

**March
2019**



FINISH LINE

Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club



Jockeys heading out for the 2018 Grand National

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Chatter from Sarah

By the time you read this Cheltenham will be a distant memory and we will have The Grand National Meeting in mind. That is mainly because this newsletter is rather late for which I will apologies most profusely. My life over the last month has been quite hectic getting ready for The Festival Preview and Silent Auction and Raffle and I would like to Thank everyone for all their help on the evening it was much appreciated and we raised around the £4,000 mark again. The evening was most bizarre with no interval which slightly altered all of our timings.

I also have a new arrival of the four legged variety! Yes I have another ex-racehorse. This is the fifth to add to my collection. Any of you who are members of The Elite Racing Club will know him well as I have 'Volcanic' coming to keep me on my toes as I will be getting back in the saddle after a break of around 6 years. Anyway I hope you all had a wonderful Cheltenham and those who are going to The Grand National I hope the weather is kind to you and enjoy.

Sarah x



TIPSTER COMPETITION UPDATE

Fortunately, the mid-month “crisis” resulting from the Equine Flu outbreak, whilst maybe hampering Festival preparation for several stables, the effect on the Tipster Scoreboard was somewhat more dramatic.

As the table below shows, we have a new **Overall Leader** who, following a timely run as the Competition enters the Festival(s) season, relegates long-time leader, Alan Wellstead, to 2nd place.

February saw forty-two horse scores recording a total of 320pts and our Congratulations go to **Richard Shaw** who, with his ‘A’ entry compiling **270pts**, collects the **£10 Overall Leader** monthly prize.

Good Luck to everyone with your Tipster entries at the Festival. Let the FUN begin!!

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

POSITION	NAME			FEBRUARY MONTH	FEBRUARY CUM'VE
1	RICHARD	SHAW	A	85	270
2	ALAN	WELLSTEED	E	30	255
3	HUGH	EDWARDS	B	40	235
4=	TERRY	POULSON	A	60	220
4=	ALAN	WELLSTEED	G	35	220
6=	JOHN	RICH	C	60	215
6=	STEVE	TAYLOR	D	55	215
6=	JAN	WOOTTON	B	55	215
9=	IAN	ATKINSON	C	35	210
9=	PAUL	JONES	B	25	210

Perhaps rather predictably, **Richard Shaw** also takes the top scorer accolade for February, with his “A” entry collecting **85pts** and collects the **£10 Top Score** monthly prize.

POSITION	NAME			FEBRUARY MONTH
1	RICHARD	SHAW	A	85
2	JAMIE	SHARP	C	80
3	IAN	STRICKLAND	B	75

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, 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 9th March 2019)

1 st	Bryony Frost	199 pts
2 nd	Richard Patrick	150 pts
3 rd	Charlie Hammond	139 pts
4 th	Jonjo O'Neill Jr	116 pts



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

DODGES NEW ADVENTURES

So, it's that mad time of year again that everyone loves and enjoys... Cheltenham!!! It always brings back some very good memories for Dodge and I when Dodge won the champion chase, and I am very fond of the place. This year it is going to be very different for the both of us as I will be on the other side of the fence this year cheering on the yard horses instead of leading them up and unfortunately Dodge isn't going to be there strutting his stuff for everyone! We were asked back again this year to parade with the other former champions but due to the outbreak of the flu and the regulations that were needed we couldn't meet them. I forget that most normal people don't work weekends and we couldn't get Dodge booked in on Saturday to get his nasal swab taken. It's a shame as he's had his final clip for the season and a tidy up, looking trim and beautiful! Never mind, better luck next year.

During his final clip we discovered his love for his new best friend. In January, my

partner and I got a new puppy. A little black cocker spaniel and they are the best of friends. While I muck him out and do everything with him, she sits in the corner watching him. Until the other day, when he was eating his tea while I was mucking out his stable.... she wandered over to him and his bowl and started eating out of it along with him. He looked at her with his ears pricked and she just looked up for the feed bowl and licked his nose!! Then while clipping him the other day she sat in the corner, curled up on his rugs watching! Dodge stood there calm and like a rock just looking at her. I've never clipped a horse so quickly. Did wonders for my straight lines !!!



