

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**LESTER PIGGOTT AT CARLISLE RACECOURSE**

Racing legend Lester Piggott will be our very special guest at the historic Bell & Plate meeting on Wednesday June 23 when he will officially open our new £1 million race facility.

Britain's greatest ever Flat jockey, now aged 74, will be returning to Carlisle Racecourse to open the Lester Piggott Race Centre exactly 44 years after he won the Cumberland Plate here on board Costmary in 1966.

Looking forward to his visit, Lester said: "It is a great to be remembered up there in the north by having a race centre at a course like Carlisle named after me. Of course the Carlisle Bell is the oldest races in the book, going back centuries and Carlisle is one of those places that still retains its character, unlike so many other places.

"My wife Susan actually has very strong family connections with Cumbria. Her grandfather Bob Armstrong was born at The George Hotel in Penrith and he trained for several years at Eamont Bridge. Then he trained locally for Lord Lonsdale, who was his principle patron.

"Susan used to go to the Lakes all the time with her family as a child before they moved away. She hasn't been racing in Carlisle since 1956 when she was her father's assistant. She says her father loved having runners at Carlisle. It was one of his favourite places. I know she is looking forward to going up to Cumbria on Wednesday. She wouldn't miss this opportunity."

Jockeys competing in the afternoon's racing will form a guard of honour for Lester as he cuts the ribbon to open the race centre named after him at 1.10pm before the first race at 1.25pm.

He will watch the 2010 Cumberland Plate, which gets underway at 3.35pm, before presenting the prizes in the winner's enclosure afterwards on the 44th anniversary of his success in the same race. The presentation will take place alongside race sponsor Kenny Hogg, of Fantails Restaurant.

Lester added: "I can still remember it as I keep a hand-written book of all my races going back forever. I rode for my father-in-law (his wife Susan's late father) Sam Armstrong. He was the trainer and she (Costmary) was a good filly and we won. The owner was Tom Farr, who was from quite a racing family near Newmarket."

England play Slovenia (kick off 3pm) in the World Cup during Wednesday's Bell & Plate meeting but the match will be shown live on TVs in all the lounges and bars around the racecourse, so football and racing fans can all watch whatever action they choose.

The Carlisle Bells are the oldest prizes still raced for in British horse racing and the originals, dating back to the reign of Elizabeth I, will be brought from Tullie House Meseum in Carlisle to go on at the racecourse display during the afternoon's racing.

The Lester Piggott Race Centre will house a range of facilities for jockeys, stewards, medical staff and the media. It will include weighing rooms, a broadcasting office and areas for physiotherapy, rest and laundry services as well as a kitchen.

Piggott's unsurpassed career saw him win 4,493 races, including nine Derbys from 1954 to 1983. He won his first race aged 12 in 1948 and was champion jockey 11 times, his last winner coming in 1994. He now lives near Newmarket, the home of racing.

Lester's itinerary at the Bell & Plate meeting:

12 noon – Lester Piggott arrives at Carlisle Racecourse – lunch in the Raceday Restaurant

1.10 – Lester officially opens the Lester Piggott Race Centre, cutting ribbon in front of guard of honour provided by jockeys in silks, who immediately depart to take part in first race.

1.25 – first race starts

3.05 – Carlisle Bell race

3.35 – Cumberland Plate race – Lester Piggott will be present the replica Plate trophy in the winner's enclosure alongside race sponsor Fantails Restaurant - Mr Kenny Hogg