

## **SHEER VERSATILITY - 2006**

**By Caroline Sussex**

Sheer Versatility, the brainchild of Judy Phillips, is a wonderful opener for the season bringing together members of the AHS, members of endurance GB, local horse enthusiasts and also riders in eventing, dressage, show jumping and other events. The aim is to show off stallions and their progeny for possible breeding for the season. It is open to Pure, Anglo and Part Bred Arabians and although it always seems to take place on one of the coldest days of the year, it gives people a chance to get together and get away from the slog of winter.

All the featured stallions have been successful in at least one sphere of ridden competition and generally have to perform under saddle although there one stallion was shown in hand. There were also ridden clinics with training experts, saddle fitting with Birgitta Bergsten, equissage demo by Sally Prichard and dressage to music.

The Crabbet Organisation was one of the many supporters of the event in February, 2006 and Committee members were there to promote the Crabbet Arabian with rosettes to the Crabbet bred horses and a trade stand for people to come and meet us. The AHS Premium Scheme also supports the event on behalf of the Arab Horse Society along with many members. The money for tickets to this event goes towards a Young Riders Bursary, a very worthwhile cause.

Immediate Past President of the Arab Horse Society, Michael Harris, opened the proceedings and then discussed the basic conformation required of an Arabian horse for performance. Franzara, leading endurance horse of the year owned by Lesley Dunn at her renowned Warren Hills stud is by AHS Premium Stallion Chatanz. Franzara won the Senior and Supreme Championships awards for the 2005 endurance season and Lesley has once again proved that her breeding programme is supreme in the endurance world. This mare carries a high percentage of Crabbet blood and her sire, Bonanza, comes from the famous Farette line with the Polish stallion, Banat in her pedigree.

Olympus Hale Bop, a stunning black Part Bred Arab owned by Denise Beken led off the ridden displays with a beautiful dressage to music performance. This stallion is competing at intermediate level dressage and ridden by Philip Woof who dressed in 19<sup>th</sup> Century costume for the event. Bop is an AHS Premium Stallion. He was followed by Sky Indigo, an advanced endurance stallion, owned by Heather Giles, who gave an endurance demonstration complete with crewing. Sky Indigo is by the straight Crabbet stallion, Silver Blue.

The next horse shown under saddle and in hand was the British National Champion, Rusleem who needs no introduction and is also an AHS Premium Stallion. This stallion is around 74% Crabbet with mainly Egyptian and Old English lines. Rusleem's dam, Rullante was bred by John and Pat Coward and carries a percentage of the famous Rodania family mainly through Rissla giving the wonderful action and distinctive chestnut colour. Rusleem's show career is superb being British National Champion in hand and under saddle in different years, very few achieve this feat. He also captured the Ridden Arabian of the Year title at the Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) in 1999. Following on from Rusleem was another Premium Stallion, Chatanz a pure bred by Bonanza out of the wonderful mare Chatelaine. Chatanz has achieved so much

in his career as an endurance horse and competed in the AHS Marathon on many occasions.

Lucinda McAlpine's fascinating Intuitive Riding clinic brought the audience into the realm of training the natural way. Karen Jones', Royal Mantle by Golden Mantle out of Mellway Princess Royal (high percentage Crabbet), was used as the demonstration horse. This gentle mare was let loose in the arena and responded to Lucinda's methods with kindness and eagerness. Royal Mantle received a Crabbet rosette from the Organisation as having over 75% Crabbet breeding.

The beautiful and charismatic palomino stallion Icon, also an AHS Premium Stallion, was very much admired showing his paces with rider Suzanne Keevil. He is owned by Mrs. Cawley and Suzanne Keevil and stands at stud in Wiltshire. His rider wore Spanish costume and performed dressage to Spanish music before showing his ability over the jumps. He is 50% Arabian/50% Lusitano and the Arabian is 100% Crabbet so the Committee felt that Icon deserved a Crabbet rosette. His dam is Lunifah by Ludomino ex Hanifah. Bright Shadow and Ludo once again dominate the pedigree in this performance horse whilst there is the added bonus of Silver Vanity through Hanif. This stallion made a great impact and was much admired.