Like every typical English person, you know who you are, and will find yourself nodding along as you're reading this, but I saw the sun coming from behind the clouds and got very over excited! I got home from work at lunch time, took Dodge for his ride and then gave him a bath as he was getting sweaty, then.... turned them all out NAKED!! There was lots of bucking and kicking going on and 3 very excited horses! They had a very enjoyable few hours in the sunny field!! Getting excited for two days turned out to be very premature as the rugs are now back on and it's raining!! Never mind, hopefully it's around the corner for a second time!!



We are both doing the sun dance now and we are fed up of wearing lots of rugs all the time! We want shorts and T-shirt weather with naked days in the field again! We both enjoyed last summer!!

Good luck to everyone that is going to Cheltenham and see you all soon. Love, Lucy and Dodge .x



David Massey Article

And as we say goodbye to Cheltenham, we say hello Liverpool. One of my favourite cities, not least because when I used to work for Stanley Racing (going back a bit, here) I used to go out with a lovely lady from Liverpool and would go up there at weekends. A fun time was had by all, as I remember. Anyway, I digress. I'll be there working all three days on the rails (for Southwell Racing) so if you see me, say hello.

What's going to win the National?

That's what you want to know. I'd like to know as well, and it's worth pointing out that as I type this, we're still a couple of weeks away from Cheltenham and I have no doubt that both the Ultima and the X-Country are going to give us some clues. We could just assume Tiger Roll wins the latter and if so, last year's winner would be a big player. But he's got more weight this time around and although he should be on

the premises, I do think he'll be beatable. Here's my three against the field.



Vintage Clouds

(Sue Smith)

Has always made plenty of appeal as one that would take to this test. Forget his pulled-up run in the Welsh National last time, Sue Smith was well out of form at the time, a ready-made excuse. Concentrate on his efforts in last year's Ultima, where he was front rank all the way and kept on for a valiant third, and then his subsequent third on ground arguably a bit too quick for him in the Scottish National and it's clear he's capable of top-quality handicap form. He just missed out on the cut last year but hopefully he should get in from a mark of 144 this year and will have little

weight to carry. The yard know what it takes to win the race and he's got to be on anyone's shortlist.



Bristol De Mai

(Nigel Twiston-Davies)

Yes, I know, top weight. But the handicapper, in an effort to tempt him into the race, has offered him a mark of 165, which for - lest we forget - a genuine top-notch Grade 1 horse, looks very fair. I have said all for a couple of years now that this could be his race rather than the Gold Cup (by the time you read this, he'll have probably won that race easily. If so, please disregard this bit), with the flat track and *relatively* easy obstacles right up his street. The worry would be that he'll leave his race behind in the Gold Cup, but nevertheless I've had a bit of 40-1 NRNB, as if he does

turn up, he surely goes off a lot shorter than that.



Tea For Two

(Jane Williams)

Have a guess what mark Tea For Two is on these days? Go on, guess. Well, you're wrong (probably). I was amazed to see he gets in here on a mark of just 149. Okay, he may not be the force of old but his third to Charbel at Huntingdon in the Peterborough Chase shows he's still got some ability, and we should remember it's not 15 months since he was only beaten 3l by the then mighty Might Bite in the King George. It's not hard to see him taking to a test like this and an extreme trip might be what he wants these days. 66-1 looks a fair price.

John Hales

Article

It has been a very rewarding time in the build up to Cheltenham and Aintree. I went to Ascot to see Politologue in the Ascot Chase and the GiGi partnership's Brio Conte and I represented my Son's Robert Syndicate "yolo" (You only live once) with Worthy Farm.

