

January
2019



FINISH LINE

Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club



HAPPY NEW YEAR

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EDITOR'S NATTER

So it's getting near that time of year again when 'The Festival' is brought to mind. Festival Trials Day is at the end of January and then it will be The Festival Preview on Sunday 10th March. Can I please send out a request for volunteers for the night, it might be selling raffle tickets or helping out on the silent auction. Names to myself would be much appreciated. We are also going to open the silent auction for bids from members as some cannot make the evening. Please let me know if you are interested in bidding. Sarah x

Club Visits:

February: Nicky and Matt Sheppard tbc.

April: Punchestown Festival and stable visit

October: Punchestown and Gordon Elliott

Email interest for any of the above to Sarah on ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com

Club Notification:

AGM February 20th.

Nominations for Chairperson, Vice Chair,

Secretary and Treasurer should be made in writing to our Secretary Helen Cameron at least 14 days before AGM to poindexter203@hotmail.com

TIPSTER COMPETITION UPDATE

Considerable action during December ensured plenty of movement in the Leaderboard which found the overall leader holding a useful 30pts advantage over his nearest contender.

December saw ninety horse scores recording a total of 615pts and our “Congratulations” this time go to **Alan Wellsteed** who, with his ‘E’ entry, collects both the £10 monthly prizes on offer.

Well done, Alan!

Please note: ALL prizes will be confirmed and paid out after the end of the competition.

NAME					
ALAN	WELLSTEED	E	190	210	
HUGH	EDWARDS	B	170	180	
PAUL	JONES	B	170	170	
IAN	ATKINSON	C	130	160	
RICHARD	SHAW	A	120	155	
ALAN	WELLSTEED	G	145	155	
PETER	BATT	C	120	150	
PENNY	STURGIS	A	135	150	
KEITH	EDWARDS	B	125	145	
BEN	HASTIE	A	145	145	
STEVE	HEARLE	E	145	145	
PAUL	JONES	C	125	145	
STEVE	TAYLOR	C	145	145	

Please don't forget that you can track the status of your entries on-line by accessing www.ctcrc.co.uk, selecting 'MENU' and then 'Tipsters Competition'.

If you have any questions about your entry, or its status, please contact Tony Coleman either on 07795 146242 or by e-mail at tonyandles@aol.com.

RICHARD DAVIS AWARD



For the Top Conditional Jockey riding at Cheltenham, Chepstow, Hereford, Ludlow, Stratford, Towcester, Warwick and Worcester

During the period 6th May 2018 – 27th April 2019

(Sponsored by the Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club)

Scoring: a Winner 10 points, a Second 7 points, a Third 4 points, a Fourth 2 points.

Latest placings (up to and including 2nd January 2019)

1 st	James Bowen	256 pts
2 nd	Bryony Frost	171 pts
3 rd	Richard Patrick	140 pts
4 th	Charlie Hammond	135 pts

Richard Davis was a talented jump jockey tragically killed in a fall over fences in 1996. This award is named in his memory.

Dodge's New Adventure

This last month has been slightly quieter for Dodge and I. With our preparations for Christmas, putting lights on the tree by the stables, present shopping and getting the horses ready for the festive season racing. The racing season over the festive period has been very good for team Ditchat this year, with Clan Des Obeaux winning the King George for the 10th time for Paul.



Dodge and I have been doing a lot of reminiscing of our days out and successes over the years of the festive period. From coming 3rd in the Christmas Hurdle behind Darlan and Sir AP McCoy, to winning the Wayward Lad Chase and of course the Tingle Creek. Amazing times and how could I forget as I'm surrounded by the photos of these brilliant days as I'm sitting writing this.



Christmas is always a special time of year for me and how can it not be when you have memories like these to go with it. Back then, I never thought I'd be sitting here where I am now writing about our memories for this blog because Dodge has retired and living at home with me. AMAZING!!



I helped Santa fill his stocking on Christmas Eve full of apples, carrots, polos and a mix of other

treats ready for him to share with his friends for a Christmas breakfast treat before a day in a new paddock full of fresh grass for a run and a roll.

Sorry it has been short and sweet this time, we have been spending a lot of time with family and friends. We both hope that you have had a merry Christmas and a lovely New Year! Let's see what 2019 has to offer all of us!!

Lots of love, Lucy and Dodge xx



HALF TERM REPORT

With half the season now gone, and the first signs of the Cheltenham Festival on the horizon, how are the Class Of 2018 shaping up with regards to their big targets? Here's my take on who is top of the form, and who really needs to stay behind for extra lessons....

Clan Des Obeaux

The young lad sat quietly at the back of the class for much of last year, but a good effort in the Betfair Chase saw him move his desk a bit nearer that front and after his win in the King George, he's very much teacher's pet now.

Make no mistake about that King George win either, he beat some good horses with a degree of authority and was value for much more than the winning margin suggests. Harry Cobden gave him the perfect waiting ride, picking off the gallant Thistlecrack after the last, and the more I watch the horse, the more I'm convinced he's an out-and-out stayer. With that, the test of a Gold Cup will

suit him well and I'm amazed he's not a shorter price for the big one than he is. Especially with the promise of more improvement to come.



Buveur D'Air

For so long he's been head prefect among the hurdlers but two starts this year now leave him with a few of the younger brigade looking to take over the milk monitoring duties.

Last season's Champion Hurdler seemed back to his very best when taking the Fighting Fifth field apart, a run that at the time looked very impressive, but given the exploits of second home Samcro and the seemingly out-of-sorts Summerville Boy since, the handicapper must be having

second thoughts about awarding such lofty figures.

