Where did the Thoroughbred come from? Everyone has heard that "all Thoroughbreds trace to just three stallions", and the impression is sometimes fostered of no racehorse breeding in Britain before the Godolphin Arabian, the Darley Arabian and the Byerley Turk popped up around 1700.

Running horses and the contests between them are recorded here almost as far back as records themselves.[1] Our "slow, cold blooded, horses from the northern forest" being transformed by three "swift, hot blooded, horses of the southern desert" was a great oversimplification.

Recent mtDNA testing shows that horses from different locations must have [been] mixed and mingled worldwide much earlier in history than was previously thought. Genetic markers for different female lines are scattered at random throughout completely dissimilar breeds; these very distinct physical types have been bred up upon almost any of the original genetic rootstocks. Prehistoric female lines so randomly scattered may weaken the theory that horses were domesticated by any single group or society[2].

If we could trace back beyond the minor mutations which now differentiate between female families, we would ultimately come upon an equine Eve. However, it is not Przewalskii's horse. Although often called the "ancestral horse", this is unrelated to any other currently known group; it must result from a more significant split in the original family tree hundreds of thousands of years ago.[3]

As it transpires, racehorses have been incrementally bred up from all sorts of starting points. Derby winners may share a *very* great grand dam with horses of any breed. Physical characteristics such as size and colour, gait and temperament, are quite easily confirmed by appropriate matings: or lost by non-confirmatory ones. Outsider stallions may impress their own type and characteristics upon a band of mares [and even further fix the adaptation by mating with their own daughters], but mtDNA testing always attributes every horse to its original female line.

Dr. Emmeline Hill and others have tested the Thoroughbred population to confirm the accuracy of the female family numbers as allotted by Lowe in the 1890s. Lowe allotted his numbers in order of classic winners in each family up to that time; to have rated them by simple volume would have

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1 J. P. Hore, "History of Newmarket and Annals of the Turf" 1885 p. 20

2 Thomas Jansen et al "mtDNA and origins of the domestic horse"

3 Hitoki Goto et al 2011

achieved virtually identical results. As it transpired eleven of the nineteen families in the study did show only a single female line of descent, and two of the others included the most common line. Eight of the families obviously contain some inaccuracies, but what they are and how far back is anyone's guess.

Lateral or single-footed gaits are much less tiring for horse and rider. So long as roads were often impassable other than to ox drawn vehicles, easy action was favoured in a riding horse. But as roads improved a heavier general utility horse, one fit for farm work when not out on a trip, became more popular than the specialist road horse.

The characteristic sidewinding motion of pacers gave an awkward appearance in harness; in nineteenth century America it was even said that "no *gentleman* would drive a pacer on the road". A pacing team was less manoeuvrable, making the diagonal trotting gait preferable in general purpose harness horses. As a result, the original application of hobbles was diagonal rather than lateral, to force a horse with pacing tendencies to stay on a trot. Nowadays the process is reversed, and a straight fore-and-aft connection obliges a mixed-gaited harness racer to pace.[4]

Icelandic law has banned horse imports since the tenth century. All Icelandic horses go with a lateral gait known as "tolt". A recent study identified a specific genetic similarity between ninth century equine remains from York and today's Icelandics, raising the possibility that the characteristic gait may have originated in Viking Yorkshire.[5] The absence of any outside influence would help to make the expression of a recessive gene universal in any population.

Any attributes governed by a recessive gene can be easily confirmed or removed by breeders. This applies to both chestnut colour and the pacing gait. In the 1700s a breed of chestnut "Naragansett Pacers" was famous in New England. These horses were said to descend from a castaway Andalusian type stallion and were highly regarded as racehorses. Dr. McSparran in "America Dissected" described them as "the best in the world, like little Scotch Galloways". But by the 1850s the breed had vanished – the modern demand for trotters in harness, and constant exportation to the sugar islands, had quite done away with them[6].

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4 John Hervey 1947 "The American Trotter" pp 231-4

5 Saskia Wutke et al 2016 Current Biology, vol 26, issue 15, pp. 697-9

6 Henry William Herbert "Frank Forester's Horses and Horsemanship of the US" 1857 Vol II P. 67-74

Racing is mentioned at several locations in Roman Britain under Emperor Severus Alexander in the early 200s[7]. The occupying army was heavily dependent upon auxiliary troops, and two regiments which garrisoned Hadrian's Wall for over a century included cavalry divisions raised in Asturia in Northern Spain.