Politologue I felt was not at his best but finished a creditable 4th in a good field. The placings could be different on another day with the exception of the winner who produced an incredible front running performance. The performance of Brio Conte was outstanding considering he was last in the betting at 25 to 1. Bryony Frost was told to do as well as she could but hopefully the handicapper would be kind to us as we believed Brio could be an entry in the Coral Cup. She was also told if she felt the horse was travelling well and had enough left in the Tank coming round the final bend to try and win the race. After the race Bryony told me that

Brio felt full of running and she decided to push him and see if she could thread her way through the field. She did this and Brio produced the class to win the race. Brio has had a number of injury setbacks and has still to produce the goods over fences. He is a good jumper and we wish him well in the Coral Cup despite having to carry an extra 6 lbs. next season it will be over fences.

Worthy Farm was purchased by my Son Robert and his friends in unusual circumstances. It has always been my daughter Lisa who was the horse person and Robert was more interested in football being a staunch supporter of Aston Villa (when they are winning) he and his pals decided to go to the Glastonbury festival and when they arrived they noticed it is on a farm called Worthy Farm. He and his pals were staying with Paul Nicholls and the following day Paul showed them some young horses and one was called Worthy Farm. That was to much of a coincidence for Robert and his friends so they

purchased the horse. Worthy Farm produced an excellent performance at Ascot and stayed on very strongly to be a very "Worthy" winner. He is a very good stayer and it will be very interesting to see him over fences next season.

My biggest disappointment this season has been the Dellercheckout who has not shown anything before going recently to Taunton. Paul decided to try blinkers on him for the first time. While he received a lot of weight his performance was a revelation. He led from start to finish and his jumping was very good. It has given me some hope that I may still have a good horse. It will be interesting to see if he can follow up in his next race.

It is now time to finalise plans for the Festival and Aintree. It is regrettable that we are planning to have only one runner at the Cheltenham festival mainly because of injuries and horses not being ready. However with Politologue Paul Nicholls is still keen to keep options open for the Queen Mother

Champion Chase and The Gi Gi partnership will have Brio Conte in the Coral Cup. Aux Ptits Soins will contest the Stayers Hurdle at Aintree with Politologue trying to win the Melling Chase again. Politologue will have his breathing reviewed again and it may be he has a breathing operation in the Summer. For now the Tongue Tie is doing its job. Last year we had 4 weeks between the meetings and this year back to three. 3 weeks is not sufficient time to expect horses to produce their best at the peak of competition.

Finished for the season are: Marie Banrigh, Eclair Danaï and Protektorat, They will all Benefit from a longer rest. That just leaves Ibis Du Rheu who will probably be entered in the Scottish National.

Many thanks

John

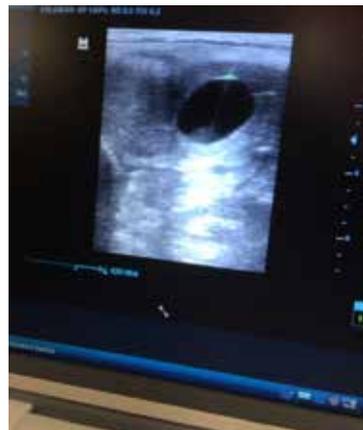
UPTON VIVA STUD

Well.....that was a busy month! After the quiet start to the year it was all systems go for the mares. Our four barren mares, two maidens and two empty, have been under lights since January 1st and all started cycling this month. Numerous scans were undergone as well as the necessary swabs and three of the four were duly covered with the last mare expected to visit the stallion in early March. The first scan of the season is to ascertain whether or not the mare is cycling, transitional or anoestrus (dormant for the winter) Putting them under lights tricks the mares brain into thinking spring is on the way with longer daylight hours when natural mating would occur. Once we know, via scanning, that the mares are "coming in" we re scan every couple of days until one of her follicles reaches approx 3.8 and then contact the stallion stud to book her in for a cover within 36 hours. We regularly update the relevant stud on the mares progress so they have an approximate date for our arrival. This is obviously a necessity as our mare would not be the only one visiting the designated stallion! Occasionally a mare will

throw up two follicles of similar size which does mean we scan for pregnancy a couple of days earlier than normal. Fortunately this happens rarely but a thoroughbred is not designed to carry more than one foetus and if twins are missed not only will the foals be aborted or stillborn but the mare could also lose her life.

