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MARES OF SIGNIFICANCE - SILVER GREY

by Rosemary Archer



Silver Grey as an older mare with Iona Bowring

Photo: Photonews

SILVER GREY was one of the crop of foals born at Crabbet in 1957, the year of Lady Wentworth's death, and thus the last to be bred by her.

Her sire, Royal Diamond, was a son of Oran (by Riffal ex Astrella), a stallion bred at Hanstead. Oran was acquired by Lady Wentworth as a four-year-old and was in fact the last stallion of solely Blunt breeding to be used at Crabbet. Royal Diamond's dam was the striking Raktha daughter Grey Royal out of Sharima (by Shareer ex Nashisha). Grey Royal died at a comparatively young age and none of her offspring remained all their lives in this country, except her Anglo-Arab daughter Grey Imperial by Derby winner Airborne.

Royal Diamond, a very impressive grey, was exported to the US by Cecil Covey when he had to reduce the horses at Crabbet on inheriting the Stud. Royal Diamond left just

three fillies in this country, the other two being Dancing Diamond, who was retained by Crabbet, and Silver Paradise who was sold to Mrs S Bomford.

Silver Grey's dam was the illustrious Silver Gilt by Indian Gold, the sire of so many great broodmares, including Gleaming Gold and Serafina, dam of Serafix, by Raktha, who was exported to the U.S. and at one time was the leading sire of show winners in that country.

Silver Gilt's dam, Silver Fire, could be said to have founded a dynasty of her own and her fame has spread throughout the world. She was by Naseem out of Somra and traced in the female line to Sobha, the mare of Abbas Pasha blood-lines bred by Mahmud Bey who kept his horses with Ali Pasha Sherif in Cairo, and imported by the Blunts in 1891.

Silver Grey had nine foals and her first, Silver Sheen by Bright Shadow was born in 1962, stands out as the most successful of her offspring. She was bred by Cecil Covey and bought as a weanling by Mrs Eileen Thomas whose Metcombe Stud was then one of the most important in the country. Silver Sheen had sixteen foals and proved her worth under Wilfred Blunt's criteria of a truly valuable brood mare as she produced sons who became top-class sires.

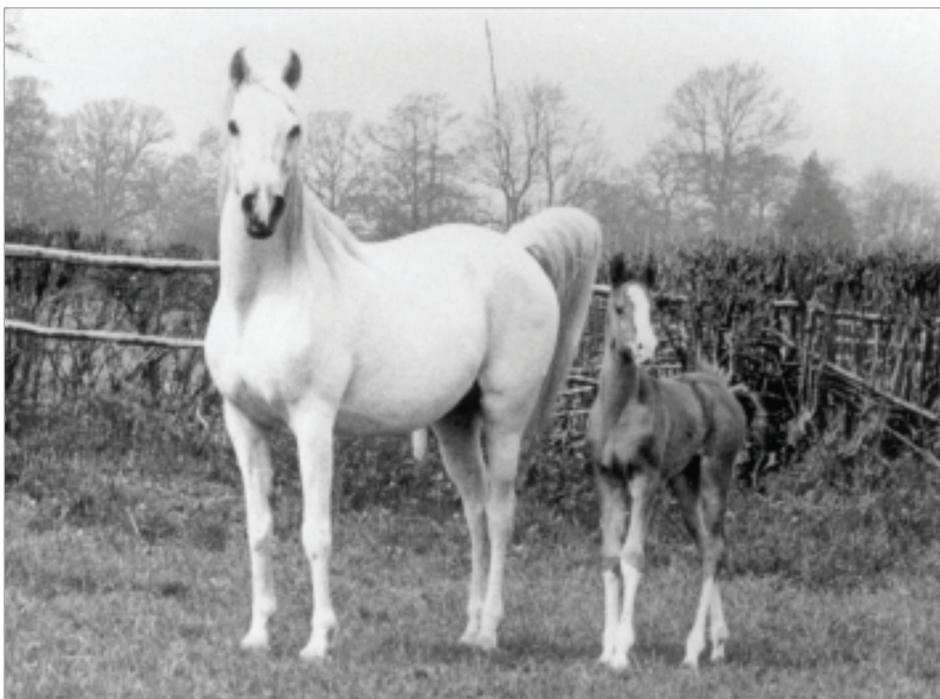
Silver Grey and Silver Sheen were not only exceptional brood mares, they created a record at the AHS National Shows which is unlikely to be beaten by any other mother and daughter combination.

In 1963 Silver Sheen was Champion Filly and then stood Reserve to her mother for the Female Championship. Silver Grey, though not shown as often as her daughter, was





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Silver Gilt with Sunset as a foal

never beaten in her class and twice won the Female Championship, whilst Silver Sheen won it three times in succession from 1968. In fact, these two mares between them were Female Champion on six occasions and Reserve Champion three times, twice to each other! In 1974, Silver Grey and Silver Sheen, with their foals and Silver Sheen's daughter Silver Shimmer, won the Princess Muna Saddle of Honour Class for Family Groups.

