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FINISH LINE

Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club



Special Tiara after working on the Cheltenham gallops
with owner Sally Rowley-Williams
and his stable lad Stephen Dunphy

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Chatter From Sarah

So here we are in February and ever nearer the 'Festival'. We had a scare with Equine Influenza shutting down racing and now the tighter rules on bio-security and vaccinations for racehorses are in place.

I had a wonderful day over in Ireland at Gowran Park to attend the Thyestes Meeting. The weather was kind to us and there were some wonderful horses on show with some brilliant racing. Presenting Percy made a winning appearance although not all were impressed with the run, I personally thought he did fine! I was very impressed with the Mullins bumper horse 'Blue Sari' and had a quick chat with his very happy lass Steph Searle who was over the moon with him.

The racing world lost a true hero in the shape of Special Tiara who sadly had a fatal injury at Leopardstown. He loved his racing which we all witnessed at Cheltenham and had a very loving owner in Sally Rowley-Williams. He will be missed.

AlsoThere is still time to volunteer to help out on Festival Preview night on 10th March

DODGES

NEW ADVENTURE

So this month has been another quiet one for Dodge. With the weather putting stops to us heading out, work being very busy, and the farm at home getting some new members. We haven't had much of a chance to go out and about away from the farm.



Mum and Dad own and run a chicken farm. We have 16,000 hens that lay for St Ewe Free Range Eggs, which is where we send them, to then get

sold in the shops. So just before Christmas we got a new flock in so this month has all been about settling them in and getting them happy before they get in full swing laying. A lot of early hours are put in to start with in the early days: 4:30am starts, walking round the birds and then grading the eggs. By the time I've finished riding out for Paul at 12.30 there's not a lot of energy left in the tank so we stay at home and go for a jolly round the farm.



We took a walk and trot around the roads a couple weeks ago to see a friend that used to live on the neighbouring farm before she moved to London. She had come home for a couple of weeks over the Christmas period along with her new little boy. Dodge met Harry for the first time, actually the first baby that Dodge has met properly. He was quite unsure about it to start with but in the end they were the best of friends.

Mid January, the Racing Post was going over the top 2 mile chasers of all time. Dodge made the cut, all the owners and myself were over the moon so I purchased myself a copy to break the news to Dodge, I showed him the article and he was as excited about it as we were. He showed quite an interest in reading the

article to see what they had said about him. Love him!!



It's nice to know that he is still loved by many, not just me, even now when he's been away from the racing world for a couple years!! I think we all know by now he is the apple of my eye and could never do anything wrong.

I hope everyone had a brilliant New Years and it's going the way we all planned. Until next time, goodbye from Dodge and I.

David Massey

Article

“Throw your homework onto the fire,” sang The Smiths in Sheila Take A Bow. *“Come out, and find the one you love.”* Admirable sentiments, but how many of us find love on a racecourse, eh? Well, okay, **I did** (@Sonic_Lady on Twitter, she’ll be delighted with a follow) but we’re more concerned with finding a Cheltenham winner or two, given it’s proximity now. So I’m suggesting we throw the form book onto the fire for this month’s article, and have a pop at a few horses that maybe the form doesn’t point to, but the prices are simply too big to resist. So, with nothing less than 33-1 shots this month, let’s get rich...

Champion Hurdle - Global Citizen

I was all for rowing in with Silver Streak at a huge price here, but after his defeat by Global Citizen in the Champion Hurdle Trial at Haydock, that plan appears to have gone by the wayside, with Evan Williams saying he won’t go for the race now. Instead, jump ship to Global Citizen, who makes some appeal at a general 33-1.

Cast your mind back to the

Dovecote last year when he dished out a 91 thrashing to Scarlet Dragon and all, and more to the point the comments of his trainer when he didn’t give him an entry for the Supreme afterwards. He was kicking himself for not doing so, which gives you a fair idea of what he thinks he’s capable of. Since then he’s not taken a backwards step - no, not even his defeat in the Christmas Hurdle was deemed a demotion by the handicapper, and there are excuses for that run. Not least, the yard appeared to be under a bit of a cloud (just three winners from 47 runners in December, well below their usual operating percentage) but are in much better form as I write this. He was impressive at Haydock and showed no signs of stopping at the finish, a slightly less aggressive ride seemingly doing the trick. Yes, the hill will ask a question of him but he’s got a great cruising speed and decent ground will suit.

Put it this way - Samcro is a shorter price. Which one would you rather be on?

Champion Chase - Lady Buttons

Mountain to climb on the figures but there’s so much else to enjoy about this likeable mare that she could easily pick up some

place money if, as is somewhat expected, this race rather falls apart due to the presence of the all-conquering Altior.

Whereas some of Altior’s main rivals - the likes of Un De Sceaux and Min - could be moved to alternative targets, the fact that Lady Buttons is a proper two-miler means she’s very likely to be targeted at this (as already hinted at by her trainer) than the Ryanair or Mares Hurdle.

All she’s done this season is improve - starting out with victory in the OLBG Mares Hurdle at Wetherby in November, followed that up with an effortless win off a mark of 140 over fences at Newbury and then showed her courage when winning at Doncaster in a Listed Mares Chase on her latest start - her tenacity getting her home over a trip that probably stretched her stamina to the limits.

She jumps superbly, travels very strongly, and to me the only question is whether she’ll be as effective at Cheltenham as she is on flatter tracks. That’s a concern, but not enough to put me off having a go each-way. You’re playing for the places, barring Altior’s connections forgetting

what day of the week the race is held on, but the place part of the bet appeals enough to take a chance.