Once the mare has been covered we give her an ovuplant which ensures (in most cases) that she will ovulate within 48 hours. After that time has passed we re scan again to check for ovulation which in almost all mares is generally the case. However for the odd mare that hasn't we don't panic as some stallions semen can remain alive for up to five days!!

At 16 days post covering, we can scan for a pregnancy which at this point looks like the picture below



The next scan is around 24 days when a heartbeat can be detected and the umbilical cord is visible. We generally scan again at approximately 30, 40 and 60 days to ensure the foetus is developing as it should and once more in September to confirm pregnancy before the stallion fee is due October 1st.

For the mares who have a twin ovulation we scan at 14 days and although the conceptus are very small they are still mobile and not fixed to the uterine wall. At this stage a vet is able to "pinch" one, usually the smaller of the two, to give the remaining one the best chance of survival. A few years ago we did have one mare who had a triple ovulation and went on to have a healthy filly.

Tell it to Me was covered by Jack Hobbs on 19th February, Tidara Angel by Nathaniel and The Missus by Blue Bresil both on 24th February. Fortunately we have the use of two lorries as although unusual for us, we had two mares needing to go in opposite directions on the same day. I took The Missus to Wales for her cover with one of the grandchildren's ponies, Fluffy, for company as she was a maiden and Blue Bresil was the perfect gentlemen!! Mel took Tidara Angel

liaison and as she is a seasoned broodmare needed no one to hold her hoof! She will need to be checked early as ovulated on two follicles. As I make no secret of my adoration of Jack Hobbs there was no question as to who was taking Tell it to Me..... with Fluffy.....to stud, and I was not disappointed. He really is a magnificent stamp of a horse in my albeit humble opinion but I sincerely hope he makes a great National Hunt sire.



Blue Bresil



Nathaniel



Jack Hobbs

Along with the stud work we are dealing with at the moment we are also dealing with a ridiculous amount of foot abscess's with the nine two year old fillies due to the ground becoming so firm. This is very time consuming putting on and changing poultices but as I've said previously, handling them all as foals certainly pays off under these circumstances.



Foal watch has officially commenced although as yet I am not "sitting up" as Liberthine is due March 1st but not showing any signs at all of wanting to foal. Knowing my luck she will wait until The Festival week starts and then have me pacing the barns during the night and needing matchsticks

for my eyelids to watch the racing during the day.....

On the racing front our home bred 5 year old Maitree Express ex Shatabdi by Malians (a firm favourite of mine) is due to go to Newbury on the 2nd March for a race course gallop with a view to run soon after.....very much looking forward to this, more next month.....

Printing Dollars again won a hurdle race at Exeter on 15th February so is off to a flying start to her racing career. She has an entry at Warwick on March 10th so again more next month.....

Elusive Belle was 2nd at Sandown on 15th February and has an entry in the novice hurdle on the Thursday of the festival which I am very much hoping to go and watch. Hurry up Liberthine, get a wiggle on.....

The culmination of a lot of blood, sweat and tears from trainers, lads and lasses comes to fruition on 12th March when the Cheltenham Festival commences. I can hear the roar of the crowds already as the tape lifts for the first race, so here's hoping that when you read this everyone involved has had a wonderful time and all horses came home safely.

February Club Meeting

Our guests for the February meeting were Peter and Michael Scudamore who were interviewed by journalist and Unibet spokesperson Brett Williams. Unfortunately a spot of car trouble meant that Tom was unable to join us though it was great to see Lucinda Russell in the audience..