Maybe the speed test of the Christmas Hurdle was never really going to be his thing. Nevertheless you might have expected him to have enough to hold off his tenderly-ridden stablemate Verdana Blue in the closing stages, but it wasn't to be. Sure, he comes out the best horse at the weights on the day but now has a question to answer.

The return to Cheltenham will help, of course, but we now know he's not bombproof.



Might Bite

Described by his former tutor as "talented yet erratic", his new class this year doesn't really seem to be suiting him and he's finding himself in detention too many times.

Last year's Gold Cup runner-up has run twice this year without covering himself in glory. A disappointing effort in the Betfair Chase was put down to the stiffness of the fences, and then a post-race vet's examination of him after the King George revealed a small bleed in one nostril.

Various theories abound for these lacklustre efforts, the main one being that the effort required to keep up with the grinder Native River in last season's Gold Cup has basically taken its toll. That holds little water with me, given he turned in one of his best efforts at Aintree on his next start. Was he unfit for the Betfair? Certainly there was something to work on, but that was a moderate effort all the same. But his King George run takes more explaining away. To my eyes, he's just looking a horse that's not enjoying it anymore, and the key to unlocking his talent may never be found again.

Altior

Better news from Might Bite's form-mate Altior though, who continues to get A* grades for every test and is already looking

forward to the big end-of-term examinations.

Sure, he might hit his flat spot a bit earlier these days but the bottom line is that, when push comes to shove, he's as reliable as they come and - something that gets overlooked, given his huge cruising speed - does actually find plenty for pressure. He had to work a bit to see off Un De Sceaux in the Tingle Creek and he gave us all a warm Christmas glow when winning the Desert Orchid at Kempton in December, a final-fence jump taking your breath away.

Basically he's the school bully - he's frightened the opposition off to such an extent that they all know they're playing for places even before they have jumped off. Another Champion Chase looks his for the taking before new adventures await next year, according to the trainer.

Samcro

Came to the new term with a fearsome reputation but the other kids soon worked out he was nothing but a big softy, and soon started nicking his dinner money.

Poor Samcro, no lunch and no idea which way to turn. Two miles? Three? Fences? Hurdles? It's no wonder he needs extra lessons.



Breaking: Samcro has been found to have a lung infection. He will go on a course of antibiotics for ten days and a trip to Cheltenham is looking very doubtful at this stage, revealed Gigginstown House Stud racing manager Eddie O'Leary



15:14 - 09/01/2019 - Twitter Web Client

The worries soon became evident when Bedrock had too much pace for him in the WKD Hurdle at Down Royal but that was put down to most of Gordon Elliott's yard needing a run to put them straight. Fair enough. But Buveur D'Air rather laughed at him in the Fighting Fifth and then another weak finish in the Ryanair at Christmas saw him beat only one home after travelling as well as anything to two out.

What now? Will a step up in trip help? It's hard to see how it can make things any worse, and may compensate for his clear lack of a gear. But the bottom line with him is that he needs to start digging in a bit when the pressure's on, or more detention beckons.

Native River

Whilst others in the class come and go, Native River just keeps on doing his homework on time, getting good reports and earning merit badges.



Whereas the Gold Cup may (or may not) have broken his form rival Might Bite, Native River continues to thrive on his racing and has come out of both of his starts this season with enormous credit. He looked ready to run a

big race in the Betfair and only found the class bully Bristol De Mai too good on the day, and despite the track (and arguably the trip) both being against him in the King George, he never gave up and kept on resolutely in the closing stages. We know that back at Cheltenham he's likely to improve on that again, especially if there's a drop of rain around, but can he deal with the new boys in Clan Des Obeaux and Presenting Percy (who seems to have an endless supply of notes from his mum to get him off games)?

David Massey



Happy New Year

John Hales

Article

It has not been the best December that I have experienced in National Hunt Racing but typical of what can go wrong in our sport. The month got underway with Just Rocky running in his last Bumper at Uttoxeter. He finished 3rd which was a good performance and now we can look forward to seeing him in Novice Hurdles. We looked forward to the Cheltenham meeting in December with Ibis Du Rheu having his 2nd race of the season and Protektorat making his UK debut. This was the start of a series of disappointments that carried through to the Christmas meeting at Kempton Park.



Ibis Du Rheu

Ibis finished 2nd but for me this was a disappointing result. He did not jump anywhere near the standard he set when winning at Cheltenham in his previous race. Had he jumped as well as he had in his previous race then I would have been confident of winning this race. Given time he could become a National horse as he is becoming a true stayer but his jumping must be more consistent.



Protektorat

So now we had Protektorat making his UK debut. I had been very impressed watching him in training and really looked forward to his UK debut in Sir Alex Ferguson's colours. He started favourite and really looked the part. In the race he travelled and jumped really well until halfway round the course he guessed at a hurdle and unseated Harry Skelton. This was a typical

novice mistake but I know this is a very good horse and it will not be long before you see him again.

The Dellercheckout ran at Ludlow but could only finish 3rd in what was a weak race. It may be that this horse turns out to be a poor buy as he is currently nowhere near the standard that I expect from my horses. We will plug away with him and hope we can see some improvement in his future races.



The Dellercheckout

Eclair D'Anaiy had his 2nd race at Ascot and was basically pulled up last. This was very disappointing as I know he is a very good horse. It was not just him and initially we did not have any excuse or reason for the poor performance. When he got home he was checked over and we found a possible reason was the soft pallet sticking and

not reopening properly. So he was booked into the vets who confirmed our diagnosis and was due to have his soft pallet quatorised the week after Xmas. We also sent him to another vet for scans as Dan was not totally convinced that the pallet was the only problem. This proved to be a sensible thing to do and the scans showed some bone problem in the pelvis which was not a fracture. The vet advised that the pallet op should be delayed and the horse be given one month's rest. He is confident that the horse will be 100% ok after one month and then he can have his pallet quatorised. All being well he should be back for April.