Mares Hurdle - Queenohearts

Were this on any other day bar the first day I wouldn’t be putting her up, as she needs some cut in the ground to show her best, but the edict from the BHA this year states that the ground is to be watered to produce ground on the slower side of good for the first day, so there’s every chance Queenohearts may well take her chance.

There’s plenty to like about her - she’s improving, with her Chepstow second in a maiden hurdle looking a lot better than it did at the time (plenty of winners have come from the race), and then, despite a slipping saddle at Haydock last time, found enough to bravely hold off Danse Idol and Off The Hook (who has franked the form since). Game and genuine, and trained, for my money, by one of the most underrated trainers in the business in Stuart Edmunds, there’s plenty of 40-1 NRNB around and that looks worth taking.

JOHN HALES ARTICLE

Following the very impressive win by Aux Ptits Soins on New Year's Day at Cheltenham my family set off for our annual holiday in Barbados knowing that we had the Racing channels available to watch although the number of runners would be limited during January.

We did not have to wait long to experience again the highs and lows of NH Racing. The one horse that we bred and put into training was Just Rocky. By Yates out of our winning Mare High Benefit. Following 2 successful Bumpers 3rd and 4th he went to Bangor for his first Novice Hurdle and was tragically killed at the first obstacle. It is always a very sad moment when you lose a horse but I feel really sorry for the Halmurrit Syndicate who owned the horse. Rocky was their first horse and they had a limited budget when they first purchased the horse and I decided to become a 25% shareholder to complete the sale. It is now almost certain

that the 3 lads will leave the sport as Rocky was not insured. The cost of insurance is prohibitive which highlights the risk in our Sport.



Protektorat

At this time I felt like having a break from the sport and it was not until Sat 26th January before we had 2 more runners at Cheltenham. Protektorat was entered in the juvenile hurdle and Aux Petits Soins in the Cleeve hurdle. Protektorat Racing in the colours of Sir Alex Ferguson ran a good race before "blowing up" with 2 hurdles to go. This was lack of racing fitness and I am sure he will really benefit from the run. Even if he had won the race we would not have entered the Triumph Hurdle at the Festival. He will now have a race at Aintree then turned away until next season. He is potentially a

very good chaser in the making and we have got to give him time.



Aux Petits Soins

With Aux Petits Soins I was very disappointed with his run following his electric finish on New Years Day. My daughter tells me that the race on New Year's Day was 9 secs faster than the Cleeve hurdle. Certainly "Sergio" did not have the kick off the final bend that he showed in the previous race and the jury is now out regarding his next race. Was it "Bounce Back" but this normally happens after the 2nd race of the season and this was his his 3rd race. He came out of the race very well so he will be completely checked over before making a decision regarding the Festival

although I would still like to go for the Stayers Hurdle if we are confident he can show the ability he showed on " New Years Day.

The Gi Gi partnership are hoping to get going this Sat where Brio Conte is entered at Sandown and we are planning to race our latest purchase Flash Collonges before the end of the season.

Dan Skelton has now confirmed that Eclair Danaïy has recovered from his Pelvic problem but being a very promising young horse we have decided to let him come home and he will be back at my daughters farm next week where he will join Marie Banrigh for an extended summer break. We believe that both horses will really benefit from this break and give them every chance to mature.

Politologue will run in the Ascot Chase on Feb 16th and then to the Festival in what is most likely to be The Ryan Air followed by the Melling Chase at Aintree.

John

UPTON VIVA STUD

January is notoriously known as the longest month and it certainly did seem to go on forever.....very cold at -8 one day and +10 the next, one extreme to the other! After a long dry spell, the snow and hard frosts arrived making life very difficult for managing the horses that live out. Morning and evening, water troughs needed the ice broken and after several days of very low temperatures and frozen pipes, taking out water in containers was also a necessity. Fortunately this didn't last for long and we were all relieved when the pipes defrosted and sent water flowing into the troughs once again. Copious amounts of haylage also needed to be taken out to the fields as what grass we do have is very limited and of low nutritional value, at least with plenty to eat the horses kept themselves warm. The in foal mares obviously need more nutrition at this stage in their pregnancy so plenty of

haylage as well as hard feed is the norm. We like to feed a bone supplement (calcium) in the last trimester so this is now added to their basic daily ration.

At the beginning of January all our broodmares were swabbed and blood sampled ready for the 2019 covering season and the empty mares were also scanned as they have been under lights to encourage them to come into oestrus. One mare, Tidara Angel, was already cycling and if all goes to plan we should be ready to visit the stallion soon after the start of the season on 14th February (Valentine's day).....quite an appropriate date! We have scanned her twice more and she is still on schedule to visit Nathaniel..... very excited am I as he is the sire of the wonderful winning flat mare Enable. Angel is herself flat bred being by the sire Oratorio out of a Kris S mare but she also ran over hurdles in France so who knows what may be the end result. The other empty mares were all still in di-oestrus (not cycling) so we will leave them

alone until the second week of February and then re scan. We have a timer fitted to the strip lights over each of the empty mares stables which goes off at 11pm and basically tricks the brain into believing that the days are getting longer which



Our two maiden mares 'Tell it to me' and 'The Missus'

Our stallion choices have now been decided after great deliberation and because of the whole Brexit debacle we will only visit UK based stallions this year. Generally we send at least half of our mares to Ireland and the odd one to France but this year will be an exception. We always foal down at home and either send mare and foal over to a boarding stud in Ireland/France after three weeks or scan etc at home and walk in to the UK

stallions.