Compared to many of you, I have been a member of the Club for a relatively short time. However, in those few years I have been lucky enough to attend some really excellent club nights with some first rate speakers. This meeting was, in my opinion, up there with the best and if the smiles and laughter that came from the packed audience is any judge, a lot of other members thoroughly enjoyed the evening too.

The idea at outset was that Brett would interview the two Scudamores. In the

event his role was more of a starter. He dropped the tapes in asking his first question and in the manner befitting a Champion Jockey, Peter was off and running with a whole host of stories, anecdotes, opinions and a lot of laughter. During the evening we covered topics as diverse as how the family first got into racing through to their views of the future of the sport via stories about some of the great horses, jockeys and trainers of the past. It really was an enjoyable and eclectic journey which I cannot hope to cover here. At the risk of sounding like I am on a commission if you missed the meeting you'll have to buy the new book 'The Scudamores three of a kind' and you'll see what I mean.

Though the stories Peter and Michael shared with us were many and varied I thought we kept coming back to two

common themes. Foremost in these was the importance that the history of racing and the great horses and personalities of days gone by have had in shaping the game we have today for example setting up the Jockeys Association. Peter reminded us of the days of cork helmets, no body protectors and sometimes huge fields. He told us a great story of a Novice Chase at Hereford which had 40 runners, so many they could not all line up at the tapes. The story goes that the Starter called out “tryers and the front and non tryers at the back please”! During the evening we met with so many famous names such as Dorothy Paget, Willie Stephenson, Fred Winter, Frenchie Nicholson, David Nicholson John Francome, Martin Pipe and many more besides. Stories were told about great races too, The Grand Annual, The Grand National and the Festival all looming large.

The other theme was the importance of the horses themselves. Peter commented that it is the horse that really captures the public imagination and that this is the way the sport should be promoted. He reminded us of the days of Desert Orchid brought out huge crowds and took us on a journey which looked at some of the great horse which have touched their family history; legends such as Oxo, Sir Ken, Greektown, Earth Summit, Pearlyman, Sabin Du Loir, Carvills Hill and many more besides.

One horse that stands high in the training career of son Michael is Monbeg Dude whose performances included landing the Welsh National in 2013. Michael recalled the rather ‘unusual’ way the horse was acquired. While attending an auction with Mike Tindall and James Simpson- Daniel then of Gloucester rugby (Michael himself was a talented rugby player) a speculative

opening bid was made by one of the players but with no expectation on landing the horse; as regular attendees at charity auctions they often used to start the bidding on items and, out of habit, did so here. However, on this occasion nobody else joined in and a mix up by the consigners meant that the reserve price, which had not been met, had not been filed. Suddenly they had a horse and a bill to be paid! Michael comments they went out to the stable having not seen the animal before, opened the door and at the back was a horse that did not look too promising. ...how wrong this turned out to be for despite injuring himself when trying to jump a gate on his own, the Dude went onto land 4 wins, 8 places and in excess of £250k prize money. Ironically the day after our February meeting I took Katie to her first Tattersalls auction at Cheltenham with strict instructions to stay very still

indeed!

In the book the author, Chris Cook, weaves together the stories of Michael’s 1959 Grand National win on Oxo and the 2017 triumph of One For Arthur which Peter described as his proudest moment in racing (Tom finished 6th Vieux Lion Rouge having been in contention for much of the race). Hearing first hand, and with such enthusiasm and colour, the racing history of the family it is easy to see why.

It was a hugely entertaining evening and I’d like to extend my thanks to Peter, Michael and Brett for giving us their time and entertaining us so well.



By
David Miller

Fuchu, Tokyo, Japan

The World's Largest Racecourse

Japan is an amazing country full of surprises and more like another planet than another country, it challenges everything you know and their version of horse racing is no different, well in fact it is very different to what we have in the UK. The first huge difference is the cost of entry, it was less than 50p each on our day out and that included a race day programme that was more like a magazine than a race card.