We now looked forward to the King George with Politologue. The going was perfect for him and he was backed into 2nd favourite at the off. He did make a mistake 4 out but this did not affect the final placing. I was very disappointed to finish 4th because I really thought he had a great chance to win. I know have my own theory regarding this great race. People in racing regard Kempton as an easy 3 miles. I am convinced they are probably correct in a normal 3mile Chase but not in the King George. The 2 and 2.4 mile chasers

stepping up to 3 miles rely on their speed and hope they still have that turn of foot in the final 3 furlongs. This year they set a very hot pace for the first mile and the jockeys said after the race that the pace was equivalent to 2 mile pace and this effectively takes the finish out of the faster horses. This I believe was exactly why Politologue did not appear to get the trip. However Paul Nicholls disagrees with me. Paul argues that Politologue should have been at the front from the off and stayed up with the pace, this way he would not have to make up ground at the finish. Paul is not convinced he does not stay and wants Politologue to have another go next year. However well done to Sir Alex Ferguson, Ged Mason and Paul Barber for a great winning performance with Clan des Obeaux.



Politologue

Photo courtesy of Racing Post

It is now to Cheltenham with Aux Ptits Soins on New Year's Day. I am hoping for a good run to set us on our way in 2019.



Aux Ptits Soins

Following a disappointing December I do not think I will ever forget Tuesday 1st January at Cheltenham. It was the 2nd race of the season for Aux Ptits Soins. I was so impressed with his victory I must have watched the recording at least 30 times. It was not just the win that is very welcome anytime at Cheltenham but the way that "Sergio" won the race. At the bottom of the hill before the final

bend in not more than a stride he moved effortlessly to the front. Coming round the final bend Harry Skelton gave him a tap on the neck and "Sergio" just pulled away giving the 2nd horse 16lbs and the 3rd horse 12 lbs. He is a fragile horse having spent more time with my daughter on box rest and hand walking following the injury he sustained at the beginning of the previous season. Before he had a race Dan rang up to say he was lame. Investigation showed he had a hole in a suspensory. Another season lost.

All these setbacks made the recent win that more enjoyable and we now everything crossed that he makes the Festival which I hope will be in the Stayers Hurdle.

Moving the horse from Paul Nicholls to Dan Skelton was in no way any fault of Paul. We have been in horses for nearly 50 years from Eventers Working Hunters and Showjumpers and we know when we have a fragile horse who was going to need plenty of TLC and we thought he may have to spend plenty of time at Lisa's farm recovering from his latest setback. Dan's yard is only 50 minutes from home and this proved the correct

decision as he was back with Lisa before last season even started for another 12 months recovery period. I am very grateful to Paul for the victory "Sergio" enjoyed in winning the Coral Cup in his first race in the UK. I just hope now that Lisa does not get involved again before this season is over.



Aux Ptits Soins

A very Happy New Year to all the members

John Hales

Upton Viva Stud

Hope you all had a good Christmas and here's wishing you all a very happy and prosperous new year.....

December is generally a fairly quiet month for us, busy as we have a lot of horses about but apart from mucking out, finishing the pressure washing of the mares barn there are no major events occurring. The most time consuming job at the moment is taking out enough haylage for the horses living out and checking all are sound and well.

As mentioned in previous articles we have quite a problem with foot abscess's due to the very gritty soil here and this month has been no exception. Several of the yearlings have had them and a couple of the two year old also. We usually call the vet out to find and dig out the abscess and then poultice until sound, followed by an application of foot dressing and pad for a few more days or until they pull it off themselves! As I've said many times, a lot of handling as foals certainly pays off when you need to dig out a hind foot of a yearling in the middle of a field surrounded by their mates! Because we are a small stud we are able to make the time to educate our foals from a very young age, from just being led to having their feet trimmed every 4/6 weeks makes for an easier life for us all in the long term. I also

have to give credit to our farrier, Martin Reed, who is the most patient farrier I have ever worked with. He has trained in remedial work for many years and his expertise in horse anatomy can only be compared to that of a vet. He has corrected many deviances over the years in our foals feet and limbs which has resulted in sound horses for the future.

Leading on from farrier work I have to say that I'm a great advocate of feeding a bone supplement from the weaning age which I believe helps with increasing bone density within the first years and also helps to improve the quality of hoof which thoroughbreds notoriously lack. Feeding young stock can be quite challenging with all the feeds currently on the market but we have used Saracen for many years now. They produce different types of feed aimed for the breeding set up and we can feed confidently knowing that foals, young stock and broodmares are getting the correct nutrition. Bringing the foals in for the winter means we can feed them individually and according to their needs.....too much feed can result in physitis, an inflammation of the fetlock joints which can result in severe lameness and damage to the growing joints. This condition can also occur with suckling foals as we experienced earlier this year. At two months old Makadamia's foal, Lightening, had

enlarged hind fetlocks and was obviously far too young to consider weaning so we had to restrict turnout for foal and mare and also limit access to good grazing. The mares milk was very rich, which is good but encouraged too much growth too quickly. This situation luckily settled down over a period of weeks and Lightening was able to stay with her dam until the six month weaning.

