

= Ladas ( horse ) =

Ladas ( 1891 ? 1914 ) was a British Thoroughbred racehorse and sire . His career attracted an unusual amount of attention as his owner , Lord Rosebery , became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the height of his success .

In a career that lasted from 1893 to 1894 , Ladas ran eleven times and won seven races . He was the leading British two @-@ year @-@ old of 1893 , being unbeaten in four starts including the Champagne Stakes and the Middle Park Stakes . In the following year , he won the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket and the Derby at Epsom to complete the first two legs of the English Triple Crown . He was beaten by the four @-@ year @-@ old colt Isinglass in his next two starts and failed in his bid for the Triple Crown when beaten in the St Leger at Doncaster .

Ladas was retired to stud at the end of the season , and sired the winners of several important races . He died in 1914 .

= = Background = =

Ladas was a bay horse of almost faultless conformation , standing just under 16 hands high . He was bred at the Crafon Stud in Buckinghamshire by his owner , Lord Rosebery , a prominent Liberal statesman who became Prime Minister in 1894 . He was trained by Mathew Dawson at Newmarket , Suffolk . Dawson , who was over seventy at the time , had " retired " from large @-@ scale training in 1885 , but continued to handle a small number of horses at his Melton House Stable . Ladas was ridden in his Classic wins by Jack Watts .

Ladas 's sire , named Hampton , was a successful racehorse , especially over long distances , who won both the Goodwood Cup and the Doncaster Cup . Hampton was the Champion sire in 1887 and sired , in addition to Ladas , the Derby winners Merry Hampton and Ayrshire , as well as Bay Ronald , the sire of Bayardo . Illuminata , the dam of Ladas , also produced a filly called Gas , the dam of the Derby winner Cicero , and Chelandry , who won the 1000 Guineas and herself produced the 2000 Guineas winner Neil Gow .

The name Ladas , derived from that of Alexander the Great 's messenger , had previously been used by Lord Rosebery 's father for a horse who ran unplaced in the 1869 Derby . Rosebery , then an under @-@ graduate at Oxford University , had tipped the horse to his friends as a likely winner and was reportedly mortified by the result . By way of an apology , Rosebery told his friends that if he ever had a horse with a " prime chance " of winning the Derby , he would name him " Ladas " so that they could all " take the tip and back him . " It was the memory of this incident which reportedly persuaded Rosebery to abandon his original plan to name the colt " Hampton Wick " .

The pronunciation of the name was a point of disagreement between owner and trainer : Rosebery called the colt " Lar @-@ dar " or " Lah @-@ dah " , while Dawson insisted on " Lay @-@ das " or " Ley @-@ das " .

= = Racing career = =

= = = 1893 : two @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

Until 1946 , racehorses in England were allowed to race without an official name and the colt who would become Ladas was still unnamed when he made a successful debut on 31 May in the Woodcote Stakes at the Epsom Derby meeting . He showed impressive acceleration to easily beat the filly Mecca and was identified as " a colt full of promise " by one correspondent . He was then sent to Royal Ascot where he started 6 / 4 ( 1 @-@ 5 / 1 ) favourite for the Coventry Stakes on 13 June . He led from the start on this occasion and shook off the opposition in the closing stages to win by one and a half lengths from a colt named Bullingdon .

" The Illuminata colt " , as he was still known , was then given a break of three months before returning in the Champagne Stakes at Doncaster in September , in which a horse named

Sempronius was his only rival . " The Illuminata colt " led from the start , and when Sempronius moved up to challenge him , he quickened away to win easily . After his win at Doncaster , he was officially named Ladas and was then sent to Newmarket for the Middle Park Plate , the most important two @-@ year @-@ old race of the season . He started at odds of 1 / 5 ( 0 @.@ 2 / 1 ) and was never in any danger , leading at half way and winning the race by two lengths from a filly named Jocasta , with Sempronius two lengths further back in third .

Ladas ended the season unbeaten in four races and was the winter favourite for the following year ? s Derby at 5 / 2 ( 2 @.@ 5 / 1 ) with the Dewhurst Stakes winner Matchbox , from the stable of John Porter , being seen as his biggest potential rival .

