

# Dilute Thoroughbreds



The existence of any dilution genes in pure-bred Thoroughbreds is one of those subjects that never fails to result in lively discussion. Champagne, dun, silver and pearl definitely do not exist in the breed but both physical descriptions of various horses and racing paintings from the day indicate that **cream** definitely was in the original gene pool of the Thoroughbred horse.



Some of those early cream dilutes include: Darcy's Yellow Turk (ca. 1665, probably palomino), Cream Cheeks (ca. 1690, probably palomino), Morgan's Dun (late 1600s/early 1700s?, buckskin), Thwaite's Dun Mare (early 1700s, buckskin?), Oxford Dun Arabian (ca. 1710, buckskin), Akaster Turk Mare (ca. 1712, palomino), Oxford Dun Arabian Mare (ca. 1718, palomino), Silverlocks (1725, probably palomino), Silvertail (1740, probably palomino), Buffcoat (1742, buckskin), Brilliant (1750, buckskin), Ginger (1750, buckskin), Gower Dun Barb (ca. 1750, buckskin), Easby Miller (1751, buckskin), Silvertail (1753, palomino), Creampot (1755, buckskin), Well-Done (1756, buckskin), Doubtful (1759, buckskin), Antelope (1760, buckskin), Honeycomb (1760, buckskin), Isabella (1765, buckskin), Petulant (1767, buckskin), Spindle (1767, buckskin), Dorilas (1768, buckskin), Gem (1768, buckskin), Spangle (1769, buckskin), Dunny (1771, buckskin), Pierrot (1771, buckskin), Custard (1774, buckskin), Loretta (1774, buckskin), Golden Dun (1777, buckskin), Don Dun (mid-late 1700s, ?) and a number of unnamed "dun" foals.



*Don Dun (1769, by Brilliant - Regulus Tartar, by Regulus) is one of a number of early Thoroughbreds recorded as dun.*

However, it is generally accepted by most experts that the gene had died out by the end of the 1700's and this is based on several observations:

First of all, from the late 1700's up until the mid 1900's there have been no known accounts of, or references to, cream dilute thoroughbreds. Surely if the gene had survived but simply been misregistered as chestnut or bay there would still have been some accounts of suspiciously 'gold coated' individuals during that time. The fact that there hasn't been certainly lends itself to the theory that the cream did not breed on after the late 1700's, especially if the families that carried it were not breeding anything of note for the race track.

Secondly, if cream dilutes were still known to exist in the breed when the current list of official recognised Thoroughbred coat colours was set down by Weatherbys, who maintain the General Stud Book, it is reasonable to think that they would have been included.

So, given this, it is interesting to speculate on how the gene may have gotten 'back' into the breed because there definitely are cream dilutes in the modern Thoroughbred. They all however trace back to one of two stallions - Milkie, born in 1966 and Glitter Please, born in 1982. Significantly, both stallions are US bred (with at least one continuous line of US bred horses in their pedigrees) as are the known lines of overo Thoroughbreds which have also made an appearance in the breed in modern times. To understand how this could have happened we probably need to take a look at the US breed whose development paralleled that of the American Thoroughbred in many ways and was also used heavily for racing.

The American Quarter Horse evolved from a mix of native ponies, Spanish horses from the early settlements of the south east, the "English Galloway" a popular riding horse brought over from England probably with some of the original settlers, the Morgan and so on. Whilst his primary function was all round working horse, the early European settlers also took over with them their love of horse racing and so the stocky, sturdy working horse turned his hoof to racing on the weekends. Lack of available cleared land meant that their 'tracks' were generally the short main street in town and so the 'short course' sprint race evolved.

As the English 'racers' started to arrive in the country they were used over locally-bred mares to increase their size and speed. An imported English stallion of note at the time was the chestnut Janus, not registered but purportedly a grandson of the Godolphin Arabian. Imported in 1756, his progeny out of locally bred sprint mares proved to be superior race horses as well as good all round working horses and so the use of the imported English horses over the hardy little local mares grew in popularity.



