



A Career After Racing

An investigation into the whereabouts of racehorses which left training in 2006





Introduction

This investigation has been carried out by Weatherbys to provide the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) and Retraining of Racehorses (ROR) with the best information readily available on the whereabouts of those racehorses which were recorded as leaving training in Britain in 2006 and which have not subsequently re-entered training in this country. Use has been made not only of the racing and breeding records available at Wellingborough but also of new sources of horse career data in the form of the recently launched National Equine Database (NED) and records of ex-racehorses registered with (ROR) for their own competition programmes.

The Source Data

Analysis was chiefly undertaken using the information held in the database at Wellingborough.

The database houses an extensive range of information on the British and Irish bred Thoroughbred, from details of parentage, age and gender to current activity (either in training or at stud), sales prices, racecourse performance and records of foreign travel.

Critical to this analysis, the database provides a comprehensive training history for each horse via the monthly 'return' which the trainer, in accordance with their licence, must file or update over the internet. This includes the date on which horses enter training and the date they leave together with the reason why (if known) each horse left training.

Methodology

The immediate fate of all horses leaving training permanently in Great Britain between the 1st January and the 31st December 2006 was chosen on the basis that this combined the merits of relatively recent training data with a time lag sufficient for the whereabouts of most horses to have become evident through future registration requirements.





The Initial Pickoff

A total of 7,590 horses were identified as having left training permanently in 2006 equating to roughly a quarter of the total population of horses. The analysis showed that 29,319 individual horses were reported as being in training at some time during that year.

This file of 7,590 horses was then cross-referenced to the following details held on the database:

- Horses registered for Point-to-Pointing in Britain and those which competed in such races in Ireland.
- Details of permanent exportations.
- Details of broodmare or stallion registrations in GB or IRE and/or records of covering.
- Details of race results in the Channel Islands and Ireland (for which export certificates and passport endorsement need not apply).
- Notifications of death.
- Ownership Updates for non-racing animals as required under DEFRA Passport Regulations provided to Weatherbys as the Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO) for Thoroughbreds.
- Sales held at the major British, Irish and French Auction Houses.

It was recognised that a horse may have a varied career path following retirement from racing. For example, a mare could conceivably Point-to-Point, retire to stud, and then be exported for breeding purposes. Care was therefore taken not to double count within the data. A comparison of the initial dates of any future registration/activity was undertaken for each horse and an 'initial fate' thereby ascertained and used.





Confirmed Fates

This analysis established with certainty the subsequent career path of 67% (5061) of horses recorded as leaving training in 2006. This left 2,529 horses (33%) for which no subsequent registrations or updates with Weatherbys had taken place.

The latter file of horses - labelled 'whereabouts unknown' - was then sent both to the National Equine Database (NED) to be matched against their performance/database and to Retraining of Racehorses (ROR).

NED reported that 65 horses on the file had been identified as having been registered with British Eventing (BE). Chief amongst these was former Grand National winner Bindaree. These 65 animals were therefore re-categorised under 'Sport Horse/Recreation' and the data file updated accordingly. (Please note: at the time of the study only BE data was held in a format at NED that enabled accurate comparison. It is envisioned that further data from the British Show Jumping Association (BSJA), British Dressage (BD) and other competition disciplines will be available at a future date at which point the results of the study will be updated).

A similar cross referencing process was undertaken with ROR which identified a further 60 animals registered with them for competition purposes. These were again re-categorised under Sport Horse/Recreation.

This produced the following spread of whereabouts of the horses which left training in 2006:

