

## PRESS RELEASE

Racing legend Lester Piggott is returning to Carlisle Racecourse to open a new £1 million facility which is being named after him.

Britain's greatest ever Flat jockey, who rode more than 4,400 winners, will open the Lester Piggott Race Centre on Wednesday June 23 during the course's Bell and Plate Day meeting.

Piggott's return to Carlisle Racecourse will come on the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of him having won the Cumberland Plate race at the Durdar track back in 1965, riding Costmary.

John Baker, Carlisle Racecourse's managing director, said: "This is a massive coup for us to have Lester Piggott coming here to open a new facility which we are naming after him. The man was a genius and a true legend.

"There is a nice synergy 45 years on from him winning one of our two feature races at this same meeting. The Cumberland Plate is one of our most historic and valuable races.

"For me personally, I am really looking forward to it. I got his autograph when I was a young kid on holiday at Yarmouth. I remember it was a big thing for me to go up to him because I was so in awe of him."

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, now aged 74, will take part in a question and answer session with the media and be available for an autograph session with punters at the track. His schedule has yet to be confirmed. Gates will open at 12 noon, with the first race at 2pm and the last at 5.15pm.

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.

Situated on one side of the winner's enclosure, the Lester Piggott Race Centre is part of a £1.2 million investment in new facilities at the racecourse. This will also include a new trackside conference and event facility where the existing jockeys' weighing rooms currently stand.

A further £1 million is currently being invested to complete three tracks at Carlisle Racecourse, with improved drainage.

The next race day at Carlisle is Singles Night on Tuesday May 18, which will be the first Flat meeting of the season. The June 23 meeting when the Lester Piggott race Centre will be opened will feature the £30,000 Lloyd Motor Group Carlisle Bell and the £30,000 Cumberland Plate.