In the middle of the 18th century the Thoroughbred was formally established as a breed in England. More and more of them started to ap-

*Sir Archy, generally acknowledged as the first good US-bred Tb stallion. Born around 1801 out of a imported mare and by the imported Diomed.*

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pear in America and with them came renewed interest in the English distance race, particularly on the East Coast. The arrival of the stallion Fearnought in particular was instrumental in establishing the popularity of the English distance race as he added size and stamina to the locally bred horses. Increased land clearance also meant that circular tracks could be built to cater for longer distance racing and by 1800 the distance race was firmly established in the US. The horses that were bred specifically to cater for this type of race were again a mixture of imported English pure-breds (mostly stallions) over locally bred race mares and so, in this way, a uniquely 'American version' of the English thoroughbred evolved.

By the end of the 19th century the American Thoroughbred too had become firmly established as a breed and in 1896 the first volume of the American Studbook was published. Although obviously heavily founded on imported English horses, it has nonetheless been noted by experts that the American Thoroughbred does have a unique heritage quite unlike that of the Thoroughbred in any other country, where it evolved more from the use of Arabian and Oriental horses (England and Australia in particular). There were a lot of horses accepted into the early American studbooks who were the result of crossing imported English thoroughbred stallions over native American racemares or daughters of American bred racehorses who were themselves a cross of hardy local horse and English thoroughbred. Many of these mares were of course the popular short course sprinters by then formally known as Quarter Horses and well on their way to becoming a breed in their own right. This is clearly acknowledged in the first American studbooks by the use of abbreviations after horses' names denoting their lineage ie C.A.Q.R.H. (Celebrated American Quarter Running Horse) or F.A.Q.R.H. (Famous American Quarter Running Horse).

The cream gene is very common in the Quarter Horse, having most likely come from the original Spanish foundation stock. Therefore it does not take much imagination to figure out that it was most likely reintroduced, intentionally or not, back into the American Thoroughbred via that source given the role the QH played in its early development. Both 'foundation sires' of the modern cream dilute Thoroughbred lines are out of 'brown' mares from relatively obscure lines who were more than likely either brown buckskins or dilute blacks but without photos and DNA it is now virtually impossible to know how far back the gene was introduced. Of course it is also entirely possible that a cream Thoroughbred or two was imported into the US from England in the early to mid 1700's when they were still around but again, there are no reports of this or any mention of cream Tbs in the US during that time.

## *Dilute Tb 'foundation' horses*

*.... then ....*

The early cream dilute lines can predominantly be traced back to the stallions Darcy's Yellow Turk, the Oxford Dun Arabian, and the Gower Dun Barb.

### **Darcy's Yellow Turk** (Article courtesy of TB Heritage)



*Not Darcy's Yellow Turk but a painting of a palomino from around about the same period so it is likely he did look something like this in colour.*

As one of the earliest stallions recorded in the Stud Book and moreover an ancestor of every living thoroughbred, he has been the object of much speculation, both as to his origins and to the unique colour ascribed to him.

The General Stud Book says only that he was "the sire of Spanker, Brimmer, and the great great grandam of Cartouch". Lady Wentworth said he was presented to the Pasha of Damascus around 1658, and that he was otherwise known as "Orange," but does not reveal her source for this information. Alexander Mackay-Smith developed a hypothesis that he was not imported, but sired by Place's White Turk in England. This was, however, based on the assumption that Place's White Turk had been imported in 1657. Highflyer, who provides persuasive evidence, says he was the horse known as Dodsworth, imported in utero and foaled in England.

Darcy's Yellow Turk is generally thought to have been first owned or managed by James Darcy the elder (1617-1673), stud master to King Charles II, whose reign extended from 1660 to 1685. However, Darcy had negotiated a contract with the king to supply the king with "twelve choice horses" annually in exchange for a payment of £800. Although Darcy had included the use of two stallions in his original draft this request seems to have been ignored in the final agreement.

While Dodsworth is said by some sources to have been owned by the king himself, no racehorses were bred at Hampton Court during this period, since the royal stables then were being supplied by Darcy. It is also possible that Dodsworth belonged to the Dodsworth family that was related by marriage to Darcy's brother, Conyers, the 1st Earl of Holderness. In any case no importations are credited to Darcy and it is reasonable to suppose that he had access to Dodsworth. Despite the General Stud Book's insistence that Dodsworth stood at Hampton Court, it seems likely that he stood at Sedbury and that his name was changed to Darcy's Yellow Turk when he took up residence there.