We are going to be selling two mares at the Goffs sale in January so are currently walking them daily to keep them looking well and also able to cope with the sale itself. Both are homebred and will be sold as prospective broodmares as unfortunately, neither of them meet the criteria to become one of our own broodmare band as one is unraced and the other despite having a wind op can't breathe well enough to race. It's always sad to part with homebreds as they have mostly been with us since birth and in a lot of cases we are even present for their conception but we have to focus on breeding from well bred mares that have won races.



Although not stud related, I just had to post a photo of the family's ponies at the Boxing Day meet as I think they are just so cute!! We look after three ponies for the grandchildren and I couldn't resist dressing them up a little for their outing.....



On the racing front our two homebreds kept and trained at Upton started their campaign at Chaddesley Corbett on 28th December. Unfortunately as we all know, the best laid plans don't always go as hoped.....The Jaffna Queen was going well but was brought down by a horse jumping violently left in front of her and Lucarno Express's tongue tie snapped in the pre parade so sadly didn't finish his race despite jumping and running well.

Nonesuch a 4yr old filly by Shirocco, bought with a view to joining the stud eventually, made her debut at Ludlow 19th December and came a pleasing third of nine. She is trained by Nicky Henderson.



Printing Dollars a five year old mare by Doyen also bought to join the stud eventually ran twice in December over hurdles. Both times she was ridden by Gavin Sheehan and both times coming second. Firstly at Wincanton on 6/12 and secondly at Warwick on 31/12.

An ex inmate of the stud and one I have mentioned previously, The Two Amigos, won his second chase under rules at Exeter on 7/12 and has an entry in the Sussex National in January.....looking forward to that result!

Look forward to announcing our stallion choices next month as we are going to visit some of the stallions on our list parading at the Doncaster sales in January.....my personal favourite Jack Hobbs, is still my number one pin up in the stud office so it's just a case of how many will visit him.....

JLB

Igor, also trained by NJH came a somewhat disappointing 7/12 on 21st December in a hurdle race at Ascot. He was second on his first outing the previous month but was found to have a dirty scope this time with a resulting virus. Hopefully a course of antibiotics should put him back on form but for the moment he is on the 'easy list'

CLUB MEETINGS

Wednesday 16th January:

Phil Smith with Edward Gillespie in the Chair

Wednesday 20th February

Club AGM and then The Three Scudamore's (Peter, Tom and Michael) with Chris Cook in the Chair

Sunday 10th March

Festival Preview

Wednesday 17th April

Ladies in Racing

Keep an eye on the website calendar for latest and upto date events.

Nick Scholfield Article

Hey everyone.

Hope everybody enjoyed the Christmas and New Year.

It certainly has been a busy month with racing. On a personal note I had 65 rides last month with a few winners amongst them.

So there wasn't much chance to enjoy the festive celebrations!

Although the majority of the jockeys headed into London on the 23rd for the annual Lester's Awards. It was an enjoyable evening with deserving winners of the categories.

The three time Champion Jockey and the current holder Richard Johnson won a Lester which I'm sure he was delighted with. A few days after this he was given the honour of an OBE by the Queen and will be acknowledged on Friday in the New Year's Honours List. This year he went on to complete another milestone in what was already a superb career but he has now reached over 3,500 winners in Britain. So Dicky had a very good month! I'm delighted for him as I sit next to him most days and he's a inspiration to all of us. The positive news is he's 41 and will hopefully give the rest of us a chance very soon when he retires. Although knowing Dicky it won't be for a bit yet!

It was also great to see flat jockey George Baker in such good form, he went on to win the Special Recognition Award and gave the most inspirational speech and I wish

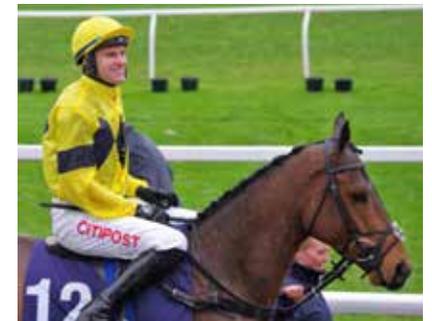
him all the very best in his role as a jockey's agent this season.

It's hard to mention all the performances of horses over Christmas but with Altior stealing the limelight yet again and continuing to be a pleasure to watch. The King George was a great spectacle again with a impressive winner in Clan Des Obeaux. It's amazing to think it was Paul Nicholls 10th King George win and I have heard they certainly enjoyed the celebrations that evening!

I enjoyed a winner on the Kempton card with Eddimaurise for John Flint who's a small trainer from Wales who certainly does well with his horses and hopefully Eddie can win again for him.

My New Year has started well including a win on Tedham which was bred by John and Lisa Hales. I'm hoping the form can continue throughout the year and continue riding nice horses and winning races. I'm not one to make too many targets as I think it's hard in racing as you never know what's around the corner and have to just try your best every day.

Wishing you all a happy New Year and all the very best for 2019.



Anthea Morshead

by
Jo O'Neill

Anthea Morshead is the daughter of Gold Cup-winning trainer Peter Beaumont (Jodami in 1994). Born in Harrogate, Anthea was educated in Easingwold and rode very successfully as an amateur jockey. She was champion Yorkshire point-to-point rider four times, and rode 66 winners under Rules including a novice chase on Jodami round Kelso and a Topham Trophy (then the John Hughes Memorial 'Chase) in 1991 on J-J Henry. So far, she is the only female amateur to beat the professionals over the National fences. J-J Henry was one of the horses that got her father established with a trainer's license having been a prolific winner between the flags for him before he took a licence.

Now, Anthea is busy as a Clerk of many Courses and divides her time between Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland and Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire.



What tracks are you Clerk of the Course at?

Cartmel, Kelso and Assistant Clerk at York.

In a nutshell, what does your job entail?

