

**Charlie Duckworth**  
**Alex Scott Travel Scholarship Award Winner 2013**

Since winning the Alex Scott Assistant Trainers Scholarship I have moved to Rosehill Racecourse in Sydney, Australia. Thanks to winning the scholarship Mr Waller (I know if he reads this he will not enjoy be referred to as Mr Waller instead of Chris) has been very kind to me and I have learnt a great deal which I can apply to how I think I would like to train in the UK one day. He has taken me under his wing and has shown me that there is a lot more to running a stable than just staff management and the training and placing of horses. The whole business side of things has been a bit of an eye opener as most assistants I know of at home are horseman rather than business men. Mr Waller is both. His work ethic and relentless effort to stay at the top of his section within the racing industry, reminds me of only one other person I know and that is John Ferguson. So it is no surprise that those two are at the top of their two given areas within the industry. I was very lucky and very privileged to have been chosen to take Zoustar over to England for his Royal Ascot bid even if it didn't go as planned. However as Rupert Arnold said to me after the news had broken that Zoustar had a hole in his suspensory ligament, 'I expect it has given you a closer insight to the tribulations of being a trainer. Most trainers say one of the worst parts of the job is telling owners their horse is injured.' Well it certainly did that, having to ring Mr Waller with the news was not a call I was looking forward to but he certainly made it a lot easier with his phenomenal demeanour. The treatment of owners has been a big area which I would improve since I have been working here. After all the hardest part of the job can be keeping owners happy. The constant contact Mr Waller has with his owners is simply amazing they are permanently receiving updates, at a bare minimum they will get a weekly update but if they are racing then they will receive one before they run with the instructions for the jockey and how he thinks the horse will run and then afterwards they will have his post race analysis as well as what the jockey thought. They usually receive these minutes after each race as Mr Waller spends most of his time in the pressroom when he goes to the races. The owners are not the only ones who are permanently in the loop, he also goes into the steward's room at the start of each race meeting and tells them how each horse will run and their instructions and if he wants to change their tactics then he will explain why he is changing them. This means that there can be no accusations of team tactics as we often have multiple runners in races and it also stops him being called into the steward's room later in the afternoon. Another part of this hugely successful operation is the incredible team he has around him. I think it would be wrong of me not to mention his racing manager Liam Prior who is by his side throughout each every day and aids him wherever possible. He has also helped me hugely by getting my head around some very important areas in Australian racing such as the handicapping system which is totally different to ours. On the training front things are very different as they train on flat tracks and a lot firmer surfaces and are at the racecourse that they could be running at later that day. All gallops are timed and you are told what times to do them in so the trainer has a gauge of how exactly how hard the horses are working. I know Jeremy Gask times his gallops at home but I think it would be very difficult due to adding so many factors such as gradient and bends but it was very interesting to see how to work your horses in such a controlled environment. I have worked with some top horses such as multiple group 1 winners Zoustar, Boban, Sacred Falls, and Red Tracer. My responsibilities at the racecourse have been as follows; I would start work at 3:45am and then take the temperatures of the 20 horses in my particular barn, there are 132 horses in training at any one time with Mr Waller in his Sydney stable. I would then ride 7 horses, all different ages and stages. One thing I would like to say quickly is how much they put an emphasis on the starting stalls even the yearling's jump out of them on a regular basis. I would then help the vet until 10:00am and then head straight up to the office to learn anything and everything I can off Mr Waller. Before finally going to the races to saddle with the boss, the highlight obviously being saddling the first 4 home in the world's richest mile turf race The Star Doncaster Mile.



The 3 white bridles are from left to right 1st to 3rd Sacred Falls, Royal Descent, and Weary (formerly known as Sir Patrick Moore).

I also went to Karaka Yearling sales in New Zealand as well as the Inglis yearling sales in Sydney to learn exactly what the boss looks for in a horse which has given me a greater understanding of the entire circle of selecting and training a racehorse. Obviously this wasn't taught to me by Chris but by his bloodstock agent Guy Mulcaster as well as Mick Flanagan who helps mostly with the European horses. Guy was incredibly patient with me as I have never looked at horses at sales before which was a huge gap on my CV and he has taught me exactly what to look for and what should be crossed straight out of the book. We would look at every single Yearling in each sale and make a short list and then that would be shown to Mr Waller and then checked by our veterinarian Dr Tim Roberts. My time over in England with Zoustar was fantastic as it gave me a chance to see English racing as a foreign raider and obviously the boss was telling me what to do with him each day, I was 100 percent responsible for his livelihood I know this probably makes me sound like I did a terrible job but it really was a fantastic experience and a real confidence booster in my own ability. I would also



like to take this opportunity to thank **Sheikh Fahad** Al Thani and David Redvers for being so supportive of me from the moment I landed with the horse until I had to sadly fly back to work empty handed. You could not put a price on the experiences I have had over the last six months it has been simply fantastic and without this scholarship I would have had a very different 2014 for me. As you can probably tell I could go and on as I have been doing as much of everything as I physically can but I will have to cut this short. I will be staying in Australia for at least another year as I believe it would be stupid to turn some of these opportunities down and also I am only 25 so I still had a lot to learn. As Ralph Beckett told me, don't rush into training as even when you think you are ready there is still a lot to learn and once you start you can't stop. Prime examples are the likes of Clive Britain, the late Sir Henry Cecil. In a dream world I would like to set up training over here, (preferably in partnership as it splits costs and risks and I think you would get more satisfaction from training

with another person) however this would be primarily for financial purposes before saving up enough money to move home and set up on my own.



Rosehill Gardens with the various tracks on offer every morning for fast and slow work.



Chris and his wife Stephanie with his first Group 1 winner Triple Honour