



Global Aftercare

Issue Four

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IFAR Virtual Conference 2021 - P3



IN THE NEWS



New Platform for Retraining Ireland's Racehorses Launched.

Treo Eile, is an Irish non-for-profit set up to assist racehorse trainers and owners who wish to rehome and retrain their racehorses after racing. The idea is for the site to act as a matchmaking tool to enable suitable horses to enter retraining programs so they can lead active lives after racing. Full story inside.



TREO EILE
Retraining Ireland's Racehorses

IFHA Publishes Minimum Horse Welfare Standards

The Horse Welfare Committee of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) has produced guidance on standards for the care and welfare of horses at different times of their life, in line with its terms of reference that include promoting best practice, harmonization and information exchange across racing nations. Titled "IFHA Minimum Horse Welfare Standards", this paper complements recent reforms which will ensure the traceability of horses from foals through to retirement and beyond.

Racing authorities should refer to this guidance to establish accepted horse welfare practices in their jurisdiction and to set minimum standards of participant behaviour, including behavioural change where necessary. Full story [here](#).

Welcome to the fourth edition of Global Aftercare

Introduction by Di Arbuthnot, Chair IFAR

This time last year, I thought that the challenges of the pandemic would have translated to difficult times for those involved in aftercare. However, in the UK, we have seen an unprecedented demand and a strong market for Thoroughbreds as well as fewer numbers of horses requiring charitable intervention. Racehorse trainers are finding that there is an avenue for horses when their racing days are over, and the rehoming centres and other equine charities have seen an increase in riders looking to rehome Thoroughbreds. There are many reasons for this, including a better work/life balance due to COVID-19 restrictions, but for those involved with aftercare, we must be ready should this picture change and horse owners are unable to care for their horses due to any future economic recession.

In the US, the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance has also seen a lot more adoptions, with some groups unable to keep up with requests. However, funding and awareness opportunities are significantly down, especially at racetracks and events like Kentucky Derby week. The cancellation of farm tours, particularly tours at sanctuary farms like Old Friends and Our Mims, have resulted in a significant decrease in visitors, and this has been particularly difficult for those farms who rely on these visitors to raise funds and awareness.

In Europe, while many racing jurisdictions have suffered hardship, the aftercare sector in those countries has reported a rising demand for Thoroughbreds.

There is a similar picture in Australia, with retrainers seeing an increasing demand for retired Thoroughbreds as people have sought alternative sports and hobbies as a distraction.

Without a breeding industry, the Hong Kong Jockey Club relies on the importation of horses. Likewise, at the end of a horse's racing career, the Club's racing model depends on the steady exportation of horses in retirement. The global measures to address the spread of COVID-19, including limitations on flights and restrictions on persons entering Hong Kong, initially seriously impacted the ability to move horses in and out of Hong Kong. However, as racing in Hong Kong continued, so has the Club's aftercare programmes, and despite the pandemic and the associated challenges of moving people across an international border, the Club was able to



open a second retired horse facility at its recently built racecourse in Conghua.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has halted almost all sporting events in Japan, horse racing has been the rare exception. Racing has been held under very strict guidelines and mostly behind closed doors, but the Japan Racing Association (JRA) has avoided any cancellations. Conversely, riding schools and other facilities in Japan that accept a large number of retired racehorses have had to close their businesses during lockdown and have therefore suffered financial hardship. The JRA is providing some financial support for them.

Since the start of IFAR, we have seen some countries make remarkable progress in setting up aftercare operations. France and Japan have led the way while South Korea, after a challenging period, is developing an aftercare programme. In Ireland, the first retraining and rehoming website treoeile.com, has been launched, and John Osborne, Horse Racing Ireland's director of Equine Welfare and Bloodstock, is working to create a platform of opportunities that will be welcomed by owners looking for next steps.

At IFAR, we are delighted to announce the 2021 conference will be held virtually, with weekly seminars featuring an exciting line-up of leading speakers over the month of April. The full program is outlined in this newsletter, and the steering committee is hopeful the virtual format will enable us to engage with a diverse and global audience.

More recently the media spotlight has been on welfare in racing, both in Ireland and the UK – the measure of how you care for the racehorse is how you look after the retired ones – food for thought as we move forward in these challenging times.

Top news

IFAR Conference 2021

The International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses (IFAR) is delighted to host its fifth conference, which will be held as a series of four virtual sessions on 6, 13, 20, and 27 April. Each webinar will commence at 12 p.m. GMT and last approximately an hour.

