

# What's in a name?

By JOHN SCANLON

ONE OF the many things I find fascinating about racing is the process of naming racehorses. There are, of course, a number of formal rules surrounding the subject; for example, names cannot exceed 18 characters and must not include suggestive, vulgar or obscene words. They cannot be followed by one or more numbers, extend to more than seven syllables or cause offence to any ethnic, religious or political groups.

Often, horses are named in an attempt to 'blend' the names of the sire and dam together. One of this year's two-year-olds at Kingsley Park, a colt by Sottsass out of Elle Memory, owned by Markus Graff and Partner, has been named Elsass. In other jurisdictions, horses tend to be given names which start with the same letter as their dams. Inspiration is drawn from a wide variety of sources, and at Johnston Racing we have come to enjoy longtime owner Paul Dean's habit of 'enobling' his friends by calling his horses 'Sir' and then adding their names. The Classic-placed Sir Ron Priestley was one such example.

Looking at the Horses In Training section of the Johnston Racing website the other day, I noticed that while the majority of our juveniles are still to be named, some have already been given some fascinating monikers.

Owner Iain Service, a farmer in the Scottish borders, has given his chestnut colt by Ulysses out of the Dynaformer mare, Dynaforce, the name Mullwarchar. It transpires that Mullwarchar, which comes from the Gaelic for 'Hill of the Huntsman's Horn', is the name of a hill in the Galloway Hills, part of the Southern Uplands of Scotland, which stands 2,270 feet tall.

As many of you will know, as well as being an Ascot Gold Cup-winning owner, Dr Jim Walker is an eminent economist and many of his horses are named accordingly, e.g. Austrian School, Capital Theory, etc. This year, Jim has given the name Say's Law to his bay/brown colt by Le Havre out of Monica Sheriff, a

reference to the work of the French economist Jean-Baptiste Say, who, in his 1803 work, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, promulgated the 'law' that the production of goods creates its own demand. Given that Jim's other sporting passion is following the fortunes of Greenock Morton FC, perhaps we can look out in the future for a colt named Andy Ritchie, a Morton legend, or perhaps even Arthur Montford, the famous STV commentator of yesteryear who was a great fan of the 'Ton.

One owner/breeder who always gives her horses interesting and appropriate names is Kirsten Rausing of Lanwades Stud. I particularly like two of the names she has chosen for juvenile fillies she has sent to Charlie to be trained this year. Some readers might remember Kirsten's Lady Jane Digby, a Group 1 winner for Johnston Racing in 2010. To date, Mark and Charlie have, between them, trained seven of her progeny to be winners. This year, they have been sent a filly by Lanwades stallion Sea The Moon out of Lady Jane Digby, which Kirsten has named Jeanne Baret.

Lady Jane Digby was a noted English aristocrat and adventurer, famed for her remarkable love life and lifestyle. Kirsten has chosen to celebrate the life of another remarkable woman. Born in Burgundy, France, in 1740, Jeanne Baret was a noted French botanist and explorer, and is thought to have become the first woman to circumnavigate the globe, partly by disguising herself as a man and enrolling on the French naval vessel, *Etoile*, as 'Jean'. She also made many botanical discoveries, collecting samples from more than 6,000 plants on her travels around the



Kirsten Rausing's Lady Jane Digby

world.

One of those winning fillies out of Lady Jane Digby was Dame Freya Stark, a filly by Leroidesanimaux. This year Kirsten has sent to Kingsley Park a filly by Study Of Man out of Dame Freya Stark. Freya Stark was a British-Italian travel writer and explorer, the author of numerous books about the Middle East and Afghanistan. This filly has been most appropriately named Eva Dickson.

EVA Lindström was born in 1905 in Sigtuna, Sweden. She was a Swedish explorer, rally driver, aviator and travel writer who packed a lot into her short life. Her father was involved in breeding horses and Eva inherited his interest and began to ride as a young girl. She married the Swedish landowner and rally driver Olof Dickson, and became the first woman to cross the Sahara Desert by car. Sadly, she died at the young age of 33 in a car crash near Baghdad.

Thanks to our owners for broadening our minds with these inventive names for their horses. We wish them all well and will keep you posted if the naming process over the next few weeks and months throws up anything of similar interest.