

'We've never had a horse over jumps like Lostintranslation'

ROSS DOYLE

Tom Peacock
on the story
behind the
leading King
George hope



AS MUCH as Ross Doyle would be entitled to laud his own contribution in the discovery of jumping's latest chosen one, he is adamant that the part played by another is not undersold.

Although far more recognisable as a significant individual in the world of the Flat, where his family is inextricably linked with the Richard Hannon operation, the agent has a sideline in part-owning a small handful of National Hunt prospects each year.

Back at the Tattersalls Ireland Derby Sale in 2015, he alighted upon a three-year-old son of Flemensfirth who would come to be known as Lostintranslation. Doyle sent him to Willie Codd, the accomplished young point-to-point trainer responsible for

Ross Doyle: first came across the star chaser in 2015



nurturing the likes of classy hurdler-chaser Tranquil Sea.

"We bought him originally as a store for €38,000 from Derrygrath, who are very good producers," Doyle explains. "He was a nice, good-looking, good-moving horse, quite raw, and Willie did a fantastic job."

"He ran him in a point-to-point and finished fourth. Willie was disappointed to be beaten ten lengths - his horses weren't firing at the time - but he said, 'He's a nice horse, he jumps great and he gallops.'"

The purpose of raising Irish pointers is generally to trade, and opportunity knocked in the shape of two men from the world of finance; Paul Taylor, a fund manager, and Richard O'Dwyer, a restructuring adviser.

"I was introduced to Paul and Richard through Flat trainer Jim Boyle," says Doyle. "They'd been owners with him for a long time on the Flat. Richard said, 'Have you seen a nice jumping horse that'll suit us and give us a bit of fun, maybe go to Saturday races?'"

"So I rang Willie and said, 'Is there anything we can stand over there, a nice horse who can do a job?' And he said Lostintranslation would do a job for somebody. I can't remember if Willie ever told me how good he thought he was, but he said he was a horse who would give lots of fun."

"We agreed a figure, there were a few little things on the vetting and most people would have said they'd leave him, but Jim, who is a vet by trade, looked at the report and advised the lads to take him. The rest is history."

A promising start

Lostintranslation demonstrated ability over hurdles but it was when he went novice chasing that he truly found his metier, winning the Dipper and Grade 1 Mildmay and losing out only to born-again two-miler Defi Du Seuil in the JLT at Cheltenham.

By adding determination to

his heady mix of precise jumping and controlled aggression in the Betfair Chase, the seven-year-old could be destined for greatness, not to mention a £1 million Triple Crown bonus, if he can overhaul Cyrname and Clan Des Obeaux et al in the Ladbrokes King George VI Chase and then crack the Gold Cup.

"The Tizzards and their team have managed him fantastically well and are a great family to deal with," says Doyle. "Then you add Robbie Power to the equation, who is a great fellow and a great rider."

"We've never had a horse like him over jumps before."

There is a poignancy to the story, as the owners revealed movingly in the aftermath of the Betfair Chase. For although a racehorse cannot in any tangible way provide succour for human tragedy, this one does in some part represent the joy of memories and experiences shared.

Doyle explains: "They've had a bit of luck with the horse but the whole thing is tinged with sadness - poor old Willie Codd passed away two years ago this January, he's unfortunately not around to see the fruits of his labour, and Paul very sadly lost his son Charlie, hence he was very emotional at Haydock."

"With Charlie and Willie in the background, Paul and Richard are very aware of that connection. It's probably very nice but very emotional every time the horse runs for those guys, with the others who aren't here to see him."

A family history

Doyle, whose father Peter has purchased a slew of Classic winners, has National Hunt in his blood through his late grandfather Jack, one of the most celebrated bloodstock agents of all with a connection to several chasing icons.

"He bought Mill House out of a field, and Silver Buck as a store, and Peter trained a few

pointers in the early days, so it's back there in the generations," he smiles.

"About 14 years ago I'd said to Peter that I wouldn't mind buying a few stores, and I got introduced to Willie by accident one day. I went to see a horse in Wexford for an amateur to ride, and I think it was John Berry who said it wasn't for me, but that Willie Codd down the road had one."

"The first thing I said to Peter when I spoke to him later was 'this fella's horse looks unbelievable and he seems a very straight talker.'"

"We bought Equal Status, who ended up at Punchestown running in a banks race and then we bought Inspector Traci for friends at the store sales and sent him to Willie. He won his point well and Willie sold him for a nice profit for us."

Codd, the brother of master amateur rider Jamie, died at the age of only 43 to many heartfelt tributes. And Doyle pays an elegant contribution to his talent.

"He had some very good horses and I think his family would be very proud of what he achieved in a short time," he says. "It's a very tough business for those lads. They're under pressure all the time and the way it's gone now, there's so much expectation to get those young horses out early."

"Willie was a great carer of horses, like a lot of those good guys are, and we had a very good relationship with him."

"We used to speak quite a bit, just about things and not

just horses, but one of the things he struggled to get his head around was how competitive the points had got, how much he would want to push them before they ran. "He wanted another day for people, which makes sense for the whole wheel to come back."



Lostintranslation has provided a welcome boost for his connections

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