Our stallion choices this year are Makadamia and Tell it to me to Jack Hobbs, Liberthine and Stravinsky Dance to Sir Percy, The Missus and Polly Peachum to Blue Bresil and Tidara Angel to Nathaniel. Free Thinking will be rested this year.

Despite the dire weather we have been having and lack of grass I'm more than happy with how our now two year olds are looking. A bit hairy and very muddy, they are all holding condition well although I'm secretly pleased not to be paying the feed bill this year!! We generally feed some kind of forage to the field horses, usually hay but as we are still suffering the effects of last years drought I managed to secure some large bales of haylage from a local source which they readily eat and clear up on a daily basis. We have been feeding haylage for the last two months and will probably be feeding it for another two before any signs of spring grass can be seen. As enjoyable as last years long hot

summer may have been at the time we are now suffering the consequences at considerable cost.



We sold two mares at the Doncaster National Hunt sales on January 22nd as although both were home bred with good pedigrees, Soldier of Fortune and Kayf Tara, neither one filled our criteria to join our broodmare band. Prices were not great for unproven mares but both sold to studs, one in Ireland and the other in the UK.

Santa Adelia, a broodmare for the future, who has been with us since last August after “doing a leg” has this month gone over to our race yard to start her ridden work before going to Warren Greatrex to hopefully run in the Autumn. She is a rangy, athletic type by

Smadoun and I am very much looking forward to her running later this year.

On the racing front we were very excited that The Two Amigos, an ex inmate of the stud, won the Sussex National at Plumpton on 6/1/19. He has entries to run at Haydock in February in the National trials and at the Festival in March.....watch this space!



Our own Lucarno Express won his maiden ptp by a distance on Sunday 27th.....a long anticipated run but one that justified our belief in him. He is a huge horse and one that has been plagued by niggly injuries and a wind issue which means he has to wear a tongue tie. He has a terrific jump and a good engine when everything goes his way, and he doesn't

get his tongue tie off as he did in his previous run! The boy did good on the 27th and we are all looking forward to his next run.....

Our future broodmares also started the year well with Printing Dollars winning a maiden hurdle at Exeter under Richard Johnson on 20th January and Elusive Belle winning a novice hurdle at Wincanton under Sam Waley-Cohen on 17th January.



Printing Dollars (above) and Elusive Belle (below)



Not a stud horse, but one who spends his summers here and one we have all grown very fond of, Impulsive Star won the Classic chase for Neil Mullholland at Warwick on 12th January. Kate Mawle who runs our race yard has spent a lot of time re-educating “Joey” who appeared to lose his way over the last couple of seasons and as Warwick is local to us she was able to go and watch all her hard work come to fruition. I have a serious conflict of loyalty though as Joey is entered to run in the same two races at Haydock and Cheltenham as The Two Amigos.....



Impulsive Star

JLB

January Club Meeting

The speakers for our January meeting were the recently retired head of BHA Handicapping, Phil Smith who was joined on the top table by our Vice President Edward Gillespie. When Edward got up to open proceedings there was hardly an empty seat in the room; the turn out from members and their guests was fantastic and helped create a great atmosphere for what turned out to be a fascinating and thought provoking evening.

The first of many things that we learnt was that we were not in fact going to listen to the retired head of BHA handicapping but to a semi professional footballer, who in his playing days starred for both Altrincham (famed for their FA Cup giant killing exploits) and the wonderfully named Northwich Victoria! Phil also taught PE, Economics and Maths before turning his attention to what he believes to be the best job in racing.



As I was driving into the meeting I was wondering how Phil was going to talk to us on what is, at the end of the day, a complex topic. Had I known he used to be a teacher I might have guessed that it would involve some homework! At the meeting we were all handed a sheet of A4 paper containing the result of the 2012 Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup along with a host of figures including weight, ratings going into the race, form, previous ratings and the individual race summary that we will have all seen in the Racing Post. You might recall that Synchronised won for JonJo and AP with the Giant Bolster and Long Run taking the others places. Phil explained that he was setting us the job of analysing the race from the handicappers

perspective. He did though give us a bit of help and advice.

Phil explained that the first job the handicapper has when analysing any race is to choose a horse to base the race around; the Guide Horse. This is the most important part of the job. He explained that the Guide Horse needed to be one that had run reasonably well in the race and in a way that was consistent with its previous outings. Of course, this is not necessarily the winner of the race. Having identified the Guide Horse the handicapper will use its rating as the basis of the rating of the race itself using the method of 1 lb per length. So if the Guide Horse was rated 147 and was beaten by 3 lengths then the performance of the horse who beat it would be rated as $147 + 3$ so 150. This is applied to the horses the Guide Horse is beaten by and those which it beats. Phil did explain though that on occasion this rule needed to be amended to reflect what actually happened in the race itself; in our Gold Cup Synchronised made a

few mistakes on the way round which prompted the handicapper to amend the rule for his particular performance (the method differs on the Flat).

It all sounded so straightforward when Phil told us what to do – it was then over to us to find the Guide Horse for the 2012 Gold Cup which eventually we did (at the third time of asking). It turned out to be Knockkara Beau who finished 6th having run with a rating of 147. It was reassuring to learn that the handicappers themselves will work the figures out on a couple of horses and then compare the rating they calculate for the race itself with the mark the horses carried into the race to see if this reflects what happened in the race itself; in other words to assess the knock on effect on the other horses in the race and how they actually performed. I would assure the reader that Phil's explanation was a lot clearer than my notes here! It was also great fun.

While there is a science to the

process there is also a need for the handicapper to use his or her skills and judgement at arriving at a rating and deciding whether that rating should be increased or decreased. There is no right or wrong answer but one person's interpretation of what has happened during the race.