The merits of Asturian horses were noted by contemporary writers, and horse traders even became "asturconarios" in much the same way that all raincoats in the twentieth century became "mackintoshes".[8] The small pacing horse which they described is recognisable in the rare Asturcon and Garrano breeds in Northern Spain and Portugal even today, as well as in the Galiceno in Mexico and the American South West. Such an enduring heritage may reasonably have survived in the Scottish borders into the seventeenth century.

Odhrán Smith mentions Isaac Ware's reference to ponies in Ireland as "asturiones" c.1720.[9] This description was interpreted as referring to what are now called Kerry Bog ponies, but mtDNA testing failed to confirm the Spanish heritage in that population today; that would not rule out the possibility of the physical type introduced through the male line.

Coincidentally to the New England legend, there was also the romantic tradition in Scotland that in 1588 horses jettisoned by the retreating Armada swam ashore. This perhaps grew out of a dim folk memory of Spanish bred horses in the border country in Roman times. A similar event may have occurred in Ireland; more likely those few shipwrecked invaders that avoided execution and integrated in the west of Ireland may have engineered later imports from their homeland.

Defoe on his Scottish tour in the 1690s found the borderland horses the best in Europe – reporting small and tireless pacers, so well regarded that "…we call all truss-strong riding-horses Galloways". Youatt[10] states that the area of Galloway in the border country "so early as the time of Edward 1, supplied that monarch with a great number of horses".

Horses as well as cattle will have been trailed from Scotland on the old drove roads through the Tees valley and North Yorkshire, and the best individuals will logically have been snapped up earliest in the trek by discerning breeders. Regardless of gait, the athleticism and hardiness of

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7 J. P. Hore 1885 "History of Newmarket and Annals of the Turf" Vol 1 p. 21

8 Fulvio Cinquini 2003 "Man and Horse"

9 McGahern et al 2006 "Revue of mt DNA diversity in Irish horse populations"

10 W. Youatt 1860 "The Horse" p. 103

the transplanted border galloway was most probably the strong base upon which successive imported crosses – and more importantly the racecourse test - built the Thoroughbred.

The Florida Cracker closely resembles the descriptions we have of border galloways and is probably like horses "rescued" from the Yorkshire abbeys by Thomas Cromwell and Sir Arthur D'Arcy in 1538.

By the late 1800s these sharp little horses had virtually disappeared from the borders, displaced by a heavier type which was more useful to intensive cultivation following the agricultural revolution. Like the Naragansetts in New England, and on much the same timescale, mass exportation along with the falling off in local demand proved to be their downfall.

Chaucer's monk of the late 1300s was a dedicated sportsman and "full many a deyntee hors had he in stable". Some of the greatest religious houses, as well as most of the foundation mares in the GSB, were located in a small area around Scotch Corner. Shakespeare, in Henry VIII, II, 2, has Cardinal Wolsey, as Archbishop of York, forcibly seizing horses, "young and handsome, and of the best breed of the north" from the King's men for his own use. Things didn't end well for Wolsey.

There are very few pedigree records – for what they are worth - before the 1700s. There are however many references to purchases and Royal gifts of horses from the continent going back to the reign of King John in the 1200s[11].

Henry VIII is well remembered to have banned the turning out of small stallions on common land in those counties where scrub breeding was out of control, but he is less widely credited with forming the Royal studs, particularly that at Tutbury in Staffordshire. He received numerous Spanish and Barb bred horses from the Duke of Savoy, who was also Prince of Naples; this likely accounts for the "Neapolitan" stallion at Tutbury and for the Royal mares described as Spanish[12]. The Duchess of Savoy was daughter of the King of Spain, from whose studs today's Andalusians and Lippizaners descend.

At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538 Sir Arthur D'Arcy recommended that the horses of Jervaulx Abbey be maintained as part of

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11 J. P. Hore "History of Newmarket and Annals of the turf" 1885 Vol. 1 p. 23, 33

12 C. M. Prior 1935 "The Royal Studs of the 16th and 17th C.." p. 2

the Royal stud for "in no realm should be found the likes to them". He recommended them as "the *tried* breed of the North", which may well have implied selection by racing merit.[13]

The eventual disposal of the Jervaulx mares is unrecorded but may well have been left in D'Arcy's hands. Although Sir Arthur's father got himself executed for treason during the dissolution process, the family continued to move in the highest circles. James D'Arcy was appointed Master of the Royal stud in 1660, and several foundation mares in the GSB are directly connected to the D'Arcy family.