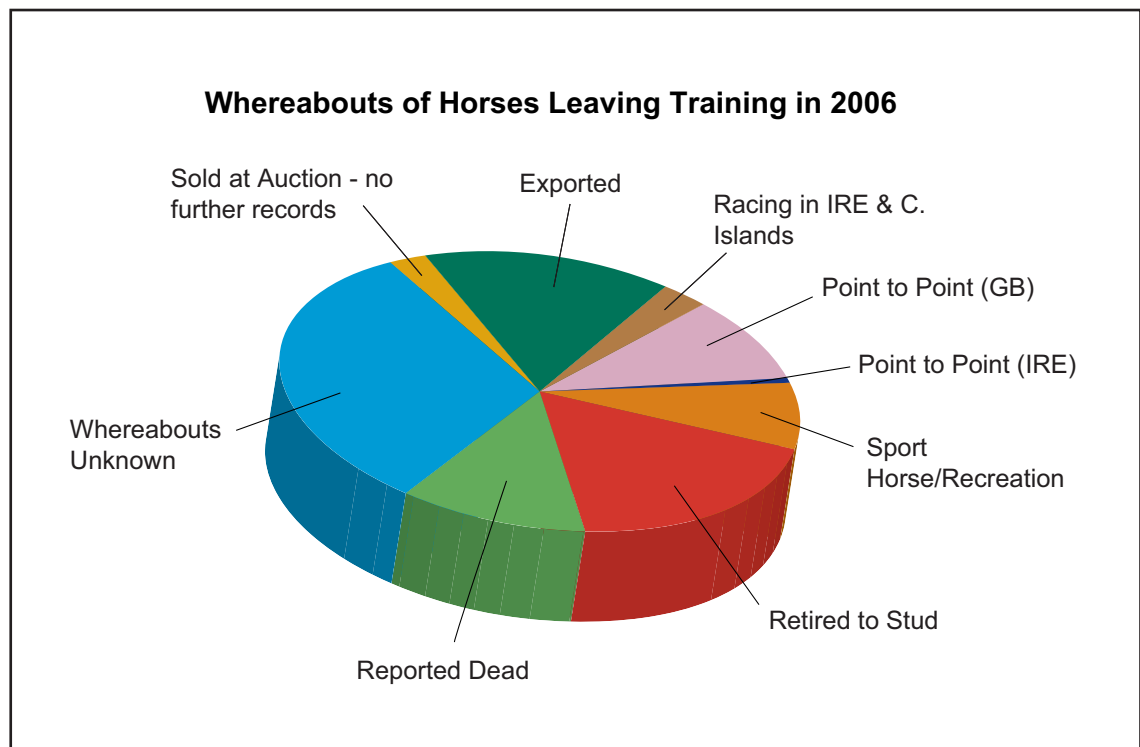
Exported	1168
Racing in IRE & C. Islands	209
Point to Point (GB)	703
Point to Point (IRE)	40
Sport Horse/Recreation	582
Retired to Stud	1446
Reported Dead	852
Whereabouts Unknown	2404
Sold at Auction - no further records	186
	7,590





The resultant profile is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Confirmed whereabouts of horses leaving training in 2006



Further Projection

This left 2,404 horses for which no confirmed post-racing career had been positively established. Unfortunately, unless and until further data on Sport/Recreational use of Thoroughbreds is available further analysis can only be undertaken by way of projection.

One method explored was that of seeking to project numbers by recourse to the percentage of horses detailed under each category in Figure 1 (excluding those with 'whereabouts unknown').

For example, the initial analysis had found that 852 horses had died. In percentage terms this equated to 16.42% of the established horse fates which would project that a further 395 horses may have died but Weatherbys had not been informed.





This figure could be within the bounds of probability – however when the method is extended to other categories, such as ‘Retired to Stud’, it is shown to be flawed. A figure of 27.88% would have suggested that around 670 horses could be being used for breeding purposes (albeit not within the registered Thoroughbred Industry). Analysis of the sex of all 2404 ‘unknown’ horses showed this list comprised 731 breeding eligible horses i.e. colts and fillies – but if it had already been calculated that approximately 16.42% (120) of this sample were likely to have died, the final total would be 611 i.e. 59 less than the projected total.

It was therefore concluded that the information supplied by licensed trainers at the point the horses left training should be utilised. This data is known as ‘Trainers’ Projections’.

Trainer’s Projections

The gathering of this information was made possible because of the initiative taken in 2004 by ROR. Working closely with the National Trainers Federation (NTF), British Horseracing Board (now BHA) and Weatherbys, ROR sought then to obtain statistics on the future careers of retired racehorses via the Weatherbys/BHB Horses in Training web-site. Before refining the projections on the basis of trainers’ returns an analysis was carried out to compare the trainers’ information on each horse against the confirmed fate for the horse. This analysis showed (leaving aside those animals that were reported as dead or had been exported for which the accuracy rate was close to 97%) an encouraging accuracy rate of 75%.

Trainers are asked to choose from one of the following categories to indicate the reason why the horse has left training.

- At Grass
- Sent Home
- To Another Trainer
- Resting
- Injured
- Sold at Public Auction/Claimed
- Sport Horse (Eventing/Polo)
- For Recreation (Hacking)
- To Point-to-Point
- Retired Stud
- Gone Abroad
- Not advised (this relates to trainers return notifications only)





Weighting Trainer Projections

Trainer notifications relating to the 2404 animals for which no confirmed career could be established were found to be as per the first column below. The figures were then pruned in line with the 75% accuracy figure (given by the comparison of all trainer notifications with known fates – from official data on exports, stud records etc) to give an adjusted total (as shown in parentheses) N.B. the 75% adjustment was not applied to the 'not advised' total.

At Grass	93	(70)
Sent home	774	(581)
To another trainer	33	(25)
Resting	39	(29)
Injured	48	(36)
Sold at Public Auction	292	(219)
Sport Horse (Eventing/Polo)	149	(112)
Recreation (Hacking)	651	(486)
Point-to-Point	24	(18)
Retired to Stud	82	(62)
Gone abroad	9	(7)
Not Advised	210	(210)
	2,404	1,855

The task now was to re-arrange these figures into more meaningful categories since, armed with knowledge that we could be certain of Weatherbys records on; training, stud, export and Point-to-Points, several of the above projections had clearly not transpired.