Phil explained that on a race day itself he would watch the race live from the Stewards Box so as to assist them in the choice of horses selected for sampling after the race. For a Grade One the winner and runner up are automatically checked. He explained that probably one or two others might be chosen based on their performance on the day. He would then look at replays of the race as part of the handicapping process.

Phil's presentational style very much engaged with his audience and as a consequence some fascinating questions were raised from the floor; too many to cover here. One that intrigued me was why Best Mate's rating was relatively low (mid 170's). This begs a

question as to whether the handicapper under estimated the horse though Phil noted that a little like Enable on the Flat consideration has to be given to the quality of opponents and how easily they were beaten.

Edward asked about the changes Phil saw during his 23 years as a handicapper. He feels that today the decisions that are being made are better and that the improvements made in Data Storage are a great help. The number of handicappers has risen from 9 to 12 which even allowing for the increase in racing over the period, allows more time to be devoted to each race. A race takes about an hour to assess. What has not changed though is the fact that the handicappers go out racing twice a week. The rest of their time is spent working from home.

Asked about jockeys Phil noted that the levels of technique today are similar to 10 years ago but that the levels of fitness have much increased with improvements made in

diet and weight management. He also commented to the positive role played by jockey coaches. In his opinion though more work needs to be done to help the management of mental health issues. The jockey chosen to ride a horse is not considered by the handicapper unless the jockey has a particularly poor ride. The weight taken off by claimers is added back onto the horse as part of the handicap process.

In a lively discussion questions were asked about the mares allowed, Irish handicap ratings (the BHA now keep their own performance figures on Irish racing), north v south, the impact that changes Phil has overseen have had on races at the Festival and in particular the Grand National and much more. We were certainly treated to a fascinating and wide ranging discussion.

We would very much like to extend our thanks to Phil and Edward for a most memorable evening. I'd also like to thank those on the Committee who work so hard to arrange our

programme of guests. They do a superb job and as you'll read next in the magazine we have a couple more fascinating evenings coming up.

Helen Cameron

CLUB MEETINGS

Feb 20th

The 3 Scudamores

Michael, Peter and Tom.

with Brett Williams as chair

April 17th

Ladies in Racing

Guests TBC

STABLE VISITS

Feb 23rd

Martin Keighley

March 23rd

Richard Phillips

April date tbc

Philip Hobbs

to book email to address on back cover.

Ally Stirling

by Jo O'Neill

Racing will always be a massive part of Ally Stirling's life. Once a regular amateur riding at fixtures under Rules and point-to-points, she showed a lot of determination to succeed, especially as a former employer, years ago, advised her to return to higher education. The fact that Ally, 30, won the Leading Lady Rider for National Hunt award in 2014 and finished up with 33 wins 'pointing and 19 wins under Rules depicts pluck.



Born in Hexham, Ally moved south initially to work for Henrietta Knight, before moving to Nigel Twiston-Davies'. There, she looked after Khyber Kim when he was second in a Champion Hurdle and won the Grade 1 Aintree Hurdle the following

month. She rode Khyber Kim every day and also Little Josh, who won a Paddy Power Gold Cup under her care.



Yet, in 2011, when former head lad there Fergal O'Brien took flight with his own training license, Ally went too and has been a massive part of Fergal's success. She has exercised many of his talented horses, like Lord Landen in the past and now, Alvarado, Master Dee and Aye Aye Charlie.



As a jockey, Ally rode one success over fences at Cheltenham and successfully made it round the Aintree Foxhunters. In 2016, Ally rode on the snow in St Moritz, and finished second. "It was a good experience," she recalls. "It was supposed to be a hurdle race,

but the track wasn't safe down the back straight so, when we were at the start, it turned into a four-furlong race. It was a bit of a nightmare because no one spoke English, so they were trying to signal up the straight and where to finish!" Another memorable moment was Ally's win on Poetic Rhythm in his first UK point-to-point at local track Andoversford – and he went on to become a Grade 1 winner over hurdles.



"The time was right for me to retire," says Ally. "There's a lot of younger amateurs coming through and I wanted to focus on the secretary side of my job." So, Ally no longer looks after horses in the evenings but, after riding out every morning, goes into the office for reams of paperwork and tapping at a keyboard. "It's a bit warmer in the winter," she muses. Like all jockeys, Ally's career as an amateur had as many downs

as good days. Yet, she considers herself lucky to have suffered only five broken bones and a few concussions. "I will miss riding in races, but time moves on and there is a lot I can learn now being a racing secretary." So far, she has perfected invoicing, accounts and payroll, and learnt to use Sage Database. "I enjoy it. It's a different-kind of challenge to race-riding and, of course, I still get to ride out in the mornings."



Living in Stow-on-the-Wold with her whippet George, Ally portrays there is more to life than being a jockey and that the racing industry continues to offer her so much more.



Racing in Dubai

by Paul Walker

For racing fans everywhere, Meydan Racecourse should be on your list of places to visit.

At first, I needed some persuasion but I cannot speak too highly of the whole experience.

Of course, it helps to have a runner to focus the mind and give shape and purpose to the week, but the racecourse itself is quite magnificent and the turf track an excellent test of the thoroughbred.

It is well over 10 years since I have flown anywhere long-haul so all I can say that the 2019 flight with Emirates was a pleasure.

Attentive cabin service and a wide range of in-flight entertainment means that time passes reasonably quickly for the economy traveller.

A prearranged transfer to your hotel is highly recommended but there are public transport links and taxis readily available.