A comprehensive review of the Royal stud in 1576[14] describes the mares as either Jennets or Coursers. The Spanish Jennets were probably comfortable ambling road horses. This type may be most closely represented today by the distinctive gaited South American Paso Fino.

A racehorse training manual from the turn of the 17th century[15] opens with "At such a time as a Horse is matched for a Race, or Course, …"; in common usage courser must have then implied a racehorse.

Several more inventories of the Royal Studs over the next seventy-five years survive but make just one reference to an Arab stallion. Courser and jennet mares were covered with Barb, Jennet, Polish, and Neapolitan stallions, many of these last having Spanish names, so most likely being from Spanish Barb bloodlines of the Dukes of Savoy.[16]

Spanish and Barb horses continued to arrive during the reigns of James I and Charles I, when the Dukes of Buckingham and of Newcastle were Masters of the Horse. Both Royal studs at Tutbury and Malmesbury were probably almost entirely of Spanish and Moroccan heritage by 1620[17,] These bloodlines had been well and truly absorbed into the indigenous stock long before the Darley Arabian happened along, and in fact Prior was able to trace just three foundation mares that were themselves imported.[18] Obviously by then the construction of the English racehorse was already well under way[19].

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13 C. M. Prior 1935 "the Royal Studs of the 16th and 17th C." p.3
14 C. M. Prior 1935 "The Royal Studs ..." pp 11-38
15 Gervase Markham [1568-1637] reprinted. 1933 "The Compleat Jockey" p.1
16 C. M. Prior 1935 "The Royal Studs ...". pp. 11-77
17 C. M. Prior 1935"The Royal studs ..." pp.68 - 79
18 C. M. Prior "The Royal Studs ..." p. 76
19 C. M. Prior "The Royal Studs ..." p. 76

Until at least the late eighteenth century, wheeled transport was painfully slow and impractical; fast road horses and fast hunters were the Mercedes and Range Rovers of the day. Seventeenth century [society] newspapers and a small amount of surviving correspondence indicate what appear to be amateur events run on a "my horse is better than yours" basis, probably with non-professionals riding.

The races proclaimed in various society gazettes during the 1600s were probably intended as gatherings for the local "county set", rather than as race meetings as we understand them. They very often advertised a single contest [although sometimes in heats], and the conditions seem intended to deter [more professional?] competition by outsiders. Horses normally had to be presented for inspection at time of entry, to remain in the vicinity until race day, and were very often to be subject to compulsory purchase at a given price.

The articles of the Newmarket Town Plate, of four-mile heats carrying twelve stone, also make it clear that "no serving man or groom" was eligible to ride.[20] At Lincoln in 1644 race conditions stipulated that entries should have "eaten no bread" - had not been on hard food - and so, presumably, not been formally trained[21]; it implies that some horses *were* being trained.

The speed of better class road horses and hacks is confirmed in an account of the Duke of Tuscany's visit to Newmarket in 1669, which remarks that those watching the races on horseback had little difficulty in keeping up with the racehorses themselves; "the English horses, being accustomed to run, can keep up with the racers without difficulty".[22]

Less formal racing, something between present day flapping meetings and gymkhanas, was popular at annual village fairs and feasts. This sport was irrelevant to the gentry and to The London Gazette; its participants were generally not great letter writers, and there is little written record until Cheny published his Racing Calendar in the 1730s. Race meetings had been totally banned, as being a likely focus for political unrest, during the Commonwealth, but by 1740 an Act was thought necessary "to restrain and prevent the excessive increase of horse races"[23]. That plan is well worth revisiting today!

