

THE GIMCRACK SPEECH - 13 DEC 22

My President, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What an honour to find myself here tonight on behalf of Godolphin,. The Gimcrack Stakes is a wonderful and historic race which is surely unique across the international world of racing in that it is a top quality 2 year old race which, should you win, does not result in the first question being an excited “So where does he go next?” but, rather, a slightly more malicious “Have you got your speech ready?”

It's fabulous for me to play a part in an institution with as distinguished a history as the Gimcrack Club. Established in 1767, which is remarkable in itself. The French Revolution and the US War of Independence were still some way off, George III was our Monarch, William Pitt was Prime Minister and the Royal Navy was on the way to becoming the mightiest fighting force that that the world would ever see. As an ex naval man myself I can always find a naval link to pretty much anything, much to the irritation of my family and friends at Godolphin. So, Yorkshire, 1767. Obvious! One of your county's most famous sons – Captain James Cook. Born and raised in the North Riding village of Marton, 1767 saw him at the end of a 6 year deployment to North America and Newfoundland. He was still a young

officer then but his brilliance as an explorer and cartographer had already become clear to the Admiralty and it was in 1767 that this amazing man wrote that he intended to go not only "farther than any man has been before me, but as far as I think it is possible for a man to go." Laudable words and the kind of ambition that drove the United Kingdom for centuries; ambition and endeavour that was forged here in Yorkshire and have been part of the heroic Yorkshire character over centuries. And, frankly, the kind of approach that has led this particular corner of the county, this amazing race course, to be the shining example of what an independent track can be. Always innovating, always delivering, excellent prize money, competitive fields and a famously welcoming crowd. From Godolphin, I want to thank William Derby and his amazing team for their outstanding work.

Anyway, back to the Gimcrack – let me give you a quick update on our colt, Noble Style, a son of Kingman out of Eartha Kitt and bred on Chasemore Farm by Andrew and Jane Black. We were obviously thrilled with his win on the Knavesmire back in August. He remains unbeaten in 3 starts but unfortunately had a minor setback that kept him out for the rest of his 2yo season. But I saw him just yesterday and Charlie is very bullish about his 3yo career which, all being well, will start with the Greenham at Newbury. He is part of a strong team at Moulton Paddocks and I must pay tribute to Charlie Appleby and his whole team for another outstanding season. He is

Champion Trainer, William Buick is Champion Jockey, Dubawi is Champion Sire and that all rather helped Godolphin to become Champion Owner. 2022 has indeed been another very special year for our whole team. We are of course all thrilled for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed who inspires us to always look ahead and do better year on year.

For many decades now we have seen the influence of Dubai on our industry. This influence has been entirely positive – Between the Maktoum family and Godolphin there have been well over 600 Group 1 winners with this year serving up one of the very best ever in the form of Baaeed as well as Godolphin providing all 3 European 2000 Guineas winners in Coreobus, Native Trail and Modern Games. But I would like to think that these statistics of top level wins are just the very sharp end of the spear – yes, there were many champion horses and memorable performances but as you move back from those you will see a rich legacy of literally thousands of horses being foaled, raised, raced and retired. Horses that have provided livelihoods for many people in the industry here and abroad over those decades.

And just to bring the subject back to the Gimcrack it is interesting, isn't it, that Gimcrack himself, this outstanding colt, had the Godolphin Arabian as his grandsire but even more notable was the duration of his racing career. 27 wins over 7 seasons. The fashion to keep flat horses in training obviously

diminished over the centuries but the sporting approach adopted by many owners now is to keep their good horses in training and this is a trend that was very much led by Godolphin and the other big Dubai owners. It is surely a good thing for the sport?

But Dubai is not here just for the big prizes, far from it – there is total commitment to our industry and our communities. We are very proud of our charitable work which incorporates The Godolphin Flying Start Programme, Rehoming of Retired Racehorses, The Godolphin Stud and Stable Awards (now renamed the Thoroughbred Industry Employee Awards and due to be hosted here at York next year and our many schools programmes aimed at informing and inspiring children about our sport. I would like to think that this wider impact of philanthropy and help to our industry is felt far and wide. Dubai got involved in British racing in the 1970s and has stayed and prospered.