The Darcy family seat had long been at Hornby Castle, near Bedale, in Yorkshire. Darcy acquired Sedbury Park, near Richmond, Yorkshire, from Sir Marmaduke Wyvill (who had acquired it from the Gascoigne family), either by purchase or through his marriage to Sir Marmaduke's daughter Isabel (sources vary). After the death of James Darcy the elder in 1673 Sedbury Park and the management of the Yellow Turk passed on to his son James Darcy the younger (1650-1731), later 1st Baron Darcy of Navan, in Ireland.

There has been much modern speculation over the colour of Darcy's Yellow Turk. Even though he was identified as the older of the Darcy's Chesnut Arabians, he was earlier called the Yellow Turk.

Given that people were familiar with the term "gold," the use of "yellow" in his name invites speculation. The term "dun" was used to refer to buckskin, and possibly palomino. The dilute (or cream) gene may be expressed as either buckskin or palomino and may hide behind black and grey. Although the dilute gene had always been available in the thoroughbred gene pool, as racehorse portraits of this era clearly show, names had not yet been invented to cover the range of the colours expressed.

In the inventory of the Tutbury Stud, which had belonged to King Charles I before his execution in 1649, an entry is recorded for a son of Fantus: "One dun Horse with a black taylor and mane, a starre and a white speck on the nose, 6 yeares oulde". The same inventory includes two offspring of Black Morocco, one a "Dunn filly" and the other a "Yellow filly," which suggests there was a distinction made between those two colours. Others colours recorded in this inventory are black, brown and grey. It may be worthy of note that a number of horses were described as "sorrill" and the term "chesnut" does not appear to be in use as yet. Given that most of the usual colours are present in this inventory it seems reasonable to speculate that "yellow" may have been utilised at this time to indicate palomino.

In the pedigree of Morgan's Dun, so called in the General Stud Book although his colour is not given, Highflyer's argument that the Darcy Yellow Turk is the same horse as Dodsworth might explain the appearance of the Dun's colour.

Burton's Barb Mare (Family 2)

Dodsworth Mare (f Dodsworth [Darcy's Yellow Turk])

Morgan's Dun (c Helmsley Turk Colt [Darcy's White Turk])

Darcy's Yellow Turk, whatever his colour, exerted a profound influence on the stud book through his well known sons Spanker, Brimmer and the Oglethorpe Arabian.

His daughters were influential as well. An unnamed mare was the 2nd dam of Kitt Darcy's Royal Mare (f Blunderbuss) from whom most of Family 13 descends. Another unnamed daughter was the 3rd dam of Hampton Court Childers (c 1725c) and his sister, she the dam of the Irish Ground Ivy (c 1737). Yet another daughter, Sister to Spanker, was the dam of the Lonsdale Counsellor.

He is also said to have sired the 4th dam of Cartouch (c 1717c Bald Galloway), although the pedigree given for Cartouch usually shows Dodsworth in this position.

### **Oxford Dun Arabian**

A high quality Arabian imported from Aleppo in 1715, he was owned by Robert Harley (1661-1724), the first Earl of Oxford and Mortimer of Brampton Bryan and Wigmore, Herefordshire. Nathaniel Harley, a merchant in Turkey from 1686 until his death in 1720, had purchased the horse and shipped him to his nephew Edward, Lord Harley.

Nathaniel Harley spoke of the difficulties he faced: "Three Expresses have been sent after him, and all the passes of the Mountains between this and Scanderone ordered to be watched, and ye marine strictly guarded to prevent his being shipp'd off ... I believe few such Horses have ever come to England ... I've had so much trouble, Expence and difficulty at first to procure, afterwards to keep and now to send him away, that I think him above any price that can be offered, and am so little of a Merchant that I would not have sold him even tho' a Thousand Pounds should be bid for him."

The following year Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, wrote to Nathaniel Harley: "The fine Dun Horse which you sent over and came safe about a year & half ago is under my care & is very well, and is thought by all that have seen him to be the finest that ever came over".

