Star, Indigo Star and Jubilee Star. Many years later, a friend drove the elderly and ailing Jane over to Gadebrook where she met my Nishtar by Jubilee Star and her filly Brightstar by Bright Cavalier. With her new owner Ros Jones, Brightstar went on to endurance success. Both she and her half-sister Bright Dawn (from Zaharina) finished near the front in the unique Man v Horse race in Wales. By the 1990s, I had collected a herd of Crabbet mares: Hamsfah by Hanif x Marufah from Geoffrey Plaister, Zarah by Orion x Zulka from the Hedleys at Briery Close, two Silver Sheen daughters Crystal Sheen by Crystal Magician and Silver Aura by Ben Rabba, plus Getana

(General Gold x Gemanta) and Silver Sylph (General Gold x Silver Starlet) all from Iona Bowring; Someone Special (The Shah x Clear Blue) from Barbara Campbell, the bay Rosaria (Fari II x Mameena) and Silver Indrette (Indian King x Indira) from Cherry Brogden at Beacon Stud, based largely on Silver Fire lines. Carol Carpenter was the obvious choice of

livery as she stood six Crabbet stallions, so my mares were spoilt for choice: Ludomino, Silver Scimitar, Silver Domino, Jubilee Star, Ring of Fire, St John and Iona Bowring's Ben Rabba son, Aurelian. Nowadays we can only dream of such valuable bloodlines being available at one stud!

The Carpenters leased the facilities at Michael Pitt-Rivers' former Tollard Park Stud so my mares graced those paddocks and produced some wonderful foals, including Magic Domino, Zaharina and Rozina in 1988, all by Ludomino.

Along with success came tragedy and my first encounter with the condition then known as CID (now SCID – Severe Combined Immuno-Deficiency). Daphne Gilbert at Star Arabians had kindly lent me maiden Star Gem and I sent her to Silver Domino, in the days before testing. Unknown to anyone, both Gem and Silver Domino were CID carriers. Gem's ultra-refined filly Mist looked too delicate from the outset.

Despite never having experienced a CID foal, I just knew something was wrong. Indeed – at three months, as immunity from her dam ended, the filly's system crashed, and her poor little body disintegrated before my eyes. As Mist was put to sleep, and I learnt of research in the USA identifying the mutant gene responsible, I vowed to campaign for testing and to stress the importance of never mating carrier to carrier.

Within a couple of years, American researchers had made a test available to the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket and I was over there like a shot with a swab from Hachim. A letter soon came back from the AHT confirming his CID-clear status. While thanking them profusely, I pointed out that this information was of such value to a stallion owner that a certificate would be appropriate, especially as they had royal patronage with an ornate, gold-embossed coat of arms. They duly obliged and I have certificate Number One for Hachim.

Now that more lethal genes have been identified, breeders can avoid mating carrier to carrier, and the heartbreak of a doomed foal.

The AHS Premium Performance Scheme on which I serve, now stipulates that acceptance as a Premium stallion is dependent on him being tested for SCID, LFS and CA. The results are held confidentially at the AHS, but the owner knows if the stallion is a carrier of



Above: Breeder Anne Brown with Hachim, the day after his WEC win in Abu Dhabi in 2005
Left: Sheikh Hazza and Hachim winning WEC in 2005



Hachim produced endurance mare Zaha (ex Zaharina by Ludomino)



Anne has travelled extensively with her involvement in Arabian horses. Pictured above at Palmyra, Syria in 2005 with WAHO delegates and below at the 2005 Australian Crabbet Convention with Magic Prophecy and owner Kevin Beaumont



any mutant gene. They are obliged to tell any client of his status before accepting a mare to be covered.

By the mid-1990s, I needed my own place. So with a slight change from travel editor to magazine editor, I was able to buy Tansor Lodge Farm near Oundle where I built my own house, (not a task for the faint hearted!) and work partly from home, surrounded by my horses. My first pure Crabbet stallion was Achim's Silver Magic, (Silver Fahd x Soumana of Fairfield) a very rare bay bred by Iona at her Chedglow Stud. Hamsfah (Hanif x Marufah) produced her second international superstar by him, Hachim in 1994, who went on to win the World Endurance Championship and other international 100-mile races.

Hachim was an exceptionally strong foal, bold and bossy from the outset, and passed his stallion licensing with flying colours at two. That spring, he covered Someone Special (The Shah x Clear Blue) and Zaharina (Ludomino x Zarah) producing fillies Hadith and Zaha in 1997, then covered Crystal Sheen (Crystal Magician x Silver Sheen) and Nishtar (Jubilee Star x Bint Nishida) for two more fillies, Magic Sheen and Magic Fire, born in 1998. He'd proved himself in the breeding barn, so we decided to get him backed to enter the tough two-day NaStA stallion performance test to gain AHS Premium Performance Stallion status.