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20 J. P. Hore "History of Newmarket and Annals of the Turf" 1885 [Vol 2] p.248

21 J. P. Hore {Vol 3] p.153, 154

22 William Day 1890 "The horse, how to breed and rear him" p87

23 C. M. Prior 1926"History of the Racing Calendear nd the Stud Book" p. 107, p. 112

King James I was first attracted to Newmarket by hawking and coursing, but after the Restoration of Charles II the town became the social centre of racing. Macauley called Newmarket in 1698 "the gayest and most luxurious spot in the island", and a dozen matches over between four and eight miles were arranged that spring. As most of them were made at nine stone or less, they were not intended to be ridden by owners.[24]

Some traditionalists must have disapproved of this populist progression, for "In order to encourage the breeding of Strong and Useful horses", Newmarket wrote a race in 1699 to carry fourteen stone and with the Town Plate's stipulation as to riders. King's Plates continued to promote the seventeenth century ideal of long races at twelve stone right up to 1887[25].

Racing – and bookmaking - gradually became more professional, and from the mid-1700s the social and populist branches of the sport grew together under generally accepted rules, although "Newmarket Rules" would not be universally accepted until the late 1800s. Weights, distances and the number of races run in heats, all reduced at the same time as the number of *full time* racehorses and of professional trainers and riders increased.

Throughout this crossover from local "win-tie-and-wrangle" rules at local feasts to a more formalised sport, "give and take" or "weight for inches" races remained the norm. So obviously many racehorses must have resembled the old galloway model until at least the late 1700s. Fourteen hands animals carried 9 stone, adjusted by 14 ounces for every 1/8 of an inch [or seven pounds per inch] over or under that standard. The allowance between 14 and 15 hands was reduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century and these races were abandoned around 1805.[26] ·

In the 1760s the famous Gimcrack, who once defeated Time by completing 22 1/2 miles within the hour [in France], won all over the country, from Wells in the far west, through Wisbech in the Fens, to Carlisle in the north; he was invariably handicapped within a smidgin of 14 hands and ¼ inch high. There was a universal standardised measuring slab upon which horses had to be officially measured.[27]

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24 J. P. Hore "History of Newmarket and Annals of the Turf" 1885 Vol 3 p. 214
25 C. M. Prior 1926 History of the Racing Calendar ..." p. 112
26 C. M. Prior 1926 "History of the Racing Calendar ..." p.98
27 C. M. Prior 1926 History of the Racing Calendar ..." p. 99

There is a clear distinction made between galloways and common ponies in the racing records that John Slusar has painstakingly unearthed from a variety of often obscure sources.[28] The horses recorded in the early GSB records as galloways may demonstrate a reverse snobbery on the part of traditional breeders content to stand upon their families' old bloodlines when *nouveaux riches* breeders flaunted a smart – real or imagined - Eastern connection.

The Bald Galloway, by St Victor's Barb, is only the galloway to have both maintained his ethnicity and made a real impact upon the stud book; his 2nd and 3rd dams were simply described as Royal mares, so were likely naturalised Spanish Barbs. As Eclipse's maternal grandsire and Matchem's sire Cade were both out of Bald Galloway mares, it might be remembered that without him the Darley and Godolphin sire line story would look very different.

Horses were commonly named for their breeder, for their place of origin, or for colour or markings. In this case "Bald" obviously described a big white face, but "Galloway" may perhaps have identified him as of original Scottish stock: a genuine MacIntosh as it were.

Mixbury, by the Curwen Bay Barb, is recorded in vol. 1 of the GSB as "…. a very highly formed Galloway …. only 13 hands 2 inches high, and yet there were not more than two horses of his time that could beat him". This tiny horse's 3rd dam was eventually identified as by an Arabian, but no such exotic claim is made for *her* dam. As direct descent through her daughters ultimately produced Cyllene, grandsire of Phalaris, that unnamed mare shares the credit for both Northern Dancer and Mr. Prospector.

At Newmarket in 1754 Mr. Corker's galloway, a 13:3 hands bay mare, was matched "to go 300 miles, led, ridden, or driven, in three days". She did so, ridden by a single 5 stone boy, with several hours to spare. Most interestingly, "she did not *gallop* above six miles in the match", likely getting over the ground fairly rapidly, but also tirelessly, in some sort of "singlefoot" or running walk.[29]

Lady Wentworth appears to have been a quite rabid Arabista; her books, including her "Thoroughbred Racing Stock", insist that the Arab is entirely responsible for the foundation of the Thoroughbred. As far as

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28 John Slusar "Racecourses: here today and gone tomorrow" 4 vols

29 J. Rice "History of the British Turf" 1879 p. 152

she was concerned native stock played no constructive role in the development of the Thoroughbred, and she is also dismissive of the obvious and well documented influence of Barbs upon the GSB. In her appraisal of the Royal Stud inventory of 1576 she gives a typically flexible interpretation of that record.[30]

William Day[31], on the contrary, is extremely scornful of Arabs and their influence. Writing in the late nineteenth century, his appraisal of the celebrated close descendants of both Darley Arabian and Byerley Turk was scathing: "Flying Childers might win now a £30 Plate, winner to be sold for £40; High Flyer and Eclipse might pull through in a £50 Plate, winner to be sold for £200".