It is a wide ranging role, taking in everything from the racing surface (description of; maintenance and improvements such as drainage projects, track widening, irrigation; course layout; inspections and abandonments), communication with racing professionals (owners, trainers, jockeys, racing staff, press), Stable Yard and Hostel arrangements; engaging with BHA Field Force on racedays; input into race planning, the extent of which differs for each course; facilities on course for jockeys, racing staff, owners and trainers, etc.

Describe the different challenges at Kelso rather than the summer tracks of York and Cartmel. And how those challenges differ between the Jumps tracks and the Flat track.

At Kelso, where we start racing in September and finish in late May, we encounter the full spectrum of weather conditions, where we will be watering in April/May, but laying frost covers on vulnerable areas from December to March. I try to avoid watering for the September and October meetings, as this can impact on the ground later in the winter. This autumn was different, and Head Groundsman, Brian Mickle, had to water over the summer to keep the grass plant healthy, and to prevent die back in the exceptional heat. In the 2017/18 season, we had an especially

challenging winter, losing four meetings and one-rescheduled due to frost, snow or water-logging. We are mandated by the BHA to try and provide Good going for NH racing at all times of the year, to ensure safe ground. To provide this, all courses need to be well drained, and establishing and maintaining this is an ongoing process.

Summer NH racing presents a significant challenge, as Good jumping ground is on the cusp of Good-to-Soft, and any un-forecast rain can quickly turn watered ground slow. At Cartmel, Head Groundsman Gary Sharp, has a small but dedicated team, who have worked tirelessly this summer to provide a safe racing surface, despite there being no rain from middle of May, and their efforts were rewarded with good fields and good racing on this most unique of tracks. Racing each month from May to August, the nine days racing come quickly, and the use of pre-germinated seed was a significant benefit to recovery between meetings. This means that, in an exceptionally dry summer like the one we had, the irrigation must be ongoing between meetings to keep the germination and grass-growth in top-class condition.

However, for Flat racing, we must produce Good-to-Firm going whenever possible. At York, we have a first-class watering system supplied from two boreholes, with edge to edge pop-ups all the way around the track, which was installed at the same time as the comprehensive drainage system ten years ago. This enables us to irrigate overnight, which is a more efficient use of water, and the program can be timed to run when there is least wind. The whole course can be irrigated with 3-4mms

in six hours, with the ability to change amounts for different areas of the track that retain or lose moisture more quickly. Again, despite the huge investment in drainage, we still have an ongoing programme of track maintenance in the winter with areas of the track in rotation having excavated sand slits installed to ensure connection with the 26 miles of lateral drains under the track. Each of these lateral drains has a rodding eye, and the ground staff, under Adrian Kay's expert supervision, will put a camera down each one, and wash clear with a pressure washer.

Is the advance of social media positive or negative?

Whether we like it or not, social media is here to stay. On the plus side, it is a very useful way of communicating information, especially Going and Weather updates. Being able to post a link to the Met Office forecast for each racecourse is a great way of keeping people updated with ever-changing weather reports.

However, there will always be a section of society who use social media to express personal opinion with no filter or fear of comeback. For young jockeys and trainers, to have this unsolicited criticism chipping away at their self-confidence is especially hard, and not something their predecessors had to cope with.

How important is it to get the correct ground reading?

Having ridden as an amateur, and been closely involved in the training side of racing before becoming a Clerk, I am very aware of its importance to trainers and their running plans. Knowing your

own track, and how it rides, and how it reacts to weather conditions are all essential. Wear and tear as the season progresses will affect the going, as well as track maintenance procedures such as verti draining, use of shockwave, etc. It was hoped that the Going Stick would be the answer to what is a subjective issue, but this remains unreliable under different conditions, and has not had the consistency across different courses that was hoped for. Giving as accurate a going report and weather forecast as possible is a must for every Clerk wanting a quiet day!

How did you cope with the lack of rainfall last summer?

Last summer was a challenge, resulting in very long days for ground staff, who had to factor in watering into their already long lists of daily jobs. As previously mentioned, York draws water from two boreholes, so there were no issues regarding abstraction. At Cartmel, we invited the Environment Agency to look at the River Eea, from which we principally extract our water, to ensure we were working with permitted levels. When the river dropped and flow rate slowed, we switched to the lagoon for our irrigation. The level had got very low, but thankfully there had been some good rainfall at the end of July and early August, and with more forecast, the threatened hosepipe ban was lifted. Although racing has an exemption from the effects of such a ban on welfare and economic grounds, we worked closely with the local community, and the effects of the drought throughout Cumbria was a concern for all.

Do you think the North and South division in racing is slowly blurring or is there still an emphasis on it?

In NH racing, I sadly think there is still a North/South divide, which seems mostly portrayed in the buying power for the southern-based stables at the sales. However, in Flat racing, this is not the case, with many Yorkshire and Northern yards being strong in terms of both numbers and quality. This is a direct turnaround from years ago, when jump racing was strong in the north, with Flat racing lagging behind. I don't know what the answer is, but I will work with both NH courses, aiming to ensure that Cartmel and Kelso put on great prize money and make that whole racing day as attractive as possible to Owners, in an encouragement to race and keep their horses up north. Both courses have complimentary lunches for owners and enhanced their facilities over the last couple of seasons, and there are exciting plans at Kelso for a new permanent Owners and Trainers facility as part of the redevelopment. The first part of this was seen at the September meeting, where the parade ring and winners' enclosure had been relocated and designed with better viewing and, most importantly, a safer experience for the horses.

Is it true that you once worked at all the Scottish tracks? And for how long?