== = 1894 : three @-@ year @-@ old season == =

== = = 2000 Guineas == = =

Ladas progressed well over the winter , despite a reported bout of coughing in early March , and was sent straight for the 2000 Guineas for his first appearance of 1894 . On 9 May he started at odds of 5 / 6 ( 0 @.@ 83 / 1 ) in a field of eight with Matchbox the second choice on 9 / 2 ( 4 @.@ 5 / 1 ) . Ladas raced towards the rear in the early stages before moving into third place behind Matchbox and St Florian just after half way . Two furlongs from the finish , Watts ( riding on his thirty @-@ third birthday ) moved him up to challenge for the lead and , as predicted , the race developed into a contest between Ladas and Matchbox . Matchbox " came again " after being overtaken and the colts raced together for a few strides before Ladas pulled away to win by one and a half lengths . Immediately after the race , bookmakers offered Ladas at odds of 8 / 13 ( 0 @.@ 62 / 1 ) for the Derby , which was expected to be his next major target .

On 23 May Ladas started at odds of 1 / 12 ( 0 @.@ 08 / 1 ) for the Newmarket Stakes against four opponents . He took the lead soon after half way and won easily ( " unextended " ) by two lengths from St Florian . His price for the Derby was immediately shortened ( reduced ) to 4 / 9 ( 0 @.@ 44 / 1 ) . In the next two weeks , Ladas was the subject of intense interest , and was protected by a group of police detectives .

== = = Epsom Derby == = =

At the Epsom Derby on 6 June , Ladas was the shortest @-@ priced favourite in the history of the Derby , starting at odds of 2 / 9 ( 0 @.@ 22 / 1 ) in against six opponents . Matchbox was the second favourite on 9 / 1 ahead of his stable companion Bullingdon on 100 / 6 ( 16 / 1 ) . Ladas started well , but was held up ( restrained ) by Watts and raced in fourth or fifth place in the early stages as Matchbox and Bullingdon made the running . Bullingdon weakened just after half way and Matchbox led the field into the straight , where Ladas emerged to challenge him , traveling in " grand style " and looking likely to win easily . Matchbox , however , responded well and , for the first time in his career , Ladas was placed under pressure . He " forged ahead " inside the final furlong and won the race by one and a half lengths from Matchbox , with Reminder six lengths further back in third .

The victory , which was received with " immense enthusiasm " , completed a three @-@ part prediction made by Rosebery as a student : that he would marry an heiress , become Prime Minister and win the Derby . He required the assistance of the police to extricate himself from the crush of well @-@ wishers at the course , while at Westminster , Ladas 's win was cheered in the House of Commons . By contrast , Rosebery was strongly criticised by some churchmen for involving himself in the " dishonesty and degradation " of the racing world . Rosebery , who responded to criticism by saying that he had " no vestige of shame " in owning a good horse , used the Derby win to his advantage ; he presented one of Ladas 's winning horseshoes as a gift to the United States ambassador Thomas F. Bayard .

===== Rivalry with Isinglass =====

Ladas was then matched against Isinglass , the Triple Crown winner of 1893 , in the £ 10 @, @ 000 Princess of Wales 's Stakes over one mile at Newmarket on 5 July . The race attracted a large crowd including the Prince of Wales ( who supported Isinglass ) and the Queen 's cousin George , Duke of Cambridge ( who favoured Ladas ) . The field also included Raeburn , the only horse to have beaten Isinglass , Ravensbury , who had won impressively at Royal Ascot , and Bullingdon , who had recovered from the bout of coughing that had reportedly affected him at Epsom . The early pace was slow , and Watts held Ladas up behind the leaders before moving into the lead just over a furlong out . He was immediately challenged , however , and overtaken inside the final furlong by both Isinglass and Bullingdon . Isinglass prevailed by a short head with Ladas , who was eased in the closing stages , finishing a well @-@ beaten third . Ladas appeared to be perfectly sound after the race , and the only explanation offered ( by The Sportsman ) was that the slow pace ( the winning time was 1 : 48 @. @ 4 ) had produced a false result .