Silver Sheen's most influential son was undoubtedly Silver Blue, by Azrak and foaled in 1969. Azrak was by Blue Domino out of Silent Wings and Mrs Thomas, who was known to make candid comments on her own horses, said this of Azrak, "He was a charmer at home but a lunatic in the showing, so he went to South Africa. I think this was one of my greatest mistakes, he has left three first class foals behind from his only three mares." Azrak's daughter Blue Sylphide (out of Crystal Magic) and son Silver Blue, both inherited his brilliant action, and passed it on to their descendants.

Silver Blue won at the AHS National Show when two years old and was Reserve Junior Champion to the three-year-old Haroun. Mrs Thomas kept only mares in the stud and the few stallions she had were boarded out. Silver Blue was broken in as a three-year-old and then stood at Mrs P Howell's Kingsettle Stud. Later, when ill health forced Mrs Thomas to cut down her horses, Silver Blue was bought by Mrs and Mrs Crosswell. Then in 1975, Mr and Mrs David Wright bought a half share in him. Four years later, Lady Townshend bought the Crosswell's share and Silver Blue remained in this partnership, spending alternate years at the Sky and Moulton

Studs. He had many successes in the showing, including Champion at the Royal Show in 1977 and Reserve Champion to Ralvon Pilgrim at the first International Classes held at Ascot.

Silver Blue sired a very large number of foals but space does not permit the mention of more than just a few of them. Suffice to say that he had a colossal influence and his name appears in the pedigrees of many present day top horses in the showing and

in performance, for his descendants are known for their striking action.

At the Moulton Stud, Silver Blue was particularly successful with mares of Yemama's line. She was by Indian Magic and out of Silent Wings (Azzrak's dam) so the foals of this breeding carried a double cross to her. Silver Blue Wings had an impressive show record, and others include Silver Blue Dream, whilst Ivory Wings would be famous merely as the dam of Imad.

Lady Townshend bred for performance, as well as good looks, and Silver Blue sired winners in-hand, under saddle and racing, from her mares, including Apollo Sky, Sky Hermes and Atlanta Sky.

The lovely Golden Silver, out of Golden Ludo, was perhaps Silver Blue's best son. He, too, was a very successful sire of show winners and performance horses, including Shaded Silver, Sunne in Silver and Rosaliah Gold. Golden Silver's son, Blue Lucius out of Ludovici, sired Shimmering Blue Jasmine who has competed with the British Endurance Team.

Two sons of Silver Blue still alive are Silver Blue Ludo out of Golden Ludo, with the Carpenters in France, who has bred good stock which are breeding on in the U.K., and Silmalia Blue, out of Gamalia, with Mrs Paulette Weir in Norfolk.

In 1971, Silver Sheen was purchased by Mrs Iona Bowring (now McVean) and the following year had her first filly, the lovely Silver Shimmer by Fari II. Her daughter

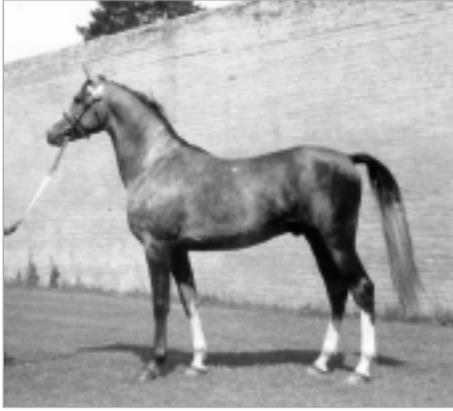


Silver Grey as a yearling





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Royal Diamond

Silver Starlet, by Indian Star, bred some high quality foals but at the age of eight Silver Shimmer was exported to Australia when in foal to El Shaklan. The resulting foal, Silver Glint, was the dam of two Australian National Champions. One of these, Windella Silver Fascination, was put to the American-bred SK Shakla Khan whose dam was mainly of old Crabbet blood-lines from the Kellogg and Selby importations. The clock has now gone full full-circle for the foal she produced, Windella Silver Sensation, after twice winning the Australian National Championship, was imported into the U.K. and in 2006, in the ownership of Heather Brown, was British National Champion.

In 1973, Silver Sheen produced Silver Sword, by Ringing Gold. He was bought by Mr and Mrs Walls and made an important contribution to Scottish breeding before he was exported to the U.S. in his middle age. His progeny included Ringing Sword and Ringing Sovereign.

In fact, several of Silver Sheen's foals went abroad but Silver Mantilla, by Manto born in 1975, remained in England. Her foals included the lovely mare Mantilla's Pride, by Sabek.