IFAR 2021 will kick off on 6 April with “Aftercare in 2021,” a session that will provide an update on IFAR’s activities from Chair Di Arbuthnot and feature perspectives from Jessica Harrington, trainer (IRE); Tik Maynard, eventer (U.S.); Graham and Anita Motion, owners, Herringswell Stable (U.S.); and Nemone Routh, racing office manager, Aga Khan Studs (FR). The discussion will be moderated by international racing broadcaster Nick Luck (U.K.).



“By hosting this year’s IFAR virtually, we are able to include participation from a greater range of aftercare advocates, experts, and regulators from around the world,” said Arbuthnot. “Each session that we have planned will offer listeners the opportunity to learn from our speakers, engage with them through a live Q&A, and share the best practices they have learned with their native racing jurisdictions.”

The remaining schedule of topics and speakers can be found below:

13 April, 2021: Aftercare for Racing Administrators and Regulators

Moderator: Caroline Searcy (AUS)

Panelists:

Martin Burns: General Manager, Welfare & Sustainability, New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing

Simon Cooper: Director, Weatherbys, General Stud Book (U.K.)

Dr. Anna Smet: Manager, Animal Welfare, Racing and Wagering Western Australia

20 April, 2021: Global Insights on Aftercare (Aftercare Providers, Equine Charities)

Moderator: Donna Brothers (U.S.)

Stacie Clark: Operations Consultant, Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (U.S.)

John Osborne: Director of Equine Welfare and Bloodstock, Horse Racing Ireland

Dr. Ignacio Pavlovsky: Veterinarian, Owner, and Breeder (ARG)

Lisa Coffey: Founder and Director, Racing Hearts Equine Assisted Therapy (AUS)

Kristin Werner: Senior Counsel, The Jockey Club (U.S.); Administrator, Thoroughbred Incentive Program

27 April, 2021: Aftercare for Racing Industry Participants: Owners, Breeders, and Trainers

Moderator: Francesca Cumani (U.K.)

Mark Fisher: Kotare Bioethics Ltd, Wellington, New Zealand

Dr. Eliot Forbes: Chief Executive Officer, AniMark Ltd. (AUS); member, IFAR Steering Committee

Tom Reilly: Chief Executive Officer, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia and Aushorse

Dr. Christopher Riggs: Director, Equine Welfare Research Foundation; Chief Advisor, Veterinary Science, The Hong Kong Jockey Club

All sessions are free, but registration is required. For more information about the conference and to register, please visit internationalracehorseaftercare.com/virtual-ifar/.

News from around the globe

Treo Eile, Ireland

Treo Eile, is an Irish non-for-profit set up to assist racehorse trainers and owners who wish to rehome and retrain their racehorses after racing. The idea is for the site to act as a matchmaking tool to enable suitable horses to enter retraining programs so they can lead active lives after racing.

The objectives are to:

- Connect racehorse owners with retrainers/new owners via the online platform
- Support ex-racehorses with prizes specifically aimed at them across the Irish equine event calendar (disciplines including showjumping, dressage, eventing etc)
- Promote the versatility of the ex-racehorse through an awareness campaign

Many racehorses that retire are more than able to make the transition into other equestrian disciplines and there are countless successful stories to be told. Some of the biggest names have gone on to be superstars but some of the 'also-rans' have made huge impacts aswell. Thoroughbreds make some of the best eventers as they are brave and have stamina to burn. Esib Power (sister of Robbie) will testify to that as the exploits of her French-bred TB, Soladoun and others has shot her to the top of the Eventing charts.

"The idea is that Treo Eile (Irish for 'Another Direction') acts as a gateway to source former racehorses, whilst creating a stronger demand for them by adding lucrative prizes for the best ex-racehorse in class. It's a concept that works really well in the UK through RoR, so we've worked with the industry stakeholders in Ireland to develop a similar program. Response so far has been fantastic and we're thrilled to have recruited some influential ambassadors in the shape of Patrick Mullins, Robbie Power and Katie Walsh. Spreading the word is really important so that more people become aware of the opportunities available for ex-racehorses and exactly what they can do." says Sarah Sands of Treo Eile, who together with Godolphin's Caoimhe Doherty has worked on the project for the last year.

Treo Eile was created with the assistance of Godolphin and Diana Cooper, Head of Global Charities, has been a guiding influence in getting the website up and running. Going forward they aim to look for further industry funding and potentially a corporate partner to allow their ambitions to be reached. "Along with the traditional equine disciplines, we'd also like to identify new roles for former racehorses. An emerging area is within therapeutic environments and there is growing scientific research showing how powerful Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) can be so we'd like to explore that area. It's pleasing to see a new UK charity recently set up exactly for this too [Racing to Relate] and we hope to work with them."