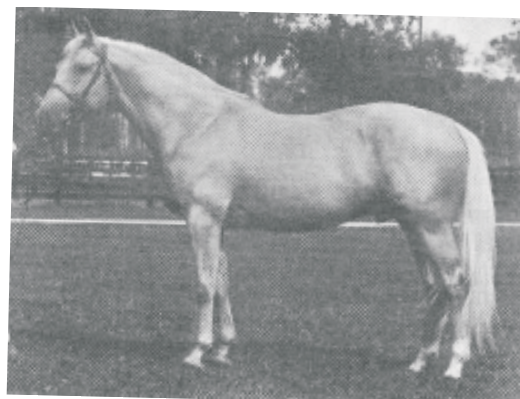
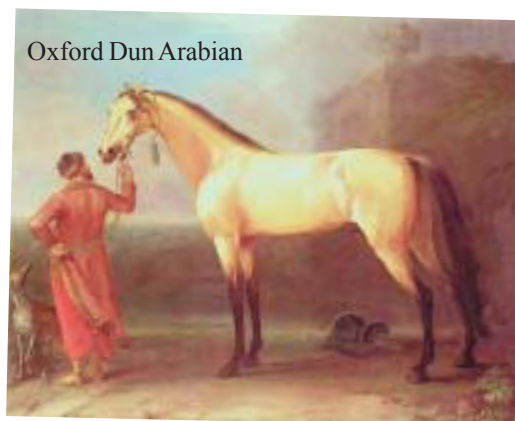
Edward Harley married Henrietta, the only daughter and heir of John Holles, the first Duke of Newcastle, and carried on the Newcastle studs at Welbeck and Wimpole. The Oxford Dun Arabian sired the unnamed mare (f 1717c) from whom most of Family 7 descends. This Oxford Dun Arabian Mare produced Miss Slamerkin (b f 1729 Young True Blue), the dam of the three good stallions and full brothers, Bustard (gr c 1741 Crab), Oroonoko (bl c 1745 Crab) and Portmore's Othello (bl c 1743 Crab). She also produced three good mares, Duchess (b f 1748 Portmore's Whitenose), and two unnamed sisters to Othello, (gr f 1749) and (gr f 1750). Fenwick's Duchess won eleven races, seven of them King's Plates. Among her offspring were the three sires Chymist (b c 1765 Matchem), Dux (b c 1761 Matchem) and Le Sang (b c 1759 Changeling). Sister to Othello was the third dam of Mufti\* (b c 1783 Fitzherod). A second Sister to Othello was the third dam of the Derby winner Saltram\* (br c 1780 Eclipse).

*.... and now .....*

### **Milkie**

Milkie was born in 1966 and is registered as a light chestnut. He was by Deer Lodge out of Tootsie T, a mare registered as brown but who was quite obviously either a brown or burnt buckskin or a dilute black. Believed to be the first known palomino to be registered with the Jockey Club, he is also one of the two founding fathers of palomino and buckskin thoroughbreds in the world today.

Because of his colour the correspondence between his young breeder and the registrar of the Jockey Club was extensive and monthly photos of the colt had to be submitted for over 12 months.





Initially there were questions about the sire. Could there have been a mistake? However, there were no cream dilute stallions near the mare and the foal was dropped almost exactly on time to the cover by Deer Lodge. The other clincher was the fact that Deer Lodge had a distinctively shaped foot which he passed on to all of his progeny and Milkie had 'that foot'. Left with no alternatives but to accept that his parentage as documented was indeed correct, Milkie was duly accepted into the American Stud Book.

Milkie was tattooed but his trainer Mel Eisen felt his talents lay elsewhere so he never raced. Eisen stated that "The youngster has what horsemen call presence, a way of moving; a way of carrying himself that commands attention. What's more, I think he can jump. Leastwise, Gary tells me he had an awful time keeping the colt inside pasture fences. Even today he wants to jump out of his stall."

The publicity the colt received from television and newspapers also influenced the decision to change his career. Numerous offers to purchase the colt were received and although his owners felt he could run and would indeed make a good racehorse, it was ultimately decided that they would get more money by selling him and that the money could be used to put his young breeder through college. So Milkie was duly entered in the 1969 Pomona Annual California Thoroughbred Breeder's Association Fall Sale as Hip No. 361 where he attracted some lively bidding. The successful bidder Joe Schneider had come all the way from Ocala, Florida hoping to purchase the colt and his efforts were rewarded when he made the successful bid.

Joe Schneider was one of America's leading breeders of palomino show hunters and jumpers and his primary plan for Milkie was to use him to breed palomino hunters. His faith was rewarded when Milkie was schooled over jumps and showed exceptional jumping ability. Along with this athletic ability he also had exceptionally good movement and superb conformation plus good looks and of course that lovely correct palomino colouring, all of which he was renowned for being able to pass on to his progeny.

