

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Steve Dennis catches up with ex-jockey-turned-instructor **Richard Perham**

Experience passed on to youngsters

THE old saw that 'those who can, do; those who can't, teach' certainly doesn't apply in Richard Perham's case. He rode almost 200 winners during his career in the saddle, and now he passes on the benefits of that talent and experience in his role as senior jockey coach at the British Racing School in Newmarket.

Perham found the way to his second career with the time-honoured assistance of Lisa Delany at the Jets (Jockeys' Employment Training Scheme) initiative – he was initially freelancing for At The Races (and still is, two or three Sundays a month) and manufacturing riding simulators (and still is), but until answering an advert in the Racing Post in late 2004 hadn't considered utilising his jockey skills.

"I assess and deliver training for those who wish to take out a licence as an apprentice or conditional," he says. "I don't teach people to ride – they can already ride when I see them."

"I, along with other coaches and speakers, teach them all the necessities a jockey needs to know



Name Richard Perham **Age** 45

When at large 1985-2001

Best moment Winning the 1991 Stewards' Cup on Notley as a 5lb claimer

Other high points Beating Pat Eddery by a short head at Ascot in September 1994 – "We had a ding-dong battle from two furlongs out, and to beat Pat by a short head was the pinnacle"

– things like diet and nutrition, rules and regulations, how to use the whip correctly, how to ride a finish, good technique in the saddle.

"At the end of the week-long course I make a recommendation as to whether they're a fit and proper person to be given a licence."

Those Perham has given the all-clear to include Luke Morris, James Doyle, Andrea Atzeni, Aidan Coleman and Ian Popham, and the buzz he gets from watching his alumni succeed on the racecourse compensates for the former thrills of his riding days.

"On rare occasions I miss it," he says. "If I stand down by the rails as the field comes thundering past then it all comes back to me, but I'm very content with what I'm doing now."

"I never won a Group race and even toyed with riding over the sticks before managing to keep my weight down, but I had some good days. I got the better of Pat Eddery in a driving finish on a horse called Wijara – not too many did that – and I rode a winner for the Queen."

"It was a cold, wet Saturday night at Wolverhampton on Carpathian – the Queen wasn't there but you never know, maybe there's a photo of me in Buckingham Palace! I say to the youngsters 'riding can open up so many opportunities for you, in the saddle and out of it'."

If they're in any doubt about that, they can simply take the example of their teacher.

I GOTTA HORSE

Pam Cooney tells Jon Lees how she fell for Beau Mistral at first sight

Sometimes money can buy you love

Horse Beau Mistral **Wins** 5

Owner Pam Cooney, one of eight members of the Winsor Not Group

Best moment Leading in Beau Mistral after winning at Chester

PAM COONEY has embraced racehorse ownership with the kind of fanaticism evident during the height of Beatlemania and the supervisor of Liverpool's Cavern Pub has made the filly Beau Mistral her number one since she was given a five per cent share as a Christmas present.

Cooney, 48, who works at the sister venue to the Cavern Club where the Fab Four were discovered, had no interest in the sport until her partner Ged Barton, a pest control officer, persuaded her to join him on his racing trips.

But now she is hooked and never misses a chance to visit her filly at trainer Paul Green's Oak Lea stables in Lydiate, north of Liverpool.

She says: "I'd never been interested in horses and when Ged first told me you could own shares in racehorses I told him, 'Don't be silly. Who do you think we are? We both work. Horses are for people with money'. But he took a share in Dubara Reef and would go off racing and eventually persuaded me to go with him."



Pam Cooney, wearing Beau Mistral's colours, celebrates another win

"Then we were at Paul Green's one Saturday morning when he showed us four horses he'd bought. When they brought out Beau I fell in love with her. She was stunning and really big. I was pining after her. That was in October 2010 and a couple of weeks later Ged came home and said I could have a share as a Christmas present."

Beau Mistral has now won five times, twice at Chester, twice at Nottingham and most recently at Redcar, and every victory has been accompanied by tears and shrieks of joy from her most ardent fan.

"I couldn't get the day off work the first time but I cried my eyes out when I heard she had won," says Cooney. "It was a great feeling. I've been there

the other times she has won and I cried tears of joy on those days as well."

"At Chester last year I had the privilege of leading her in because it was the day after my birthday. I came into the winner's enclosure screaming and people must have thought I was a mad woman, jumping around like a lunatic. I tend to wear her colours as well. Suddenly all my wardrobe has become purple with a hint of yellow."

"I live for my Saturday mornings now at Oak Lea. We've made lots of friends. It has opened up a whole new world to us. I don't think I could imagine going to one of the top stables and getting as much enjoyment."



Tom Basford: new lease of life in racing following his first retirement

LONGSERVERS

Tom Basford, who has just retired from his job at Cheltenham after 25 years, talks to Steve Dennis

SOMETIMES the end of an era passes quietly, as it did earlier this week when Tom Basford walked out of Cheltenham racecourse and into a very late retirement. Finally, at the age of 90, it was time to put his feet up.

He retired for the first time in 1986, yet for the past 25 years he has been a vital asset behind the scenes at Cheltenham, looking after the regular influx of stable staff staying overnight for racedays. Still as sharp as a tack, Basford derives his greatest pleasure in life from meeting new people and his time at Cheltenham allowed him to do just that.

"Some of the things I've seen – I should write a book, but it would have to be censored," he says. "But racing people are nice people, dedicated to their lives and their jobs, and I've found the vast majority to be very polite and well behaved."

"One of the nicest things was seeing parents bringing their children along with them, and later seeing those children following their parents into racing."

"I've worked on the gate on racedays, acted as a supervisor, as night porter, as night security – you need to be about all night when the horseboxes come off the ferries for the big meetings."

Basford hails from a family steeped in horses. His father was a cowboy at the beginning of the century before settling down to become a stud groom, while his brother was a huntsman, but a bout of osteomyelitis

Welcoming figure bows out at 90

Name Tom Basford **Age** 90

Job Employed at Hunters Lodge, stable grooms' accommodation at Cheltenham, since January 1989

at the age of nine halted any aspirations in that direction and he worked as a gamekeeper, before spells in the corporate world, including with British Leyland, took him to normal retirement age. Then a double hip replacement gave Basford a new lease of life and his many roles at Cheltenham allowed him to enjoy it.

He has worked at Nottingham, Stratford, Warwick and Worcester as well as Cheltenham and Royal Ascot, sometimes covering two or three venues in a day. He's a fan of Royal Ascot – "You see it all there, from royalty all the way down the scale" – but Cheltenham is his first love and the festival meeting the icing on the cake.

"I've really enjoyed working here," he says. "Cheltenham have been very kind and said I can come racing whenever I want, so I'll still be able to see the horses and the people."

Q&A 'The best thing was meeting all sorts of people'

What was the best thing about the job? Meeting people, all sorts of people from all backgrounds.

What was the worst thing about the job? Sometimes I saw youngsters in tears because they'd brought a horse to the races and had to go home with just the empty bridle, because it had been killed on the track. That was awful.

Favourite horse over the years? While I was working at Cheltenham it was Desert Orchid, but before that I was always a big fan of Wayward Lad.

Plans for retirement? I'll keep busy. I've had some poems published and I'll have lots of time to write more, and I'll still keep going racing.