The grey endurance stallion, Sundance bred by Kay Firth-Butterfield, is by Jazmir out of Silver Ingot (by Sadi) and is 99.19% Crabbet. He is owned by Nicky Ghetler who had brought him all the way from Hull for this event. This upstanding impressive grey stallion traces through Silver Ingot to Wentworth Golden Shadow, one of the mares Lady Wentworth bred from the very successful Indian Gold with Oran and Silver Fire crosses. Jazmir was by Marania Gold, a son of one of the two mares Mrs. EM Murray bred by Blue Domino out of Gleaming Gold. Jazmir's dam Jazirah Sbeyel was by Mikeno, the Hanstead bred son of Rissalix and Namilla, who spent his life at Pamela Linney's stud. Mikeno, whilst not quite 100% Crabbet, was a very important sire of high class show and performance horses. Sundance competes as an advanced level endurance horse and gained the highest point and highest mileage in the North and East Yorkshire Group of Endurance GB at Intermediate level in 2005.

The next horse to be seen was the Anglo Arab, All That Jazz, bred in Australia by Paula Jane Sparr by SS City Lights out of Belingo by Saulingo. He is now owned by Finn Guinness and ridden by Ibbey McPherson. He was tested by the National Stallion Association (NaStA) as a Grade 1 Elite (the highest level) and as a result of passing that test he is an AHS Premium Stallion. This magnificent bay stallion stole the show with everyone present watching closely and silently as he was put through his paces. His wonderful action and extreme agility was beautiful to watch as the fences went higher and higher. William Fox-Pitt, who already trains and rides Tamarillo at the top level of eventing, has ridden All That Jazz in one day events in 2005 and there are bigger plans for 2006. What a future for this stallion and what good news that he is still entire.

A rare treat for the audience after this was the outstanding moving Pure Bred Istfahan, by Aurelian out of Istashra, bred by Mrs. JH Paine and brought into the ring by Mark Smallman. At 22, Istfahan reminded us of his superb movement that had given him the magic 20 at the International Show many years ago and Mark proved he could still run too! Istfahan qualified for a Crabbet rosette and his pedigree contains many Crabbet lines that are lost in the 100%

Crabbet horses. Mrs. Paine wanted to re-introduce the blood of Nasik to England so imported Ben Rabba by Aurab, a great-grandson of Nasik. Istashra (100% Crabbet) has an interesting pedigree as her sire Indriss, by Indian Magic out of the Dargee daughter Rissalma, goes back to the beautiful Rissiletta, Rissla's fine and elegant daughter by Indian Gold. Istashra's dam, Blue Fantasy, was by Blue Domino and goes back in tail female to the imported desert bred Dafina. This line is found in the Pure Bred programme at Biddesden Stud; so it is very fitting that in 2006 Istfahan will be standing at Biddesden.

The last stallion to be shown was Toman, already so successful in the ridden show ring and ready to take major awards in 2006. He was bred by Jane Kadri at her Al Waha Stud and is owned by Judith Evans and shown to perfection by Ann Hooley. Toman is by Grand (a Russian bred sire) out of Queens Topaz, from that very special family of Dancing Queen. Queens Topaz is by Midnight Gold (by General Gold) who proved has to be an outstanding sire.

Despite the bitter weather the day was classed an outstanding success and hopefully Judy will have enough energy to put together another event in Winter/Spring 2007. If you want to show your stallion's paces, contact the writer at the Crabbet Organisation to request a nomination for next year's Sheer Versatility. If you missed out this year, be sure to check the date for 2007 and go along with a friend or two and view the selection of some of the top class performance sires our breed has to offer.