The re-categorisation of these figures was determined as follows:

1. **Recreational/Sport Horse (1,339 horses)**
This comprised horses indicated as being thought to be: At Grass (70), Injured (36), Resting (29), Sent Home (581), Sent to Another Trainer (25) – together with those already indicated as Sport Horse (112) and Recreation (486).
2. **Breeding (non-racing) (62 horses)**
This category comprised horses initially reported as having been ‘retired to stud’ based on the theory that although Stud Book records could confirm these horses had never actually been registered to a Thoroughbred Stud never the less this did not discount the prospect that they had bred un-registered foals.
3. **Gone Hunting (18 horses)**
These comprised the horses listed as having gone to Point-to-Point but of which no evidence Hunter Certificate Registration nor Point-to-Point Registration could be found
4. **Sold at a Minor Sale (219 horses)**
These comprised the horses indicated as having been sold at ‘Public Auction’ as sales database records discounted the possibility of these horses having passed through the ring of any major Thoroughbred Sale.
5. **Abroad (Non-Racing) (7 horses)**
These comprised the horses indicated as having ‘Gone Abroad’ since there was no evidence of exportation for racing/breeding purposes.
6. **Whereabouts Unknown (759 horses)**
These comprised the remaining 210 animals for which no indication of their future whereabouts had been given by Trainers and 549 horses for which the projection weighting technique had discounted the trainers’ notification from being accurate.



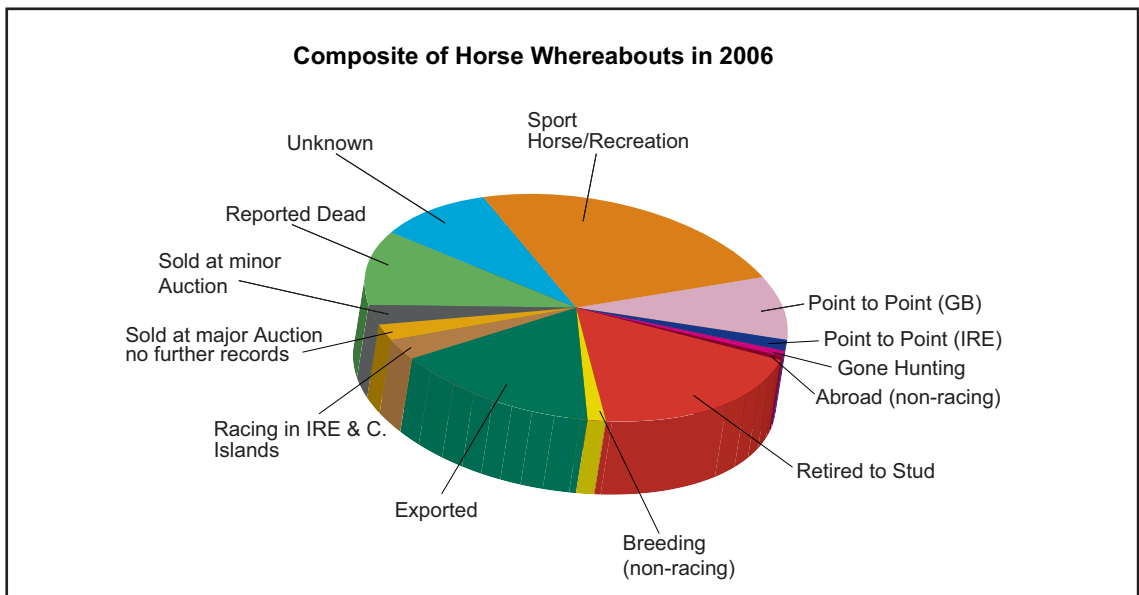


The Final Results

Finally, a composite analysis was produced by combining the figures of established fates (Fig 1) with the projected fates overleaf/page 7; as shown below in tabulated form and in Figure 2 below.

Sport Horse/Recreation	1921
Point to Point (GB)	703
Point to Point (IRE)	40
Gone Hunting	18
Abroad (non-racing)	7
Retired to Stud	1446
Breeding (non-racing)	62
Exported	1168
Racing in IRE & C. Islands	209
Sold at major Auction - no further records	186
Sold at minor Auction	219
Reported Dead	852
Unknown	759
	7,590

Figure 2 Composite of horse whereabouts in 2006





Summary

1. It has been determined that 7590 horses left training during 2006.
2. The subsequent career path of 67% (5186) of these horses has been established with certainty.
3. 852 (11%) have been confirmed as having died, 1446 (19%) as having retired to stud and 1168 (15.4%) animals had been exported for breeding/racing purposes.
4. No subsequent registrations or updates were found for 2404 animals.
5. Utilising information provided by licensed trainers these 2404 animals have been placed in relevant categories for sake of completeness leaving 10% of the original 7590 horses that left training with no reported destination.
6. The report will be updated again once more information is available at the National Equine Database.





Acknowledgements

With thanks to:

Annie Dodd - British Horseracing Authority

Di Arbuthnot - Retraining Of Racehorses

Nick Wallbridge - National Equine Database



