

Cock Robin

A bay colt foaled in 1822 by Blacklock out of an unnamed mare by Cerberus in the end he won 15 of his 33 races before breaking down at Northallerton a year after his win in the £50 Members Plate of 1826. By then he was a gelding and no more is recorded of him.

The mare had been bred by the famous Squire Watt of Bishop`s Burton and must have been sold by him to the notorious Robert Ridsdale in foal to his splendid Blacklock, whose portrait by Herring used to hang in my dining room. Anyway Ridsdale raced him at 2 and 3 winning 2 little races at a defunct Yorkshire meeting called Robert Town.

For the rest of his career he raced in the name of his Malton trainer Tommy Sykes and was usually ridden by the stable jockey Sim Templeman, who actually rode 3 Derby winners in a very long career although essentially a northern jockey. Sykes is mainly remembered as the man who shouted to his rider on Blacklock as that horse was cantering in for the 1817 St Leger "Pull to thy horses lad" or words to that effect and as a result got him beaten a head by Ebor, whose rider heard the shout and persisted.

Presumably the £50 Members Plate was actually given as your trophy although one would not know that from the conditions. As I explained the rider clearly took the first heat easy in coming in last of 6 but then won the next 2 heats to gain the prize. Probably Templeman rode but one cannot be sure. He rode him every time a jockey is given in professional races but that only happened on 3 occasions.

In one amateur race he was actually ridden for Sykes by his former owner Robert Ridsdale, about whose career someone could write a book. He was

an associate of Gully`s and mixed up in all sorts of villainy before eventually going broke and dying in a Newmarket hayloft with only a penny halfpenny left. He owned classic winners and his brother William even won the Derby with Bloomsbury after he died having taken the horse over when Robert had to sell up.

In summary, Cock Robin was clearly useful but not top class and his best wins were a Kings Plate at Manchester, the Winyard at Stockton and a 100gns Gold Cup at what was called the Midlands Meeting for amateurs held at Pontefract where he ran 3 times in 2 days, winning twice. He broke down on his third run at Northallerton in 1827 so they made him sweat.

COCK ROBIN by Blacklock out of a Cerberus mare.

Bay colt foaled in 1822 bred by the notorious Robert Ridsdale.

At 2-y-o Ran twice being 2nd in a maiden at Leeds when 5 to 4 and unplaced at Doncaster behind Memnon, who had just won the Champagne and next year would win the Leger.

At 3-y-o Ran 9 times winning 2 very minor races before Mr Ridsdale presumably lost heart and sold him to Mr Sykes. Which Mr Sykes I do not know but presumably something to do with Sledmere.

At 4-y-o Ran 13 times winning 8 so the wicked Ridsdale had clearly made a serious error. His wins included a Gold Cup at Pontefract and the mildly important Wynyard Stakes at Stockton.

At 5-y-o Ran 9 times winning 5 races including a King's Plate and a race worth £100 both at Manchester. By this time he was a gelding and since his form was not declining he presumably went wrong as no more is heard of him. Accordingly he won 15 of his 33 races and was evidently a useful horse well below top class.

ELIZABETH by Walton out of Trulla by Sorcerer

Black filly foaled in 1821 bred by Mr R O Gascoigne, who had won a Leger with Soothsayer, a son of Sorcerer, and in 1824 won again with another black while Elizabeth was unplaced at very long odds having been left at the start.

At 2-y-o Unraced.

At 3-y-o Ran 5 times winning a 240gns maiden at Doncaster after her disaster in the Leger.

At 4-y-o Ran 6 times winning 4 of them consisting of 2 of the 3 sections of The Great Subscription at York plus 2 £100 races at Leeds and at Newcsatle

At 5-y-o Ran 6 times winning twice being a King's Plate at Lincoln and the Gold Tureen at Leeds before being retired to stud by Mr Gascoigne. Thus she won 7 of her 17 races.

At stud she produced 6 foals to get names but missed on numerous occasions. In the end she outlived her owner dying in 1844 but founded no line of interest. Her final successful covering was by the Doncaster Cup winner Lottery, one of those beaten in the race between her and Cock Robin.

The horses had met only once on 14th October 1826 when 6 started for a £50 plate over 3 miles at Northallerton to be run in heats. It was the final race of the year for both of them and indeed the last time Elizabeth raced. She won the first heat with Cock Robin content to save his distance in last place. For the second heat the roles were reversed with Cock Robin winning and Elizabeth coming in 4th. For the third heat only 4 ran and Cock Robin won with Elizabeth second and the much better known but by now over the top Lottery last.