In any event, as early as 1782 even *Arab-sired* runners were allowed 3lbs in a race at Newmarket. Later the Goodwood Cup featured an allowance of 18 pounds to Anglo-Arabs and a further 18 pounds to pure-bred Arabians; there were no takers, even though horses bred overseas would also have been allowed a further stone![32]

High class horses had been imported and exported as Royal gifts for centuries. Many were Spanish Barbs. The influence of a few named imports around the turn of the eighteenth century has been grossly exaggerated. Multiculturalism apart, the resident racehorse population is entitled to be viewed as British long before the Darley and Godolphin Arabians and the Byerley Turk wandered onto the scene.

The long-term survival – and consequent fame - of a sire line is largely a matter of luck, "Crisp's horse, of Ufford" to whom all Suffolks trace in tail male, being a case in point. Squirt, the sire of Eclipse's generally accepted sire Marske, was reprieved from the kennels at the last moment: had his sentence not been commuted then none of the sire lines back through Eclipse to the Darley Arabian would exist!

There are no pedigrees whatsoever and very questionable histories attached to all three "fathers of the Thoroughbred"; the Godolphin was widely regarded as a Barb during his lifetime.[33] That they happen to account for all male lines today is by pure chance. Any or all of them may very well have been less apt to produce good racehorses than were the best of the local mares that visited them.

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30 Lady Wentworth 1945 "The Authentic Arabian Horse" p. 54 compare Prior "Royal Studs"

31 William Day 1890 "The Horse, How to Breed and Rear Him" pp 80-87

32 C. M. Prior 1926"History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book" p.124

33 C. M. Prior 1935 "History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book". p. 13

A stud advertisement for Marske described him as "thought to be the highest *English-bred* horse in the Kingdom".[34] There was some serious speculation that Eclipse was in fact by Shakespeare; however, as that horse was also a great grandson of the Darley Arabian it merely highlights the problem of poor record keeping without undermining the "founding fathers" theory. [35]

The inaccuracies now proven by genetic research in some female lines hardly inspire confidence in the accuracy of male lines – which can neither be proven nor disproven. In most cases a foal can reasonably be attributed to one specific mare over a period of months at least, however "it's a wise man who knows his own father"!

Recorded pedigrees become generally available with the publication of the General Stud Book around the turn of the nineteenth century. But the introduction to Part IV of the GSB openly accepts that market forces had sometimes transformed early pedigrees from the mundane to the exotic,[36] and many were very likely enhanced and embroidered. Some were constructed retrospectively to flesh out the early volumes. Others may have been subject to the vagaries of memory. Horses often changed names when they changed owner and may appear in the GSB under a variety of aliases, but assumptions of these dual identities may not always be accurate.

Most of these early Easterners are specifically identified as Barbs or Turks by the GSB. Lady Wentworth airily dismisses all such descriptions as misnomers for Arabs, yet the fact that those few imported Arabs which did race proved to be very moderate [37] makes it highly improbable that any specifically Arab influence could improve our racehorses overnight.

Aleppo seems to have been a main embarkation point for horses, which may account for "Turks" being so well represented in early pedigrees. This blanket description likely included animals from Eastern Europe and as far away as the Caspian Sea. Both the Belgrade and Lister Turks are supposed to have been captured in battle. The Byerley Turk was less likely a trophy of war, but he did later see service at the Battle of the Boyne.

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34 C. M. Prior 1926"History of Racing Calendar and Stud Book" p. 150

35 Lawrence "History and Delineation of the horse"

36 Mackay-Smith "Speed and the Thoroughbred" p.127

37 C. M. Prior 1926 "History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book" p. 244

Despite being referred to now as Arabian, the Godolphin was at the time widely regarded as a Barb[38]. There were several references to the plainness of his head. The several well-known portraits of both Gimcrack and Eclipse invariably show their patently straight-fronted Barb heads rather than the concave Arabian model.