Yes, since I started Clerking about 19 years ago, I have been lucky enough to work, at some point, on all the five Scottish racecourses, starting out at Perth and Musselburgh, where I was Clerk of the Course at each for a decade.

Racing is well-served in Scotland with all the courses having excellent go-ahead management teams – all leading the way in terms of prize money and investment.

Who has been the most influential person in your present role and why?

Bill Farnsworth, the General Manager at Musselburgh! When I initially qualified as a Clerk, I sent a letter to each of the Scottish courses explaining that I was newly qualified and was willing to fill in sickness or holiday cover, or more if required. Bill had recently taken over as Musselburgh's Clerk and GM (when, in his first two days in charge he had to deal with a fire, and an owner having a heart attack in the winners' enclosure!) His Chairman, Group Captain John Prideaux, told him he needed a Clerk and my letter was on his desk. As with a lot of good opportunities, I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time. When William Derby offered me the place as his Assistant at York, it was Bill who urged me to take up this amazing opportunity and I'll always be grateful for that.

Please describe your typical race day:

During the big York meetings, it is not unusual for a Whatsapp conversation to occur at 2-3 in the morning if we are watering! Normally, I arrive at 6:00 and walk the course, checking the weather. I put a going update out before 6:40 on the BHA admin site, and on Twitter and send a text to trainers if there has been a significant change from the day before. Then, I set up the weighing room and check on any overnights who wish

to exercise on the course. I like to eat breakfast in the canteen when possible and get chance to chat to racing staff. At York, William Derby, James Brennan, the race day presenter and I go through the day at 11am, then I walk the course with the Stewards Chairman before getting changed. I then attend the stewards' briefing with the BHA Field Force one hour, ten minutes before the first race. In winter, when the first race can be as early as 11.45am, all this needs to be compressed, making a very busy morning! Frost, snow or waterlogging inspections in the dark are the worst part of the job!

Following the Stewards briefing, I check on the medical and veterinary personnel to make sure they have all arrived, been briefed, and have collected their radios, ensuring we meet the required standards. There's a radio check twenty minutes before the first race with ground staff, doctors, vets, farrier, etc. By this time runners for the first race are being saddled and entering the Parade Ring - then we're off!

Which is your favourite race meeting and why?

The Dante Meeting followed by the Ebor, because of the quality of horses running: the best of the best from all over the world. National Hunt racing has always been my passion, but top-class flat racing can equal it when you see horses such as Frankel, Enable, Roaring Lion, etc. It's a privilege to be part of the team responsible for setting the stage on such days.

Have the themed race days (ladies' days/Irish music nights/family

fun days, etc) increased spectator numbers and widened the appeal of racing?

In a word, yes, they definitely have. Racing purists are sniffy about them but £1 million race days, like the Juddmonte and Ebor, bizarrely do not produce the highest number of racegoers through the gate. It is the popular Saturdays and Music events that help to fund those high-quality racedays. Also, anything that attracts young people to come and try a day at the races is a good thing, as they are the future for our sport.

What is the funniest thing to occur at one of your racecourses?

At an evening meeting at Perth, a horse of Howard Johnson's fell in the second race; he got up, galloped out of the racecourse, alongside the river and disappeared. A lot of people went out looking, but without a sighting of the horse the racing was allowed to continue. The horse still wasn't found when the meeting finished; the owner and trainer had even gone back to their hotel, and just asked that we let them know when we found the horse! Thankfully the horse was eventually found safe and well nine miles away; he had swum the River Tay (one of the widest in Britain) still in saddle and bridle, and was happily grazing in a lady's garden!

Do you still ride out?

In the summer, I'm too busy but resume riding during the winter. I still enjoy riding out, including schooling over fences when I've got a nice ride!

What is your favourite racecourse that you do NOT work at?

Aintree – unbeatable for atmosphere, drama and fun.

Who do you admire the most in racing?

Jonjo O'Neill for achieving at the highest level as a jockey and trainer. He overcame massive adversity, such as career threatening injuries and battling cancer, to still be a hugely successful trainer, and a kind family man as well. I can't miss out my father Peter Beaumont, who started out with just one point-to-pointer which was fatally injured at a local 'point, leaving him and my Mum to come home to an empty stable. He did not give up though, and went on to train the winners of many top Steeplechases. He is a true horseman and a complete gentleman. It is interesting that both Jonjo and Dad were granted their training licence on the same day, and despite very different career paths to training, they both trained a Cheltenham Gold Cup winner!



Please tell me a little about your companion Jack the Jack Russell....

At 12, Jack is just starting to settle down. He is a big character, a typical terrier. He tries to ensure there is a no-fly-zone for

all birds over each racecourse, and that any rabbit hole in the area is visited each day!

Jack went missing for ten days at Cartmel, before reappearing back on the racecourse at 6am on a Sunday morning. He had been front page news in all the local papers, had his own Facebook page and I'd put posters up everywhere, and amazingly I got him back. Over the years, I have had numerous trips to police stations and dog pounds to get him back from yet another adventure, but at last he's becoming my shadow. It's refreshing that he now looks for me, rather than the other way round!



Coolmore Stud Visit

In April 2018, Sarah and I joined approximately 50 invited guests on a special visit to *Coolmore Stud*.

Situated on a bed of limestone, the stud now extends to over 6000 acres and is perfect for the potential classic racehorse to grow and thrive.

Behind banks of trees and in stables fit for a king, the priceless stallion *Galileo* has pride of place but only as "first among equals" among the likes of *Australia*, *Churchill* & *Gleneagles*.

The serene gardens feature some stunning statues notably that of *Yeats* by *Charlie Langton* which is identical to the one that adorns the Ascot paddock.