Since we were going for the racing, our booking was in the Meydan Hotel which overlooks the racecourse and merges seamlessly into the racecourse grandstand. For early risers, this affords the pleasure of watching

trackwork from your balcony as the desert sun appears above the horizon.

Many of the hotels (including the Meydan) offer an executive club facility which offers significant benefits to residents. They are well worth investigating prior to booking.

During the Carnival season, there is racing every Thursday and sometimes on Saturday too. There is no betting and online UK betting websites are blocked. For those keen to have an interest there are competitions on each of the races with bets similar to our jackpot and tricast bets.

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So that's the background, what about Victory Command himself and Robynne & Emma who were over with him and the 3 other Mark Johnston horses?



Victory Command with Emma

There are 20 partners in Kingsley Park 10 and we enjoyed remarkable success in 2018 with 9 wins from 17 runs from our 3 horses. Victory Command is by War Command and cost just 6000gns as a yearling. He was a late May foal and improved throughout his 2yo season winning 4 times including a valuable listed race at Ascot in July and then finished 4th in 2 pattern races up against some of the best.

Robynne has been out to Dubai with Mark's horses on many occasions. Emma has been with Mark for 4+ years and rides as an amateur on the flat.

It was at the beginning of January, that Charlie Johnston confirmed that Vic was going to travel and that his first target would be on the 24th January on dirt – a new surface for him and over 1900 metres – a new trip.

Six of us decided to go and we all met on Wednesday morning to visit the International Stables to see him with Robynne and Emma and discuss tomorrow's prospects. It was clear that he was on great terms with himself, eating and drinking well and having taken the flight out all in his stride. He looked fit and ready to do himself justice.

Vic had been given the wide draw of 13 which definitely compromises his chances because of the very short run to the 180 degree first bend. (If you imagine an 800 metre athletics race with no staggered start you will get the idea.) So we had dirt, distance and draw to overcome and while everyone was hopeful, 3rd would be a great result.

Race day dawned bright and clear and Vic could be seen stretching his legs on the dirt at his usual time of 0655. It's a strange feeling being the only spectator to your horse cantering at Meydan in complete silence.

A golf buggy ride took the 6 of us to the racecourse and into the well-appointed Owners and Trainers area for which you must have the correct badge. A free buffet is laid on for the owners but any drinks must be paid for.



In the parade ring.

We are Race 2 so there is not too long to wait: the saddling area is vast but, in contrast, the paddock itself is quite small and compact. Everything runs to time and Royston French soon joins us in the paddock. Jock Bennett gives Royston his final instructions and off he goes with Victory Command down the tunnel and out onto the inner floodlit turf track.

All of us find our own place to watch, I am up in the stand with a good view of the start, the final bend and the finishing straight. In a flash, they are off and running. Vic is away well but some of the jockeys go hell for leather to the first bend which is just not his style.

The dust flies up from the front runners hooves and Royston wisely travels wide to save Vic from the worst of the kick-back. Into the final straight, the first 2 have flown by now but Victory Command is out in the clear and passes horse after horse down the outside. Running strongly right to the finish, he has come 3rd to whoops of his joy from his so proud supporters.

Royston and Jock are delighted too. Royston reports that he has acted on the track, stayed the trip

and he will be better next time. Whether that will be on dirt or back on the turf, who knows and indeed who cares as the celebrations go on long into the night.



VC 3rd



Happy Owners

Festival Trials Day

It's always a bit of a challenge writing about a race meeting for the magazine; particularly one at Cheltenham. Many of you were at Prestbury Park for Trials Day or were watching on the TV, so you'll already know about the winners and the stories that came out of one of the best days racing in the Cheltenham calendar. Even so we hope you'll enjoy a look back at the events of the day from the perspective of our own 'junior jumper'. I should say at outset that Dad is writing this the day after the race meeting itself. Katie has the joys of school exams next week so she's given me some rough notes and asked me to write up while she is swotting away in her room. A lot of the article is taken from her notes.

One of the problems being a teenage race fan is that the Festival generally falls on a school day. It's good to catch the highlights on the TV but there is nothing like being at the track and watching the races live, so for me the Trials Day is one of my favourite meetings of the year. This year was more exciting than

ever as Dad and I had our first ever runner at Cheltenham. We have a small share in Dogon who is owned by Middleham Park Racing and A&J Ryan. He ran in the opening race on the card; The JCB Triumph Trial Juvenile Hurdle; his first outing to a UK track. I knew he had been entered at the start of the week and I was hoping he'd run but really hoping that that Bryony would be our jockey. On Wednesday evening I got home from school and logged onto the Racing Post website and jumped for joy when I read that my favourite jockey would be riding 'my horse'. I could not believe it.

Saturday finally dawned and we set off to Cheltenham. We have a routine when we arrive at the course (race card, junior jumpers stamp and chat to some folk) but today we headed up to the O&T lounge for the first time. I've never been inside before; it was very exciting going up the stairs and seeing the fantastic view from the balcony. One of the Stewards showed us the way in; wow it was really posh. We found a seat by the window and a waiter came over, introduced himself, and asked if we would like a drink. It was like being in a posh restaurant; the Chocolate

was really nice! We were soon joined by another MPR owner and were chatting away about the race. I kept an eye of the clock not wanting to miss the whole race experience.



We've never been inside the pre-parade ring. I felt really important walking in and looking up at all of the people who were already on the terrace steps watching the horses; and there he was. Dogon looked a picture and I was getting very excited and nervous watching him go round. We then followed him out and into the Parade Ring itself. We met up with Paul Nichols who gave us a briefing about the horse and how he had been working. I did not know whether to listen to him, watch the horse or keep an eye on the Weighing Room. Everything seemed to go very quickly and in no time at all Bryony was shaking hands with us owners (I got a hug!) and getting her last minute

instructions from Paul. As she headed off to Post I was very excited indeed.