Darcy's Yellow Turk, who got a quite successful sire in Spanker, may have been an import named for the characteristic shimmering golden coat of Turkmenistan's Akhal-Teke. Today this breed[39] much more closely resembles our idea of a racehorse than does the Arab.

However, the Yellow Turk may have simply been a son or even a grandson of D'Arcy's White Turk – who was supposedly the same horse as Place's White Turk. If so, he was imported from Constantinople for Oliver Cromwell in 1657, and was later spirited away to Yorkshire by the Lord Protector's stud groom Rowland Place after his master's death in 1658[40].

The Thoroughbred today represents the culmination – some might say consequence - of several hundred years at the whim of the English aristocracy, about two hundred more or less driven by genuine competition, and now followed by several decades at the mercy of venture capitalists. As a result, the population is very closely related "in human terms", although, as Dr. Hill and her colleagues have shown, its original roots are surprisingly far flung.

The athletic improvement and physical standardisation of racehorses was the natural result of selection for the task in hand. Races changed from four-mile multiple heats to shorter sudden death contests, and the pattern of horse selected to run in them changed too. The more professionals took over both training and riding, the better informed that selection became. The expansion of formal racing inevitably produced a professional racehorse that was faster than the part time road horses that preceded him.

The Spanish heritage of the English running horse in the 1600s is probably best demonstrated by New World populations like the Paso Fino. A few groups of "Spanish type" mustangs have remained geographically isolated, as have some very small island populations off the East coast of America.

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38 William Youatt "The Horse" 1860 p. 19 p.73

39 Judith Dutson "Storey's Illustrated Guide to 96 Horse Breeds" 2005 p. 51

40 C. M. Prior 1935 "The Royal Studs ..." pp 79-82

Both the Pryor Mountain mustangs and the Shackleford Banker ponies, as well as the Peruvian Paso Fino horse, have been shown by Dr. Gus Cothran to share ancient Iberian heritage with little evidence of adulteration by other breeds. The Banker ponies may directly descend from Spanish imports to their isolated home in the 1520s.

In the early twentieth century, a small population of wild horses was identified in the wilds of Portugal by Dr. Ruy D'Andrade as survivors of a very ancient type, historically referred to as "zebros", probably due to the occurrence of primitive markings. Although the wild band was extinguished, he did manage to collect a group of semi-domesticated horses from the area all, showing the primitive dun colour and striping of the wild troop, and these he preserved under the name Sorraia.

It seems likely that theSorraias' ancestors were included in the earliest exports to the New World: the "coyote dun", sometimes with theSorraia markings, is quite common in relatively unadulterated groups like the Sulphur Springs and Pryor Mountain bands. The colour has traditionally been taken as sure indication of extreme stamina – it was often said that "they die before they get tired".

These "old" colours were probably not uncommon among our early racehorses. Lord Bristol's racing diaries for 1711 record his own Hervey Dun as well as Lord Granby's Yellow Jack. Master-of-the-Horse Tregonwell Frampton's 1713 letter to the Duke of Devonshire mentions both Dunhasty and Peterbrow Dun. [41]

Queen Anne's Mustard is described in the 1713 field for the Royal Gold Cup at York as "nutmeg grey" and may have been the blue dun or "grullo" frequently seen in Spanish type mustangs.

Most so-called Spanish mustangs today are small and wiry. Relatively unadulterated by later crossing, they remain well within in the 13:2 to 14:2 hands range of Gimcrack and Mixbury. The Galiceno of Mexico and the South-Western states can be as small as 13 hands. It likely represents the type so admired by cowboy historian Frank Dobie, and three hundred years ago it would have been equally suited to long road trips and to "Give and Take" races. The Spanish mustang head invariably

[41] C. M. Prior "The Royal Studs of the 16th and 17th C." pp118,193, 195

demonstrates the straight or slightly convex profile of Eclipse and Gimcrack, which also seen in mounted portraits by Van Dyck and Velasquez, rather than the characteristic dished Arabian face.

All in all, it seems most likely that the Thoroughbred today would have emerged equally well with or without the Darley, Godolphin, or Byerley stallions. The Spanish and Barb blood absorbed over very many years, and the ever more competitive racing as highlighted by William Day, were far more relevant to the breed's success.