In the skilful hands of show-jumper Paul Nunn, Hachim emerged from the bucking bronco stage to an accomplished one-day-event all-rounder in record time. Just as well, as the organisers pulled the test date forward by two-weeks. Also, he had matured to just over 15hh – meaning he had to jump the higher course. With 26 entrants that year (1998), including four other pure Arabs, including Oberlix and Sisyrinchium, the pressure was on, but he passed with flying colours, with the highest marks of all the Arabs!

Hachim had one other phenomenal ability. You will have heard of medical detection dogs who can sniff out diseases like cancer and diabetes - Hachim predicted epilepsy!

Two yearling fillies, Silvern Sheena (Silvern Sceptre x Crystal Sheen) and Silvern Aurena (Silvern Sceptre x Silver Aura) were in their stables one morning as I was grooming Hachim in the yard outside. As usual, he fidgeted constantly, twisting this way and that until he suddenly stopped, stood stock

still and looked intently towards Sheena's stable. A minute later, she dropped into the straw and suffered what I later learnt was an Equine Juvenile Epileptic fit. She came to no harm, and I never saw it happen again, but Hachim had sensed it well in advance.

We also stood the pure Crabbet stallions Klinta Sultan, (Shabakka x Star Solitaire) Binley Prince Salim (Prince Sadik x Silvern Image) who was reserved by Gadebrook when he was just 2 weeks old and half Australian-bred Kaalif (Silver Zaanif x Palma Benay) and raised Sceptre's son PHA Silvern Risalm (Silvern Sceptre x Rislina) who later became Britain's very first WAHO trophy winner.

An eventful life followed at Tansor Lodge Farm. A 35th reunion party in 2004 for all the horses I had bred featured a treasure hunt, hog roast, art exhibition and tea/carrot party. The AHS show committee used Gadebrook for a judges' course. Participants included our current Chair of Council, Caroline Sussex. I presented them all with a red Gadebrook rosette. Another early influence upon me were the paintings of Arabians in their oriental homeland by Peter Upton. Much later, I was able to invite him to stay at Tansor Lodge Farm to capture Summertime Blues and her filly Rose of Summer (by Shaded Silver) on canvas. Rose is now with Libby Whittome in Scotland producing foals, and 'Summer' is enjoying retirement at Binley Arabians.

The Arab Horse Society soon pulled me on board to organise the annual Performance Horse Awards for many years, to serve on Council and to join the committee of the



Above: Anne and Azarina (Shaded Silver x Zaharina) in 2017

Left: Judge Peter Upton makes the Duchess of Rutland's Silvern Surprise 2012 Crabbet Champion. Pictured here with Anne presenting him with the Gadebrook Shield



Never one to stand still, Anne made sure Gadebrook was always a busy place - below with a film crew for Al Jazeera and above with Inshallah Signature who was brought to the UK from Australia as part of her 'Boomerang Plan'



Premium Performance Scheme of which I am now chairman.

I breed for endurance and not in-hand showing, but I thought that Crabbet horses deserved better exposure. So, I initiated the three-ring Crabbet Show at Equifest from 2012 for six years with in-hand, ridden and dressage classes and a grand championship, watched by supporters of all breeds and disciplines. Magic Domino's owners, Kim and Mark Thomason, kindly sent over a handsome trophy from the USA for our inaugural year, won by Marbon Masadi (now competing in dressage in Germany). The Sports Horse class always attracted the most entries, judged by a visiting 'celebrity'. Renowned Australian breeder Astra Temple was a popular choice who gave valuable analysis for each individual horse in 2015. Sponsors were very generous, Mark and Natalie Tindall of Moonlight Arabians provided a large cash sum for prizes one year, and each champion's owner providing a trophy for the following year's winner. Embarrassingly, my own Kaalif (Silver Zaanif x Palma Benay) won the Ridden class (beating future National Champions Beeston Hakim and Bey Daayan), the Sports Horse Class and the Overall Championship, ridden by Stephanie Turner in 2015, to take home the Binley Rose Bowl.

At Gadebrook over the years we also hosted numerous film crews - one from Al Jazeera dubbed my commentary into Arabic which made me look very strange. A stream of guests, equine researchers, art groups, photographers and overseas breeders kept the house full, especially around Burghley each September for the three-day event. Over 150 volunteers from WWOOF (World-wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) came to help from overseas, each staying for a month or so, a really rewarding experience, hopefully for all parties. As a former English language teacher, I was able to help them with their language skills. In return, they revived the languages I was losing as I no longer travelled, except to WAHO Conferences in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries. At the Crabbet Convention in Australia in 2005, I met inspiring breeders like Leon Bennett at Pevensy Stud, Roxanne Pidoto, the O'Deas at Inshallah and Ron Ryan at Arfaja. So very soon, the Boomerang Plan was hatched to bring back lost genes to our depleted pool in Britain, with Palma Benay in the vanguard. But that's a story for next time... □