Only recently launched and Treo Eile is delighted to announce its first rehoming victory. Dance Alone, an 8yo Bahamian Bounty gelding trained most recently by Kieran Cotter has found a new retrainer.

The four-time winner of over £20,000 has joined Kildare-based Richard Hyland who will spend a few weeks of schooling the grey over obstacles before finding him the right partner to compete on. Hyland, a graduate of the Irish National Stud Breeding Course and currently working with Jessica Harrington said "Every horse deserves a second chance after racing and Dance Alone had an incredible career, running 67 times so that says something about his durability. I especially enjoy teaching them to jump although some need more time than others depending on their temperaments". Dance Alone was owned by the On Each Way Syndicate run by Thomas McGrath who was delighted to see the horse given a chance to change direction. "We had some great fun with him at the racecourse, he was in peak fitness and had plenty more to offer so it was important to find him a new opportunity. I look forward to following his progress".

Treo Eile will be following the fortunes of the new partnership in a blog over the next few weeks. For more information visit www.treoeile.com.

DANCE ALONE pictured below with his syndicate owners after a win at Leopardstown.





Off The Track grant programs to increase opportunities for ex-racehorses

Racing Victoria has introduced two new grant programs to help increase the re-training capacity of its acknowledged retrainers and to drive demand for thoroughbreds in equine-related businesses.

To support retrainers to grow their businesses, a Retrainer Capacity Expansion Grant program was introduced late last year. This allowed retrainers to share in \$AUD200,000 to take on projects that would increase their capacity to support the re-training of more ex-racehorses.

Following the successful delivery of the first round of retrainer capacity projects, it is anticipated the program will be rolled out again to support even more retrainers to increase the capacity and quality of their re-training operations.

This initiative is complemented by the Off The Track Business Grant program that will launch in March, to allow Victorian-based equine-related businesses to apply for a grant of up to \$AUD10,000 to support the addition of more off-the-track thoroughbreds in their operations.

This program is aimed to provide additional financial support to businesses, while also opening up new pathways for those former racehorses that might have otherwise struggled to find their perfect forever home.

These programs are anticipated to help grow Racing Victoria's post-racing initiatives financially backed by the Victorian racing industry's \$25 million equine welfare fund.

This includes the RESET program, launched in the second half of 2020 to support former racehorses that have struggled to find their perfect second career. This program has already seen close to 10 horses find a new home.

These grant programs along Racing Victoria's broader post-racing framework are aimed at creating greater visibility, transparency and ultimately working towards each and every retired thoroughbred racehorse finding its perfect second career.

For more information on Racing Victoria's post-racing programs, visit racingvictoria.com.au/offthetrack or email offthetrack@racingvictoria.net.au.



The Japan Racing Association (JRA)

The Japan Racing Association (JRA) has produced a series of videos underlining the importance of aftercare and the versatility of Thoroughbreds. The videos can be viewed on the JRA's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhZFZK9xnQ3-Jxwp3SKC-CkC-r4esFFBP2> or on their dedicated website at <https://retraining-jra.jp/>.

Every year around 4,000 Thoroughbreds exit Japan's Thoroughbred racing industry and enter a wide variety of second careers, including recreational riding, equestrian disciplines, therapeutic activities, riding for the disabled, and festivals. The JRA videos highlight the journeys and stories of off-the-track Thoroughbreds as they transition to and become active in their second careers. In addition, efforts are being made to care for horses that have completed their entire careers, including second careers, and to increase the human resources involved.

JRA hopes that the videos will help spread greater understanding of racehorse aftercare to as many people as possible. The site is in Japanese, but English subtitles are provided for each video.





Published Study Finds Equine-Assisted Therapy Effective

By BloodHorse Staff

An eight-week study of patients with post-traumatic stress disorder who participated in equine-assisted therapy found evidence at the neurobiological level that such programs are effective in treating the ailment, which may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a harrowing event.

Columbia University Irving Medical Center and New York State Psychiatric Institute researchers, under the auspices of the Man O' War Project, published the findings in a new study in Human Brain Mapping, "Neural changes following equine-assisted therapy (EAT) for post-traumatic stress disorder: A longitudinal multimodal imaging study."