As you'll know, this part of the story did not have the ending we'd hoped for. Bryony pulled Dogon up before the end so I'll have to wait for another day to get into the winners enclosure. Bryony gave us a debrief on how the race went and we headed out back onto the course to get some food; both of us a bit quiet and disappointed about how it turned out. But there is always another race and there was the prospect of watching Frodon who is one of my favourites; I've got pictures of him on my wall at home.

Before that race we met up with Debbie Matthews who was handing out green ribbons as part of her "goracinggreen" initiative. This is to raise awareness of mental health issues. Dad and I both wore our ribbons and will when we go racing again. It was also fantastic to cheer Lizzie Kelly and Siruh Du Lac into the winners enclosure. Girl Power.

We could have watched Frodon from the 'posh seats' but we have our favourite places on the course so having shouted good luck to Bryony on the Shute we headed to one of our spots right

on the rails. I was getting very excited again and as they climbed up the hill with the blue and white colours in front I started to shout and cheer. Then I saw that Elegant Escape getting closer and closer. I was jumping up and down, shouting and punching the air trying to encourage Frodon for one more effort; the noise around was huge. The finish seemed to get further and further way but eventually Frodon crossed the line. We literally jumped for joy. The disappointment of earlier in the day was replaced by rush of excitement and relief. They won, they won. I quickly turned to Dad, shouted 'I'm off to the Winners Enclosure' and ran off leaving Dad by the rails! There were a lot of people but somehow I managed to get down to the front to see them both arrive. I was beaming from ear to ear and so was B and all of the Ditchheat team. The cheer when she came in was very very loud. I'd totally lost Dad who found me in the end very happy and chatting away to Debbie.

After her last race of the day (riding another of my favourites; Lil Rockefeller) we went over to the Weighing Room so I could say 'well done' to B for her win. She gave me a massive hug! There was still time for one more race

and this time we headed up to the 'posh seats' and watched Benny's Bridge come from nowhere for Paddy and Fergal to win the last. Being up so high we had a great view of the race and were really pleased with the winner, knowing that Debbie had been at Fergal's yard that morning and will have been cheering on his horses.

It was a day of ups and downs (I won a squishy horse on the wheel of fortune which I was very happy about too) and new experiences and a days racing that I'll remember for a long time. I said to Dad on the way home that next week, if the exams are tough, I'll think back at how Frodon kept battling and that will help me through.

Katie and David



Jo O'Neill

Article

We saw 2018 off with a winner at Warwick on New Year's Eve. His Dream won over hurdles for owners Donna and Richard Evans who, under their company LPS, had sponsored the whole race day. So, His Dream winning gave them an even better day at their local track! It was rather a surprising win, but it was a lovely way to end the year.

January was a pretty quiet month and we had to wait until the 5th for our first winner of 2019. Tedham won at Wincanton under Nick Scholfield. 'Teddy' is looked after by Kate Eames and he will hopefully have a bright future. He is a handsome, big bay 7-year-old who is built like a chaser.

Petra Florinoná, returned for her sixth stint of working for us on a temporary basis. From the Czech Republic, Petra graduated from a degree in Germany and is now studying for a Master's back home. She speaks three languages fluently and her

parents are trainers and breeders of racehorses, and her younger brother Adam, who has also worked here in a past summer, is now a talented jockey. Originally Petra would work here during her summer holidays, yet, by now, she has seen the yard in every season and in every extremes of weather! Last year, she got snowed in with us and, even when she got to the airport, her flight was delayed twice before being cancelled and she had to come back. Petra, 23, is an accomplished rider and we all hope she will return this summer.



Petra

I only went racing the once, on the 18th, to chilly Chepstow. My Forza Milan (Foz) and Annie Mc were running so I went with Harrison Day, our head of travelling. It was Foz's second run of the season, having had a disappointing start

to fences at Uttoxeter. Foz is a big softie in his stable and never does anything wrong; yet, he is crazy to ride! I would never want to have his name by my name on the riding out board. Dickie Johnson rode him, and it is always lovely to lead him up. Yet, once again, Foz did not run well and pulled up. Dickie said he hated jumping the fences, which is frustrating as he has the tall, lean appearance of a chaser. He was immediately booked in for a wind test, and hopefully this will give us another chance.



The day cheered up when Annie Mc bolted in under Jonjo Junior, by an amazing eighteen lengths. Annie is owned by the Coral Champions Club, so she had a great reception coming back from many happy owners. Annie has consistently run well all season and is still only five. She is a big mare and is quite a character, always dancing onto the gallops and loves her work.

I was supposed to go to Catterick with Young Wolf (Wolfie) on the 23rd, but it was frosted off (as was Hereford later). I woke up to a light covering of snow and it was freezing. The boss rang up Catterick's clerk of the course at 6:15 and then called me to say the meeting was off. In the next breath, he asked did I want to go to Doncaster sales instead! A.J O'Neill was down to go but it made a lot of sense for me to go in his place. A.J could ride out a few lots and it was so cold I was quite happy to stay in a nice warm cab. So, I put Wolfie back and rugged him back up and swapped over my kit for A.J's bag. I was now taking Cake de L'isle, Lot 312, a lovely bay gelding who just wasn't a "Saturday horse" for owner Trevor Hemmings.