Yeats

The breeding season was in full swing while we were there; *Mastercraftsman* strolled off for his tryst and was back a few minutes later without a care in the world.

Across the road that brings mares from far and wide, are the *Coolmore* offices where future

Derby winners are planned. There is no doubt that remains the focus despite the influx of speed from stallions such as *Caravaggio*. *Australia* is a perfect illustration of the old maxim “breed the best to the best and hope for the best” and the concerted efforts of everyone to be first past the winning post at Epsom in June.



However, just as *Coolmore* is the culmination of a lifetime's racing achievement by *John Magnier*, it is also a love letter to the stallion who was the foundation of the dynasty that we saw before us – *Sadler's Wells*.



The purchase of his dam, *Fairy King* and the subsequent mating with *Northern Dancer* involving shuttling across the Atlantic, demonstrates the foresight needed to produce great champions. Coupled with the eye and training skills of *Vincent O'Brien* the rest is history.

Truly a unique place.



JO O'NEILL ARTICLE

On the 30th November, I picked up Knight Destroyer from Donnington Grove Veterinary Group. He had run over hurdles at Newbury Racecourse three weeks earlier, finished fifth but had broken his pelvis. He went straight to the local vets to have treatment and stayed there for initial recovery. That day the *Racing Post* had listed him as “fatally injured” in the results on their website, only for it not to be true. We were so relieved when word filtered back that he was not dead – everyone is very fond of KD. Along with Tidal Watch, who runs in the same colours, he came here as a yearling colt and, now both four, are part of the Jackdaws' furniture.

After unloading KD, so many staff came up to pat, hug and welcome him back; it was heart-warming. The first there was his groom Vasile Ursu, looking chuffed to have him return home.

I was delighted to take my Big Penny to Sandown on 4th December, especially as Barry Geraghty was onboard. Penny had disliked fences first time out at Southwell, so was reverting back to hurdles. Penny is a sweetheart to handle, very docile and never puts a hoof wrong. She has three big white socks on her legs, which I shampooed to whiten them, and she just stood there to plait. Via his valet, I asked Barry to weigh out early and saddled Penny in the stables, grabbing a passer-by to stand on the off-side. As I legged Barry up, he said with a smile, “They're getting their money's worth out of you today.” I had no expectations on how Penny would

run but, as I watched on the big screen, I saw she ran so much better, enjoying the hurdles compared to big, scary fences. Barry was very complimentary, calling her genuine and that she badly needs a wind operation. Since then, Penny has gone to have her op and fingers crossed, it'll work.

On 7th, Kate Eames and I drove a two-box each up to Sedgefield, County Durham. It was a five-hour drive and we were leaving by 5:00. Kate, 23, started back in the spring, having worked at the Newmarket Equine Hospital as a veterinary nurse and has progressed well in her first job in racing: running the therapy unit, and quickly becoming a driver.

Anyway, I had never been to Sedgefield before and, as always, I love going to new places. The racecourse was very compact, the stables just a stride from the pre-parade. We had brunch in the canteen, a low-ceilinged cavernous room that was run by the same ladies as *Wetherby*, so the food was delicious. *Bahama Moon* was our first runner, he was beaten into third by a nose, closely followed by *Eclat de Star* who finished second. I led up *Travertine*, who is as wily as an old fox, but he obviously looked pretty because he won the best turned out. It was an online betting voucher, rather than cash, so I could not share it with his groom at home, Vasile. I am unsure I agree with vouchers as BTO prizes, especially betting ones, but at least ‘Travers’ looked the best. He finished third, so we did not have a bad day with three runners being placed. Yet, a winner would have been nice!

On the 11th, Forza Milan had his

chasing debut at Uttoxeter and was very disappointing. He is rangy with impossibly long legs and looked smart enough to win the BTO. Yet, he was never happy in the race and his jumping was erratic. I am not sure if 'Foz' had an excuse for such an awful run but, trying to be positive, he can only improve!



John Dina and Quarenta

Two days later, I drove John Dina and two runners to Warwick. It was such a crisp, sunny day. John had his Quarenta running over fences and I had my March Is On (Marty) over hurdles. Quarenta won and Marty finished second, only beaten half a length. He would never have beaten the winner, but I was delighted and jockey Jonjo O'Neill (Junior) was very positive. Back in the summer, Marty had gone on holiday after a poor (and lucky due to a faller) third round Stratford. He had languished during the summer heat, getting plump, but still had been unenthusiastic when returning to work. So, the boss changed tactics and trained him on the round gallop and Marty's attitude

improved, and he began working well. So, hopefully, he can keep his attitude sweet and he can run well again next time out.

My busy week finished up on the Saturday at Hereford. I have always loved Hereford but had not been since June 2011 and, of course, it had shut and reopened since then! I have led up a few placed horses there but always missed out on a winner. Yet, with its delicious canteen and compact set-up, it brought back a happy familiarisation and good memories.

Gabriel Ungureanu, shortened to Gaby, is one of our team of yardies and had his Young Wolf (Wolfie) running. Wolfie is a bit of grumpy character so, not risking being kicked, I did not plait his tail, only his mane. He finished third, which was very pleasing especially as he is keen and not an easy ride. It was a cold wet grey day and we had over three hours to kill between races. We sheltered in the canteen hut, attempting to dry out and warm up!