The Man O' War Project is the first university-led research study to examine the effectiveness of equine-assisted therapy in treating veterans with PTSD. Founded in 2015 by philanthropist, businessman, and ambassador Earle I. Mack, a veteran himself and long-time Thoroughbred owner/breeder, the project was born out of his concern about the mental health crisis facing veterans and his observation of anecdotal stories from various equine-assisted therapy groups, yet no hard science to support their results.

Mack noted this is the second time scientific results have been published and a third is planned. Mack said that while he never was called into combat, veterans who saw such action have always had a special place in his heart.

"It's really satisfying to see," Mack said. "I love the veterans we're helping and I love the horses. And this has the potential to help many others, including children, suffering from PTSD."

State-of-the-art technology was used to look at changes in brain regions key to fear and emotional processing. Dr. Yuval Neria, who led the Columbia team with Dr. Prudence Fisher, said the MRI data showed remarkable results. [To read full story click here.](#)



Wall of Fame New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR)

Thoroughbreds are well-known for their versatility off the track and a recent addition to the New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) demonstrates this, along with the longevity of some of our retired racehorses.

The Horse Wall of Fame (found here <https://loveracing.nz/walloffame>) includes returnees from Hong Kong, Derby winners, top handicappers, moderate to fair racehorses, non-winners and unraced horses. Each of them has now found a role off the track, either as top-performing eventers and show jumpers, therapy horses, happy hackers or much-loved paddock mates. Behind each photo is the story of the horse, its race record (if the horse did race), and its pedigree.

NZTR General Manager of Welfare & Sustainability, Martin Burns, said the development of the Wall of Fame would help dispel some of the misinformation spread by those with no understanding of racing.

"A key part of our work in traceability has been ensuring we have more comprehensive records regarding where horses end up once they leave racing. This is now supported by the rules introduced earlier this year, which require every horse to have an 'accountable person' who is responsible for ensuring a retired or rehomed horse goes to someone with appropriate horse knowledge, and providing NZTR with the details of that new owner," Burns said.

While undertaking work, which began back in February, it became very clear to Donna Cameron, NZTR's traceability officer, that the people she was talking to about their long-retired horses were very keen to tell the story of what each of them was doing now.

"It was following discussion around this that the Wall of Fame was born," Burns said. "We often hear anecdotal tales of what our Thoroughbreds get up to in their lives after racing, and the Wall of Fame gives owners the opportunity to share these stories more widely."



"Everyone who has one of these retired horses that currently feature on the wall has been incredibly eager to share their story and to reassure people that there is a good life for Thoroughbreds off the track," he said. "It has been amazing to hear about some of these horses in their mid to late 20s who are obviously still an important part of their owners' families."



RoR Educational Wednesdays a Resounding Success

Following the success of the Retraining of Racehorses Showcase, RoR launched a series of educational webinars. Each webinar was designed to offer advice and support for those who had an interest in retraining former racehorses or considering rehoming one. The webinars consisted of four evening sessions throughout February and attracted over 1,100 attendees including viewers from France, New Zealand, and the USA.

Each session was hosted by professional broadcaster Mark Hayward who was joined by an excellent line-up of experts including Olympic athlete Richard Davison and British Dressage Trainer Cara Hayward. Showing stalwarts Richard Ramsey, Lucinda Cavendish and David Ingle were also on hand to offer advice to viewers. For full story click [here](#).

Aftercare stories

Aftercare conversations encompass many dimensions, however some of the most compelling and heartwarming stories emanate from passionate people using retired Thoroughbreds to assist people in need.

IFAR forums have provided a worldwide platform for organisations to share their stories and remind us of the remarkable versatility and gentleness of the Thoroughbred. Please see the below stories from around the globe.

Watergate Bay, UK

Watergate Bay, previously trained by Paul Nicholls, owned by Graham Roach and then Chris Gordon now competes at BE Intermediate level with Harriet Colderick. Watergate Bay raced for Harriet's family before she retrained him and the pair now have a very special connection. "He is certainly quirky and wasn't the easiest to retrain, he is sharp and his party trick is rearing," says Harriet.

Harriet contemplated sending him back Point to Pointing a few months into his retraining, however she stuck at it because she knew he was a very talented horse.

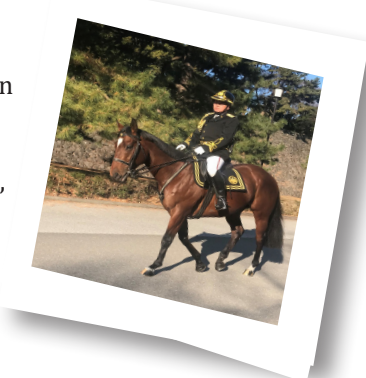
Since then, the pair haven't looked back and he has now amassed 62 BE points, placed at Intermediate level and finished 8th in our first CIC3*S last year. He was also the RoR Elite Eventing Champion in 2018 and finished 3rd at Gatcombe in the RoR National Trainers Federation Retrained Racehorse Eventing Championship in 2019.