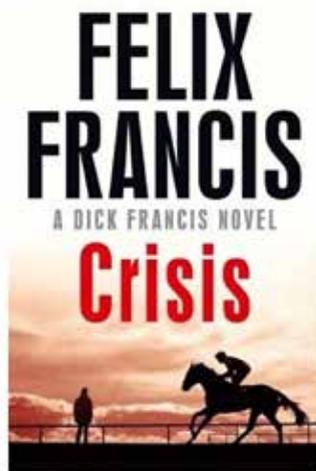
It took the usual three hours to get to the DBS Sales, just to the left of Donny racecourse and I arrived at 10:00. I was expecting it to be unbearably cold, but the sun was shining, and Cake's stable was luckily in a sun trap. I collected a few wads of hay, which Cake started munching on immediately. For the first hour, I sat on an upturned bucket and flicked through the catalogue. No one came to see Cake for ages

but then a few people did. A man from Germany said he was too big as they like their racehorses smaller. Cake had his forelegs felt, his back poked and was trotted up numerous times. He was never naughty and was such a gentleman. I put on his bridle and green and yellow paddock sheet, and he arched his neck and flicked out his toes. A few other horses were rearing, jogging and bucking about the collecting ring.

Cake went through the ring at about 2:30 and I couldn't quite believe that he sold for £17000. I was on the road again by 2:55, a little saddened to have given Cake a farewell pat and wished him luck. Later, I found out he had been purchased by our former head travelling girl, Laura Morgan, now a trainer. She has done very well, and I hope she has a good time with Cake.

I make no secret of my love for reading and I was delighted to receive a Felix Francis novel *Crisis* for Christmas. It had many similarities to the books of his father Dick Francis, which were my "coming of age" novels, the next step up from pony adventures and

The Saddle Club. I was reminded of trawling every Dick Francis novel through as a teenager, falling in love the most with the ones in a yard setting. This storyline was gripping, the portrayal of stable staff pretty accurate and the ending exciting. It was like my reading had gone back in time and I love that portrayal of racing, though regrettably racing is not as exciting in real life!



Silent Auction Items

There will be silent auction items which will be available to bid on before the Preview night 10.3.19 and will finish at the event. These include stable visits to Philip Hobbs, Nicky Henderson, Fegal O'Brien and Robin Dickin. To bid or enquire email: ctcrsilentauction@gmail.com

RICHARD DAVIS AWARD

For the Top Conditional Jockey riding at Cheltenham, Chepstow, Hereford, Ludlow, Stratford, 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 5th February 2019)

1 st	Bryony Frost	181 pts
2 nd	Richard Patrick	140 pts
3 rd	Charlie Hammond	139 pts
4 th	Jonjo O'Neill Jr	102 pts



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

Noel George

Q&A

Given my background, i always wanted to opt for a life in racing rather than the university education which my father had hoped i would pursue.

I was always a regular in the hunting field - my mother Sophie has been a Master of the Cotswolds Hunt - and at the age of nine i started riding out at my father's yard.

I achieved 14 pony racing victories and in addition i finished 3rd in the 2011 138cm National final at Aintree.

I opened my point to point account in 2015 on Coeur De Fou on my 2nd ride which was just 3 weeks after my 16th birthday, having finished runner up on my debut.

All of my 12 successes to date have been for my father but having recently joined the books of Chris Broad and able to ride comfortably at 10st 7lbs i am hoping to pick up enough rides to enable me to have a crack at the Amateur National Hunt Championship Title.

Q How and where did you first become interested in horses?

A Having grown up in a racing yard I have been involved in horses all my life and was put on a horse before I could walk! I then started riding out for Dad from the age of 8, as well as doing a lot of hunting, pony racing and pony club.



Q What inspired you to take up competitive race riding?

A Having seen my father's horses racing as I have grown up it was always going to inspire me to ride competitively, doing pony racing definitely made me even keener to ride under rules.

Q Most memorable ride to date and why

A My most memorable ride would have to be coming third in the Aintree Foxhunters on **Big Fella Thanks**, he was 15 and I was only 17! He also provided me with my first winner on the track and a Cheltenham winner, so was a horse very close to my heart! I would be very surprised if I ever got a better ride round the National Fences than he was!

Q If you could ride any horse which one would it be?

A The one horse I would like to ride in a race would Black Op, I ride him every day at home and know how talented he is. Now he is going over fences is very exciting and I would like to think he could be a Gold Cup horse one day!

Q A horse to follow for the remainder of the current NH season?

A He would also be my horse to follow for the season.

Q Who do you turn to for advice and guidance?

A I often talk to my Grandfather (John Edwards) for advice as he used to train to a high level and would know when I've done something wrong!

Q Favourite Racecourse?

A My favourite track would have to be Cheltenham as it is the home of NH Racing and is just down the road.

Q Best horse you have ridden and why?

A I rode a very nice horse to be 2nd in a bumper at Chepstow a couple of weeks ago called Doctor Dex and think he will be an exciting prospect once he goes hurdling later on this season.

Q Who do you admire in racing?

A The one jockey that I like to watch and maybe model myself on would be Davy Russell. He is very good at an obstacle and is always in the right position in a race.

Q What is a typical day for you?

A My typical day would be riding out in the mornings for Dad and if I'm not racing, do evening stables at home and help out in the office at home.

Q What are your hobbies?

A I like to try and play as much sport as I can and played a lot of rugby and football at school. I also run every day which I enjoy.



Q Favourite holiday location?

A Favourite holiday would have to be skiing, although I like a bit of sun I don't think you can beat a holiday where you always have something to do!

Q Food heaven and food hell?

A Food Heaven would have to be a BBQ in the summer, unfortunately I don't really have any food which I don't like!

Q What do you think racing does best?