In fact the Maktoum family has been closely connected to the UK for a very long time. The young Sheikh Mohammed studied in Cambridge, trained as an officer with the British Army and has been a frequent visitor here since he was a boy. The connection runs deep and obviously included a particular friendship with the Royal Family and specifically Her Majesty the Queen. Since he was a young man, their relationship was founded on a love of the

horse. His passion for the thoroughbred and his skill as a horseman were a match even for her's.

The mutual respect that existed between HH and HMQ was obvious to anyone who knew them both. Collecting a trophy at Royal Ascot from HMQ was always a high point. Indeed, one of the most memorable moments in Godolphin's last few years highlights this mutual respect. You will all remember the brilliant Blue Point, a winner of the Gimcrack himself – the zenith of his career was the Saturday of Royal Ascot in 2019. He had won the King's Stand on the Tuesday and was backed up on the Saturday for the Diamond Jubilee which he duly won by a short head. I know Charlie will tell you that it was his proudest and happiest moment of his training career to see His Highness collect that trophy from a beaming Queen. Two lovers of the turf, who know intimately how difficult it is to win at Royal Ascot just once, let alone twice in the week. The words that were spoken? Simple but worth their weight in gold – “That was brave, well done.”

But there is yet another string to HMQ's bow as a horsewoman that I want to share with you. Yes, she was a superb rider, breeder, owner, analyst of the form, pedigree expert – that's a given – but did you know that she was also a rather brilliant Bloodstock Agent? I can verify this outlandish assertion, don't worry. Back in 1985 the outstanding filly Helen Street

owned by Lord Weinstock and Michael Sobell was coming to the close of her racing career. She was a classic winner and had an impeccable pedigree and one would have assumed she was destined to retire to Ballymacoll Stud. In those days, Darley as our breeding operation was really getting going and that year had seen Oh So Sharp (in the old maroon and white colours) sweep all before her. She was retired to become part of the increasingly strong broodmare band at Dalham Hall Stud. However, there was a clear wish to add the beautifully bred Helen Street to the band. But this was easier said than done - I understand that Messrs Weinstock and Sobell wanted to keep her and were driving a very hard bargain. The position seemed intractable until an autumn day at Ascot when all the related parties happened to find themselves in the vicinity of HMQ. Suffice to say that there was much speculation within this distinguished group of owners about the future of Helen Street – one can imagine the conversation I think – but everything was stopped in its tracks with HMQ uttering the immortal words, “If I may, please, can I propose a solution?” I’m not going to relay in any detail precisely what that solution was but this was the outcome – Darley acquired Helen Street and she went on to produce Street Cry, the winner of the Dubai World Cup (and sire of Winx) as well as Helsinki who was the dam of Shamardal himself one of our greatest stallions. It was a good deal....to say the least....and on behalf of Godolphin I think the least I can say is...”Thank you very much Ma’am...”

Mutual respect, a collegiate approach and what wonderful days they were both able to enjoy at the races and on their respective stud farms. Like everyone in the country we are truly saddened by her loss in 2022. Her legacy will live on through the memories, the stories and of course her outstanding bloodstock. Dubai is a friend of the UK, a friend of the Royal family and I cannot tell you how proud Godolphin is to be part of this country's remarkable racing heritage.

It is a racing heritage that we cannot take for granted, forged over centuries and still the envy of the world. Godolphin supports British racing and will always be thrilled to race here at York. But we know there are challenges and are pleased to see that there appears to be a genuinely collaborative and unified approach being taken by the authorities. His Highness has written "The word "impossible" is nowhere in the vocabulary of the UAE" and he also asks "Does running water stop when it reaches a rock? Of course not. It either turns left or right and continues its way. Likewise, a positive person is confident that no challenge will stand in the way of achieving a goal." Wise words that seem to be now being heeded by racing's leaders.

Sport, generally, is so important: from thousands of years ago, it is how humans have found a way to enjoy life beyond just mere survival. It is what makes life worth living. And British sport is one of this country's greatest exports with horse racing as a jewel in that crown. Let's not dwell too much on the past but always look forward and always approach this sport with enthusiasm and positivity. Just look at Dubai now. You'll be amazed where that approach can get you.

On that note, may I propose a toast to the health of British Racing and to **Noble Style, winner of the Al Basti Equiworld Gimcrack Stakes.**