Probably the best known of Milkie's progeny was Gold Apollo (1973), one of the last of the Schneider bred foals. Gold Apollo



Gold Apollo

was out of Wild Jone (I'm Going x Wild Lucy) and like his sire was an extremely successful hunter sire. One of Gold Apollo's sons is Issue of Gold (1994 out of Issue's Call, from Princequillo and Native Dancer lines.) Issue of Gold is the sire of the three JC registered cremello stallions Zillionaire & Billionaire (full brothers out of Queen Debonair by Milkie) and Snowy River and several palominos, including the stallion Dreaming In Gold.



Issue Of Gold



Zillionaire



Billionaire



Snowy River



Milkie's Desire

Another good Milkie son was Milkie's Desire (1986, out of Desirable Lady) who sired many A class show hunter champions. One of these is the line-bred cremello stallion Guaranteed Gold (1998) who became the first Tb cremello born in the US. Guaranteed Gold's dam is Distingold, a palomino daughter of Gold Apollo.

Guaranteed Gold matured to 16.1hh and with his excellent work ethic, correct gaits and superb jumping style has embarked on a highly successful career as an eventer with wins and places at almost every show attended. Event trained by Olympian Anita Nemtin-Gilmour, he finished 5th in the Ontario Training Level Championships with some of the best dressage scores in his group and a faultless cross country. Competing at this level is a clear illustration of the talent and athletic abilities, as well as the

trainability, of these horses.

Guaranteed Gold is of particular interest to Australian dilute Tb breeders because his son Gold Bayou is the sire of the imported cremello ASB stallion Glacial Gold. Glacial Gold is out of Shimmering Gold, a daughter of Billionaire, making him intensely line-bred to Milkie on both sire lines.



DISTINGOLD xx



Guaranteed Gold





Gold Bayou



Glacial Gold



RFF The Alchemist



RFF Kings Ransome



RFF Sun King

Other progeny of Milkie's Desire include RFF Sun King and RFF Kings Ransom. RFF The Alchemist, a cremello son of RFF Kings Ransome out of a mare by Glitter Please competes successfully as an eventer in Germany.

### Glitter Please



In 1982 a second, totally unrelated palomino Tb colt was born. Glitter Please also got his cream gene from his dam, Lucky Two Bits, registered as a bay but obviously a buckskin. Although her pedigree is less obscure than that of Milkie's dam line, it is also somewhat of a mystery as to where the cream gene came from, although there has been idle speculation that there could be American Saddle-bred in there somewhere. There are very few photos of family members in that side of the pedigree and certainly no DNA results available. Regardless, he, like Milkie, was accepted and registered by the Jockey Club.



show horses in many disciplines. His own speciality though was dressage and he was trained to and competing at Prix St Georges level. Amongst his wins was the Prix St. Georges Memorial Trophy at the West Chester Fairfield show under Judge Maria Gunt.

Probably the best known of his sons is the palomino stallion GP's Krugerrand. This stallion is the sire of Pretzel, a 2007 palomino mare imported to Australia by Winning Colours Farm who also own Glacial Gold. A cremello son Electrum out of a Milkie line mare is in the UK.

Another son, Glitter Of Gold was exported to Germany by Gestuet Falkenhorst and has been used over Warmblood and Arabian mares to produce coloured Warmbloods and Anglos. One or two daughters likewise have found their way to Germany where they have been put to Warmblood stallions.

He has also been a popular cross with daughters and grand daughters of Milkie and several of his sire sons have also been put over Milkie line dilute mares. His daughters likewise have been crossed to dilute Milkie line stallions. The full brothers Goldmaker, a cremello and Dream In Gold (palomino) are by him out the Milkie daughter Desire For Gold.



Glitter Of Gold



GP's Krugerrand

A number of studs in fact appear to have either a Milkie line stallion and Glitter Please mares or a Glitter Please line stallion and Milkie line mares. Red Fox Farms in particular own a number of his daughters and grand daughters.



Gold And Pearls, a perlino or smokey perlino grand daughter of Dream In Gold.



Forever A Dream, buckskin mare by Dream In Gold out of a QH mare.



Goldmaker