A I think that racing treats the young very well, if you are able to do the job to the same ability as someone of a bit older you are still going to earn the same amount in racing, which I think is very good!



Q What is your worst habit?

A My worst habit would probably be driving too fast, my Mum always tells me to stop treating it like a race!

Q Social media – friend or foe?

A I think that Social Media has to

be considered as a friend because it enables racing to be broadcasted to a wider audience, although you can get a lot of opinions flying around on Twitter after you ride a beaten favourite!

Q Fast forward 10 years – what would you ideally like to be doing?

A In ten years time I would like to have ridden as many winners as possible and hopefully have been Champion Amateur, however hopefully be playing a big role in Dad's set up at home, which would definitely be where I see my future being, in the training ranks



By Jamie Sharp

Syndicates Matter



Dan Abraham, Syndicate Manager at Foxtrot Racing and Chairman of the Racehorse Syndicates Association (RSA).

The Racehorse Syndicates Association (RSA) represents professionally run racing syndicates to the racing industry.

Members vary from large to small syndicates, with a variety of price points. Members include well-known names such as Middleham Park and The Royal Ascot Racing Club to small syndicates who only have one horse.

Commercial syndicates have a significant economic value for racing, with an estimated annual incremental impact of £151m from the 1,000 horses being managed by RSA syndicators on behalf of over 5,000 owners. This impact is calculated from bloodstock purchases, sales house commissions, training and keep fees, racing levy, media rights and bookmaker profit.

With syndication being one of the few expanding areas, it is vital that syndicates are represented, and their needs considered by the industry. That is the role of RSA.

There is a fundamental problem facing racing. Syndicates are the only area of ownership which is expanding but most racecourses don't have the facilities to cope with the change from sole owners to group ownership. Some racecourses consider owners to be important, others appear to consider them a nuisance and there is a huge variation in the treatment of owners at different courses.

It is imperative that racecourses adopt defined standards and continue to improve the raceday experience. There are of course significant challenges in achieving this in the short term, with the increasing number of syndicates. Buildings, parade rings and unsaddling areas simply weren't designed with so many owners in mind.

In most aspects of racing (and sport in general) entrance is tiered. You can pay more money to be in different sections of a football stand, rugby stadium or pay extra for a different racecourse enclosure. Yet ownership has no tiering system at racecourses. All owners receive the same access to the same areas. Some will say

this is a benefit and every owner should be treated equally. Those calling for a tiering system will argue that sole owner should have better facilities than someone with a small percentage ownership in one horse. The tiering model could incentivise syndicate members to purchase more shares if ownership benefits were based not on one horse but their collective ownership interests. The tiering system could also of course lead to much unhappiness amongst those owners who don't enjoy the privileges of other owners.

Bringing in large numbers of syndicate members can be a major boost to the overall income and profitability of racecourses. On the vast majority of racedays there is minimal risk of overcrowding of facilities or safety risks in the paddock. Racecourses should help themselves by adopting a more generous and flexible approach towards the allocation of badges and embrace the bigger picture. Miserly allocations of owners badges on quiet racedays or bureaucratic restrictions makes no sense.

Having access to the pre-parade and main paddock, together with non-restricted entry to the winner's enclosure, is the most important element of the whole ownership experience. It is not a coincidence that when Great British Racing launched their scheme to promote

syndication, they called it "In The Paddock".

British Racing must put the needs of syndicates to the forefront of their ownership strategy. Maintaining media rights, betting turnover and an ever-expanding fixture list requires more horses to ensure field sizes are competitive. Without syndicates there will be fewer owners and fewer horses.

Syndicates have become a vital stepping stone in the future of British Racing. Rather than being seen as a 'problem', let's view syndicates as a huge opportunity. Those quiet racedays could become awash with syndicate members with the introduction of a 'syndicate day'. Offer a syndicates facility as well as an Owners and Trainers bar, interview syndicate members at the racecourse, encourage people to join syndicates and make ownership sound fun and exciting. We need new owners. Why not have a Syndicate Owners' Championship and races where all horses have to be owned by syndicates.

Syndicates bring new people into the sport, new people into ownership and without owners we won't have a sport at all. Rather than fighting the change to group ownership, lets embrace syndicates and find the way for them to best benefit racing.

TIPSTER COMPETITION UPDATE

Not quite so much action during January (unsurprisingly) so no material to the Leaderboard which found the overall leader retaining his useful 30pts advantage over his nearest contender.

January saw just thirty-three horse scores recording a total of 210pts and our "Congratulations" stay with **Alan Wellsted** who, with his 'E' entry, collects the **£10 Overall Leader** monthly prize.

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

POSITION	NAME			JANUARY MONTH	JANUARY CUM'VE
1	ALAN	WELLSTEED	E	15	225
2	HUGH	EDWARDS	B	15	195
3	DAWN	MILLIKEN	B	55	190
4=	PAUL	JONES	B	15	185
4=	RICHARD	SHAW	A	30	185
4=	ALAN	WELLSTEED	G	30	185
7=	IAN	ATKINSON	C	15	175
7=	KEITH	EDWARDS	B	30	175
9=	PETER	BATT	C	15	165
9=	PENNY	STURGIS	A	15	165

The top scorer for January month is ex-Chairman, **Doug Miles**, who recorded a notable 70pts with his 'B' entry and collects the **£10 Top Score** monthly prize.

POSITION	NAME			JANUARY MONTH
1	DOUG	MILES	B	70
2	GRENVILLE	DAVIES	G	65
3	KEITH	EDWARDS	C	55

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.

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Club Events and Magazine are on the website so please keep checking.