In 1979, Silver Sheen was covered for the first time by a stallion carrying lines other than 'English'. This was Ben Rabba, who was carried Davenport blood, and was imported into the U.K. on loan to Mrs Beatrice Paine to re-introduce the Nasik sire line. Silver Aura was National Champion mare when four years old and she bred some good foals. She spent the last few years of her life with Anne Brown who describes her as having an exceptionally kind nature. Silver Aura has left some promising performance horses.

Silver Sheen's 1982 foal was a bay filly, Silver Sheba by Fari II. She produced the very successful endurance mare Jade Rani, by Dhruv, another who has competed with the British Endurance Team.

The following year, Silver Sheen had Crystal Sheen, by Crystal Magician, another successful show mare. Her daughter, the lovely Silvern Sheena, who is in fact double



Bright Crown, grandson of Silver Grey, breed at the Rutland Stud

Photo: Ross Laney

Silver Grey, her sire being Silvern Sceptre, has won top honours under saddle.

Silver Sheen's last foal, born when she was 24, was Spirit of Silver by Ludomino, and so once again combining the Wright's very successful blood-lines of Silent Wings and Blue Domino with this branch of the Silver Fire line. Spirit of Silver was bought by Richard and Carol Carpenter and spent some years in France. He is a good sire of endurance horses and is now back in England owned jointly by Mr and Mrs Tobin and Mrs Hazel Crowle. This partnership also have Lufti Pasha, a son of Silver Blue Ludo and Lusarah.

Silver Sheen was retired from stud in 1987 at the age of 25 and was put down two years later. With such an enormous extended family it is understandable that she should have a great influence here and overseas and apologies are due for those horses not mentioned in this article.

Silver Grey was not such a prolific breeder as her famous daughter, nevertheless, there

are other lines from her which have proved to be of importance.

Silver Grey had only three foals at Crabbet before Cecil Covey disbanded the stud and she went Iona Bowring. It was discovered that she had not been producing enough progesterone and once this was rectified, Silver Grey had another six foals.

Her second foal Silver Crown, by Indian Magic and born in 1964, had no foals at Crabbet before she was bought by Frances, Duchess of Rutland. She was not a prolific breeder but in 1970 she had the important mare Crowning Glory, by Mikeno. She was put Bright Shadow (who Cecil Covey had given to the Rutland Stud in 1971) and produced Bright Crown in 1975. He had a good show record and proved to be a valuable stallion.

Bright Crown sired a number of top winners in-hand and under saddle, including Bright Cavalier, out of Soumana of Fairfield, an International Ridden Champion. Another son, Silvern Gleam, out



Rose of Bediya



Bright Cavalier



*Naresh*

of Silvern Dream, was exported to South Africa where he and his progeny have won numerous National Championships in-hand and under saddle.

The beautiful Silver Cirlet, out of Argenta, was an outstanding daughter of Bright Crown. At the Rutland Stud she bred Silver Sceptre, by Silver Idyll, who was bought by David and Jean Peck. He not only won Championships in-hand and under saddle but proved a valuable sire. His sons include PHA Silver Risalm and the gelding Silvern Enchanter, both HOYS Champions who need not introduction, and the previously mentioned Silver Sheena.

Silver Grey's next foal, Silver Rani 1970 by Hanif, was the third and last born at Crabbet. She was bought by Geoffrey Plaister. Possibly her best daughter was Rachinka, by Marania Gold, who went to Wendy Carr. Put to Rezolute Bay she produced the lovely Razilka who won at National level as a filly.

Silver Aatifa, also by Hanif, arrived in 1972. She went to the Brogden family in Cumbria and left some descendants, but most of their lines appear to have died out.

In 1973 Silver Grey produced her first colt, Silver Sabre by Ringing Gold. A lovely foal, he sadly turned out to be a rig and so was gelded. Bought by Libby Whittome he became a great ambassador for the breed in Scotland competing in shows and Hunter Trials, as well as Long Distance Rides and Ride and Tie.

*Spirit of Silver**Silvern Sceptre*

Photo: Peter & Marilyn Sweet

Silver Scimitar, by Bright Shadow and thus a full-brother to Silver Sheen, was born the following year. He is the only son of Silver Grey to have been used at stud in this country. Amongst his progeny are the beautiful mare Diamond Treasure, out of Sun Diamond, and Silver Auriole out of Silver Aura.

Silver Grey's next foal Autumn Silver, by Fari II and born in 1975, left offspring at Silverdale Stud before she was exported to Canada.

Shimmering Silver, by General Grant and

foaled in 1977, was one of Silver Grey's best fillies. Sadly she died young and her two colts, by King Cotton Gold, also went to Canada.

At the age of 21 Silver Grey had her last foal, Boroboedoer by Banat, who was exported to Holland and later went to the U.S.. That year she was retired from stud.

Through many descendants she has abroad as well as in the U.K. she has left a legacy which should be treasured as a valuable contribution to the influence of Crabbet blood-lines. ■

*Silver Sheen 1969*

Photo: Photonews