

ragh. Liam looked like he was doing very well, so that started a 10-year relationship with Liam.

"Anyway, the filly won first time out and got disqualified! But I got her sold out to Canada off that. Her name was That's A Point, she was by Sharpen Up. Liam's secretary named her - very clever.

"The next year, Pat [Clarke] said, 'you better buy me another one'. So, I bought another one, same sort of price, and she won first time out at Leopardstown by eight lengths, at 50/1 or something, and she was sold to Italy straight away.

"Anyway, that's what started everything and I started buying yearlings with Liam [Browne]. We had a great time; we bought a classic winner in our second year, Dara Monarch, for five grand. It was minimum bid at the [Tattersalls] Houghton Sale, which was considered to be the best sale at the time.

"We won both of the Guineas trials that year - they were on at Fairyhouse because the Phoenix Park was being done up. A £1,500 filly won the girls' race, and Dara Monarch won the boys' race."

Throughout my conversation with Peter and Anna, I'm amazed by their memory for horses, their prices, sires and underbidders, especially considering the number of horses they have seen and bought through the years. The next horse mentioned is no different, but I imagine success commits detail to memory.

"Another good horse for Liam [Browne] was Carlingford Castle, who was second in an English Derby," Peter relays. "We bought him as a store for £7,800; Timmy Hyde was underbidder on him."

Anna continues: "A famous judge owned him, Judge [Frank] Roe. When the horse went to run in the Derby, they only had woollen colours, and Liam wanted the judge to buy silks for the Derby. He wouldn't, so poor Mick Kinane had to ride in the most famous races in the world, in a woollen jumper, probably on a hot day."

It could have all been so different

Peter and Anna have stood the test of time, through various bloodstock trends, changing clients and economic turmoil. I wonder, was there ever a time in the early days of the business that they considered an easier life?

"There was one time we were really going to buy a pub, weren't we?" Peter says, and, while I mourn the best pub that never was, Anna continues: "Actually, whatever about the sales business, but the private sales are what you depended on during the year to keep things ticking over, and during one of the recessions, it was really difficult."

"Way, way back," Peter adds, before Anna explains: "We were really going through a tough time financially, just trying to hang in there, and then things just and a deal must have been done, and it started growing from there."

A stint in bloodstock insurance, upon a suggestion by Sally Carey, offered a lifeline, but the real turning point was the beginning of one of the most fruitful associations in racing. "I suppose the best thing that ever happened to us was when Peter's father encouraged him to get in touch with Richard Hannon at the sales in Deauville," Anna says. "That was sort of the turning point, probably in establishing the agency as viable."

"Jack told me to go meet him in Deauville," Peter recalls. "I met him coming out of the races with his wife Jo, Mick Channon and Gill [Channon]. I said, 'My father said to say hello to you.' 'Yes, you've done that,' he said.

"I said 'Are you going over to the sales?', he says 'yes, to buy drink, not horses'. So, he went over to the sales, straight to the bar, and I bought a few drinks. And the next thing, I said, 'Do you want to see a horse?' 'No', he said.

"Anyway, I went out, came back in again, he bought another round, and I said, 'I'm going out again to look at a horse'. And he says 'what is it?'; I said, 'some horse I saw yesterday, that I was going to get you to look at'.

"Where is it?' 'Just outside here.' 'For f*ck's sake,' he says, and we go out.

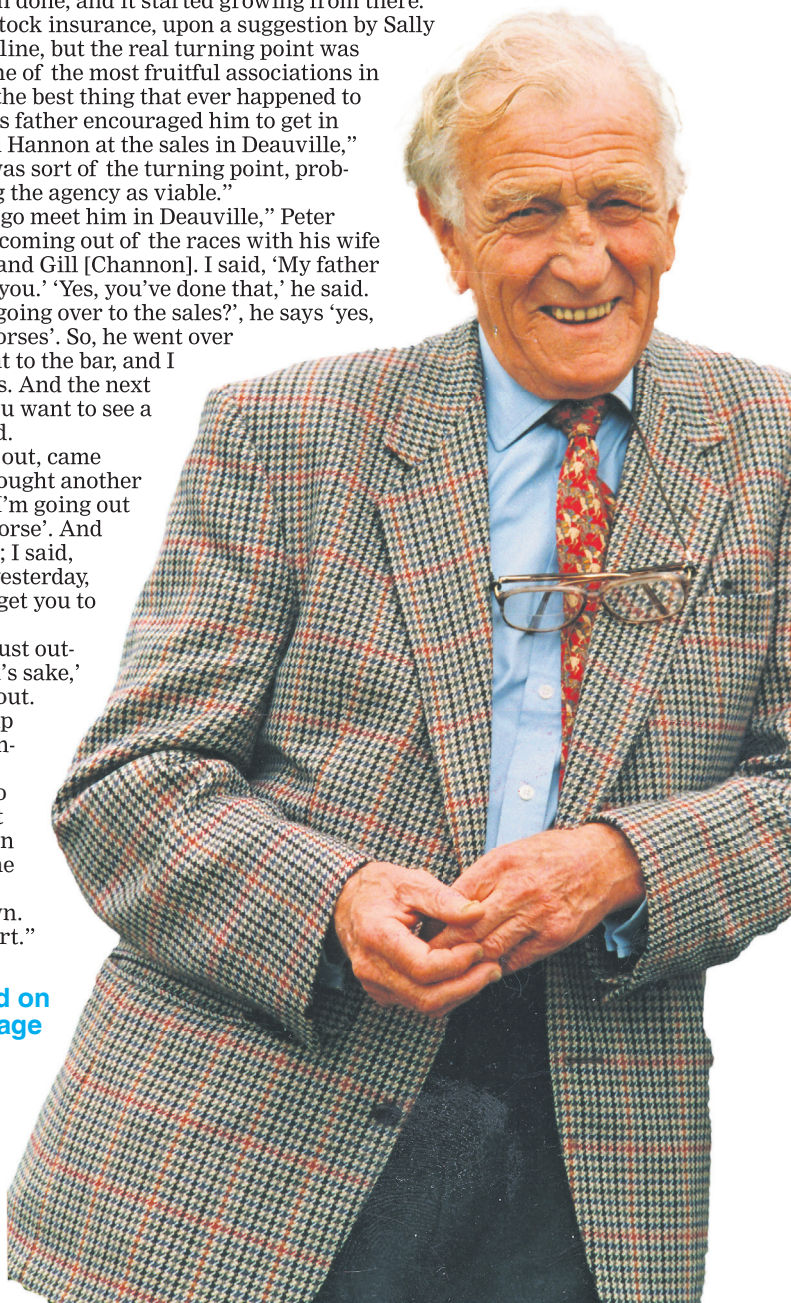
"Didn't we end up buying two? And underbidder on about 25 [laughs]. The two we bought; one cost eight grand and won a listed race, and the other one cost nine grand, it broke down. Well, that was a start."

Continued on
next page

"Listen" - Peter Doyle on the greatest lesson he learned from his father, the legendary



"Richard had owners that wanted results. They weren't into breeding or standing stallions" - Peter Doyle on buying for Richard Hannon \ Caroline Norris



"The extraordinary became the ordinary"

TDN, 21 November 2024



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