

## Memories Live On

As readers of this column will probably have appreciated by now, one of my main interests, after the Saddlebred itself, is the role of horses in the development of man and the memorials we give them (or don't) when they leave behind their bondage to humans and go to the freedom of the skies.

I have visited many memorials and markers of horses, some great, some famous, some just well loved family members. It has been remarked that perhaps I am being morbid, but I always find it very moving in our increasingly urban and cynical Western society, to see how these wonderful creatures have been treasured by their owners or honored by a community.

Some horses who were lucky enough to belong to the more wealthy, have statues of themselves either above their burial site or in some prominent equestrian facility such as the Kentucky Horse Park or race courses. Others are marked by simple plaques and tended by caring people.

An old but treasured war horse called Warrior, was presented to the British town of Southampton at the end of the World War I, where he lived in happy and indulged retirement. On his death he was buried with full headstone on the land where he had grazed. In later years that land was purchased by the town council and turned into a municipal golf course. But there, in a little chained off plot next to the first hole and near the club house, is the headstone surrounded by shrubs and flowers.

Billy, a grey police horse, became a British icon at the 1923 Football World Cup when he helped control hysterical crowds. Now 30 years later with the refurbishment of the London stadium, the newly erected White Horse Bridge commemorates his service and was named after Billy upon the votes of hundreds of thousands of the general public.

Miraculously, some who were interred on former equestrian properties have remained undisturbed despite the acquisition of the land for modern commercial purposes. For example, the final resting place of Oklahoma Peavine, a Saddlebred, has been preserved by town developers. Buried at home on Northwinds Farm, Lansing, Mich., in 1950, this stallion was left undisturbed when his grave marker

(placed by the ASHA in 1965) was found by town developers who were constructing the East Oak Square shopping center. The site is marked by a landscaped area in front of the mall and the memorial slab is still there.

Some retain their original peaceful setting, such as Greyhound, the legendary Grey Ghost of trotting. When he died at age 33 in 1965, he was interred at his owner's home of Red Gate Farm, St.



This life-sized bronze of Supreme Sultan was sculpted by Pat Crane, and stands at the entrance to the American Saddlebred Museum in the Kentucky Horse Park.

Charles, III. The cemetery there contains other champion performers each with their name and facial likeness preserved on brass plaques. Amidst its ancient trees, the whole cemetery is overseen by a marble and bronze angel on horseback dedicated to Greyhound.

Another great pacer, Adios, is buried under his favorite apple tree near the paddock that had been his home for 17 years, marked by a boulder and bronze plaque. Since his owner's death, Meadow Lands Farm near Washington, Penn., is quiet, but visitors are still welcome to visit Adios. The grave of the legendary pacer Dan Patch was never publicized to protect his remains from trophy-hunting fans! But the derelict farm is still there and the Dan Patch Highway runs nearby. In addition, the story of Dan Patch was recorded on celluloid in a major feature movie.

And celebrated properties such as Castleton Farm retain their animal cemeteries intact, and many memorials exist for fine horses in the Kentucky Horse Park, including, of course, the sensational Supreme Sultan in his prestigious location near the entrance of the Park and right in front of the ASHA building.

Thoroughbred racehorses also receive

their dues. The British favorite of all time, Red Rum, a three-time Grand National winner, is buried at the finishing post at Aintree, the racecourse that made him legendary. There is also a statue of him.

Eclipse of the 13 pound heart fame and most legendary of them all, was not buried, but his skeleton is preserved at the Jockey Club Racing Museum in Newmarket, England, where outside in the main street stands the statue of Hyperion, another great racing sire. Secretariat rests at Claiborne Farm, Paris, Ky. Originally the first Kentucky Derby winner, Aristides, was buried at Oaklands Stud, St Louis, Mo., which was later turned into the St Louis Fairgrounds. Aristides is honored by a statue at Churchill Downs, but what has happened to the horse himself? Do you know?

Some horses are commemorated with their owners, such as Soapsuds and Will Rogers whose joint statue is in front of the Will Rogers Memorial complex in Ft. Worth, with replicas to be found in several locations in Texas and Oklahoma. Will Rogers, the famous entertainer and trick roper once wrote in the *New York Times*, "A man that don't love a horse, there is something the matter with him. And if a man has no sympathy for the man that loves horses then there is something worse the matter with him." The statue of Soapsuds and Rogers plays a major role in the life of Texas Tech University being routinely "dressed" in red crepe before the big game in a ceremony where the students circle the statue singing traditional songs. Soapsuds and Rogers have also been wrapped in black crepe to mourn national tragedies such as the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster and the world-changing horror of 9/11.

But this column is not intended to be a list of the burial and memorial sites of great horses — it would take much more space than this! — but forms the basis of a request to all *Saddle & Bridle* readers and their friends and families.

Based here in England, it is not a possibility for me to visit all the sites I would like to in the USA or the rest of the world. So if you know of, or come across, any memorials to horses of any breed or achievement, I would be so grateful if you could remember to take a photograph and a few details and send them to me? I am building an archive of horses and their deeds and how they are commemorated but need some help from fellow equestrian enthusiasts.

Please email me at: [cheryl@americansaddlebreds.co.uk](mailto:cheryl@americansaddlebreds.co.uk). Thank you — and I wish you all a happy and trouble-free 2008.

PHOTO BY JANE A. GREEN