Watergate Bay trusts Harriet implicitly and tries his hardest to get through those flags, leave the poles up and perform the dressage movements to the best of his ability.



Conferment, Japan

Conferment (2015 G Shamardal – Emmy Award) raced seven times over two years in Japan unable to finish better than third. In 2018, he joined the Emperor's Imperial Guards and made his debut for them the following year. He works mostly at ceremonial events such as the Presentation of Credentials Ceremony escorting foreign ambassadors' horse-drawn carriages that move in procession from Tokyo Station to the Imperial Palace where new ambassadors present their credentials to the Emperor. He can be seen at a ceremony in this YouTube [video](#) at the 0:37 mark.



It's A Sting, UK

Written By Andrew Thomas Llewellyn

It's A Sting was bought by Oliver Sherwood and Tessa Greatrex during the April Sales at Cheltenham 2014 for £90k. He was purchased for his owner Mr Mark Burton. Sting, as he is known had won a bumper in March 2014 at Market Rasen under the trainer Tony Coyle before going on to the sales. Following this, Sting went straight to Mr Burton's for a summer break and returned to Oliver Sherwood's Rhonehurst Stables at the end of July 2014.

I started working as an Assistant Trainer for Mr Sherwood at the beginning of July 2014. When Sting arrived at Rhonehurst, I automatically fell in love with him having ridden him from the day he arrived. Unfortunately, Sting had his issues whilst in training and Mr Burton decided to retire him from his yard in March 2018.

I quickly asked Mr Sherwood and Mr Burton if I would be allowed to re-home him and if I could have the chance of riding him in a point to point and was delighted when they agreed to this. He went straight out on a holiday and was out in the paddock for five months. I was so lucky that my very close friend, Chloe Boxhall was able to train him ahead of our pointing debut. I rode him in a restricted race at Chaddersley Corbett in February 2019 but shortly there after I made the decision to retire him from racing indefinitely.

I proceeded to give him a month off before starting to re-train him. I started by taking him on some fun rides, competing him in some unaffiliated show jumping competitions, taking him to local shows and drag hunting. He's taken to his re-training really well but similar to that of his racing career, he always seems to be the bridesmaid and never the bride! This year, I've registered him with RoR and am also going to register him with the BS and compete him in the RoR Bronze League.

This year, as everybody knows, has proven a bit of a nightmare with Covid-19, which has affected the equine industries dramatically. Personally, I have been put on furlough, which has been hard, but Sting really has been my mental and physical saviour through these testing times. I'd literally be lost without him!



IFAR'S Vision

- All horses are treated in a humane and ethical manner every day of their life.
- All suitable horses find a home after racing.
- Every industry participant, administrator, owner and breeder recognises and embraces their responsibility towards Thoroughbred aftercare.
- All racing jurisdictions have effective and well-funded aftercare, traceability and education programmes in place.
- Thoroughbreds are valued and sought-after athletes by the equestrian community.
- IFAR leads a highly-engaged and global community of horse professionals advocating for Thoroughbred aftercare.

Dates for the Diary 2021

Australia

6th-11th April - Equestrian Victoria Interschools State Championships, Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre

30th April - 2nd May - Jumping Victoria State Titles, Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre

10th-14th June - Melbourne International 3 Day Event, Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre

8th-11th July - Education Boulevard at Equitana

12th-15th August - RDAV State Championships, Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre

United Kingdom

27th June - The Al Shira'aa Hickstead Derby Meeting

6th-8th August - RoR/NTF Retrained Racehorse Eventing Championship

13th-15th August - RoR/British Showjumping Championships (Provisional)

26th-29th August - RoR National Championships

United States

31st August-5th September - American Eventing Championships, Lexington, Kentucky

Fall 2021 - Thoroughbred Incentive Program Championships, Aiken, South Carolina

12th-17th October - Retired Racehorse Project Thoroughbred Makeover, Lexington, Kentucky



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Below you will find links to the websites of IFAR Steering Group Members



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How IFAR can support you

IFAR comprises members with significant knowledge and expertise and is ready to assist those seeking help. This assistance may be general advice or guidance or it may be tailored to specific issues relating to the welfare of Thoroughbred racehorses and how to develop aftercare provision in their countries, taking into account cultural differences.