Arrivederchi in the winners enclosure

I had Arrivederchi running in the junior bumper – he is my "baby", nicknamed Lucky and a beautiful dapple grey, as cloudy-coloured as the day! He is owned by Sir and Lady Broughton and I felt proud

to look after one of their horses as they are lovely owners. Nick Scholfield was riding, and Lucky behaved well, prancing around the paddock. I was very delighted when he stuck on to win by a head, and Nick had a big grin too underneath the splattering of mud. It meant a lot that Lucky won, an early Christmas present. I loved having a Hereford winner, and that Lucky won the double whammy with the BTO too.

Yet, our day was far from over. We had to pick up a Mount Nelson three-year-old from the other side of Hereford. It was difficult to find – we had to take little lanes, up a wooded hillside called Haugh Wood and past a common! Yet, we got there, even in the black, rainy night and collected the horse, and made our way home.

On the 22nd, I was sent with our runner, Annie Mc, to Ascot. Head of travelling, Harrison Day, could not go because he was having a night out at the Lesters in London. Annie was very well-behaved and finished fourth; she is such a big, gangly mare that it is easily forgotten that she is only four. She jig-jogged round the paddock and was a little skittish. I arrived home early, so it was a great way to kickstart the festive period.

The following evening, the yard had its Christmas staff party. As always, it begins with bubbly up in the owners' suite, where the best bit is seeing everyone smartly dressed, no Jewson-blue uniform in sight! A bus then took us into Cheltenham and to the bar, Acquavite. We had exclusive use and it was a brilliant venue with a large bar. There was a photo booth in one corner, and this proved much fun. Props included several inflatables,

the most memorable being a slightly limp candy cane, and guitars and a ghetto-blasters. There was an oversized doughnut, sunglasses, Santa hats, a horse-head mask, boxing gloves and a couple of cowboy hats, which caused many *Brokeback Mountain* jokes. Goergia Plumb and Alex Howitt, who both joined us in August, were the first up there and even dragged up head lad Johnny Kavanaugh, who seemed to enjoy the experience!



Our annual party is always such a great night – everyone mingles and chats and drinks; surrounded by music and laughter. Later, after 11:00, the stairway down to Club 21 was opened up, so we could go between the bar and the club. Staff from Kim Bailey's and Fergal O'Brien's had a joint party elsewhere and it was lovely to see some friends and have a dance. Jockey Alain Cawley, nicknamed Squeak, flitted between the two and joined in on the photo booth fun too!

As the bus was leaving just after midnight, I made sure I got on it. My last sighting of Harrison was of him on the rammed dancefloor, shirt unbuttoned, arms spread like a victorious matador. There were some of the staff still clubbing at 04:00 on Christmas Eve, including two head lads who shall remain nameless! The next morning, everyone thankfully turned up, but the morning trudged on as if slowed by a layer of molasses. Hangovers set in and we could not finish quickly enough for lunch! The idea of having the party in town was to allow the younger staff to stay out in town afterwards and it was a great success; everyone had a fabulous time.

Last Christmas Day, I had ridden out in a Santa Claus outfit pulled over my riding clothes. This year, I wore a Mrs Claus outfit, which barely fitted over my uniform, complete with cape tied in a bow. It brought a smile to everyone's face and even appeared on Twitter. Next year, I will have to choose another character, maybe an elf!

Christmas was short-lived, especially with runners on Boxing Day. I drove to Huntingdon with Nick Healy. When signing in at the stables, we were

given a pouch of Quality Street! It was a lovely gesture, and we saved them for the journey home. I led up Aquarian who finished last, but Box Office finished third for Nick, which made it a good day.



Capard King another BTO

New Year's Day Racing Quotes from Cheltenham

Race One

Jarveys Plate won easily by 13 lengths Brennan said: "That is a good way to blow a horse's mark (handicap), I know that. Fergal said "To win today is fantastic. Paddy is thinking that we could bring the horse back here for Festival Trials Day (Saturday, January 26), but it is a very tough sport and we will get him home and enjoy today.

Race Two

Nine-year-old Beware The Bear, carrying 12st 11lb and wearing blinkers for the first time "He was just stargazing into the stands after the last, and I had probably gone quick enough, but thankfully he had enough class and energy to last up the hill.

Race Three

Tizzard reported: "I was a worried when we were headed as we all know what Defi Du Seuil has done before, but Lostintranslation definitely looks like a stayer now. "He is a beautiful, big old-fashioned chaser and I am sure we will be going up in distance with him now.

Race Four

Trainer Venetia Williams, who trains in Herefordshire, summed up the victory: "It was a superb performance by Aso. They went a really good gallop to begin with. Charlie Deutsch, enjoying his fourth victory in his last six rides, added: "Aso was very impressive today. I just thought I would let him stride on down the back

straight. I love this horse to bits and Venetia is an amazing trainer. The horses are in good form and it is just brilliant."

Race Five

The grey Au Ptits Soins owned by John Hales, is now trained by Nicholls' former assistant Dan Skelton. Then winning rider, celebrating his 130th winner of the season, said: "The horse has obviously had a lot of problems. John, Pat and Lisa have been awfully patient with him. John Hales commented: "It has taken a long time, but that was Aux Ptits Soins' best performance since he won the Coral Cup.

Race Six

Smith explained: "Midnight Shadow is a great jumper and has improved all the whole time we have had him, from his bumpers, novice hurdles and handicaps. He is still improving. He has got a big engine. He is a little bit bull-headed at home and we don't have a horse in the yard that can work with him. He has had to do a lot of things a little bit on his own, but he has come here and won. He is tough and brave.

Race Seven

The final race of the day went to newcomer Glory And Fortune (Tom Lacey/Richard Johnson), a 7/2 chance, who put daylight between himself and nine rivals in the final furlong.

***Next Race Meeting at Cheltenham
is Festival Trials Day on Saturday
26th January.
See you all there.***

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