In the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown on 20 July , Ladas met Isinglass again , this time over ten furlongs on soft ground . Isinglass started favourite at 4 / 5 ( 0 @. @ 8 / 1 ) with Ladas on 13 / 8 ( 1 @. @ 6 / 1 ) and the other runners , who included Raeburn , Ravensbury and a filly named Throstle virtually ignored . The outsider Priestholme set off at an unsustainably fast pace , followed by Isinglass , with Watts restraining Ladas towards the rear . Priestholme dropped away in the straight , leaving Isinglass in the lead with Watts moving Ladas up to challenge . The two Derby winners dominated the race in the closing stages but in spite of a " game pursuit " , Ladas was unable to overhaul Isinglass , who won by a length with the rest of the field , headed by Throstle , well beaten . There were no excuses for Ladas : Watts admitted that he had been beaten by a better horse .

===== St Leger =====

Ladas was sent to Doncaster for the St Leger on 12 September in an attempt to win the Triple Crown . Ridden by Tommy Loates , Ladas started at odds of 10 / 11 ( 0 @. @ 9 / 1 ) in a field of eight , with Matchbox ( ridden by Watts ) the second choice on 2 / 1 and the filly Throstle ignored on 50 / 1 . As usual , Ladas was held up at the back of the field as , at first Throstle , then a horse named Legal Tender , then Matchbox made the running . Ladas moved steadily closer and turned into the straight in second , before overtaking Matchbox and going into a clear lead . In the final furlong , however , he was challenged by Throstle , and in the closing stages the latter pulled ahead to win by three quarters of a length . According to The Sportsman , the cheers of the crowd were replaced by those of the bookmakers as the outsider overhauled the favourite .

===== 1895 : four @-@ year @-@ old season =====

Ladas was kept in training as a four @-@ year @-@ old for the 1895 season . Rosebery issued a challenge to Isinglass 's owner , Harry McCalmont , for a match race between Ladas and Isinglass to take place at Newmarket in May . McCalmont declined as he did not want to disrupt his horse 's preparation for the Ascot Gold Cup .

Ladas had a series of training problems which kept him off the course for most of the season and he was also becoming " short @-@ tempered and impetuous " . He made his belated seasonal reappearance at Newmarket on September 27 when he ran in the £ 10 @, @ 000 Jockey Club Stakes . Although Ladas was reported to be running with only two sound legs , he was his owner 's first choice ahead of his 1895 Derby winner , Sir Visto . Carrying top weight of 142 pounds , he raced in third place for most of the way but weakened in the closing stages . He finished fourth of the eleven runners behind horses named Laveno , None The Wiser and Venia . Despite Ladas 's disappointing season , Rosebery turned down a reported offer of £ 20 @, @ 000 for the colt , preferring instead to retire him to his own stud .

===== Assessment and earnings =====

Before Ladas ran as a three @-@ year @-@ old , Mat Dawson , who had been training horses , including more than twenty classic winners since the 1850s , was reported to have called Ladas the best he had ever trained . Later that season he ranked him second , slightly behind St. Simon . Henry Chaplin , the owner of Hermit , called Ladas the finest horse he had seen . In June 1894 Ladas was rated fourteen pounds superior to the Derby winner Sir Visto by Dawson , who trained both horses .

Ladas earned £ 5 @, @ 768 as a two @-@ year @-@ old , placing him sixth among British horses for 1894 . He added £ 12 @, @ 790 in 1895 .

= = Stud career = =

Ladas had some success at stud , siring the Classic winners Gorgos ( 2000 Guineas ) and Troutbeck ( St Leger ) . Another successful offspring was the gelding Epsom Lad , who won the Eclipse Stakes and the Princess of Wales ' s Stakes as a four @-@ year @-@ old in 1901 . In total , he sired the winners of 196 races and £ 97 @, @ 000 in winnings . By 1912 he had been retired from active stud duty and become extremely bad tempered : one writer said that the old stallion had " worn himself out with his restlessness and peevishness " . He died on 31 March 1914 at his owner 's stud at Mentmore .

= = Pedigree = =