Fuchu is the main racecourse in Tokyo and has its own train station with a long-covered walkway leading from it to the course, on a busy day there can be over 220,000 punters there making it one of the largest in the world. The grounds and stands are vast and the facilities offered



are first class. Families are positively encouraged with a huge infield area devoted to children, here they can enjoy a ride on a mini Shinkansen, stroke a talking animatronic horse or

just run wild in the play-areas.

Betting is via a Tote system and is automated, you simply fill in a card which is similar to our placepot card although with many more columns. There is a special information desk where you can get help and even trained staff to help the first-time punters to understand just how to bet and explain the whole schedule of events for the day. The Turfy shop stocks souvenirs with cuddly toys for the children dressed up in the colours of the most famous horses.

We were amazed when we visited to find that there were twelve races that day, four jumps four on the turf and four on the all-weather. The form was detailed in the race programme but here we did hit a problem as we couldn't follow the



Japanese version at all, apparently English versions are made available though. The first race started at eleven o'clock, and with one every half an hour it was a very full days racing.

We visited the paddock to try to get a feel for the racing, it is huge and there are superb facilities for watching the horses, but the first thing to strike us was that there was no sign of any trainers or connections. The horses were being led around as usual and there were a couple of beautiful grey horses being ridden by two red coated escorts.



Once the bell was rung the jockeys ran from the weighing room beneath us and were legged up immediately. The huge information board kept the locals well informed as the horses disappeared under the stands into the tunnel that led to the course, led by the two grey horses. Once out on the track they galloped towards the starting stalls, here again there was something different, it was a very hot day and near the start there was an open barn where the horses could shelter out of the sun to cool off before they were loaded.

The speed with which the horses were loaded was nothing short of astounding, with up to twenty being loaded in less than two minutes

there was no time for them to get overheated or fractious. The stalls handlers did a fantastic job, which raised an obvious question, why is it such a difficult operation in the UK? Why do we so often see horses being pushed and pulled with blindfolds and blankets and in some cases just refusing to enter them at all.



The Japanese horses are all thoroughbreds, many descended from the same lines as our own, they just seem to do a much better job of loading them up. The handlers were dressed in bright green and yellow safety clothing again an obvious course of action, it has always been a concern of mine that a race in the UK might start with an unfortunate handler trapped underneath. The use of bright clothing would surely reduce this risk still further.

The horses also are very colourful with their different hoods and tack, all adding to the spectacle that is racing in Japan. The screens are absolutely massive and easily visible too. The punters get very excited as

the horses near the finish roaring on their favourites. It really is a great day out for all of the family, there was mix of people attending and no threat of any poor drunken behaviour either, that just would not be acceptable here.



The betting hall was interesting too, many Japanese put small plastic sheets on the floor and make that their base for the day. As they are used to sitting on the floor they are happy to stay there watching the screens placing their bets and also collecting their winnings from the numerous machines that surround the cathedral like space.



The plastic sheets are also in evidence outside where many families picnic all along the rails, it is how they reserve their space, and nobody encroaches onto your plastic pitch, that just isn't done in Japan. They are extremely territorial and very polite people.



There are dozens of food outlets offering all sorts of goodies, with plenty of seating. Grandstand seats only cost a few pounds and can be reserved, but really only need to be on feature days as there are also thousands of free seats in the stands. The amounts gambled on horse racing

in Japan are huge with more money being bet than in any other country. In recent years it has been declining, no doubt as a result of the emergence of more online opportunities.



charge the earth while still paying out excellent prize money (20/30% more on average than the UK). It seemed to us that we could learn a great deal from them especially with regard to facilities offered, the cost to the public, and how to attract a wider audience and especially a younger one. Go racing in Japan you won't regret it.

Paul Trott

The Editor would like to add that she went racing in Japan when she was 12 years old as she was living over there. It was a great experience and would agree with Paul that it is well worth making the effort.

CLUB EVENTS:

April 17th

Ladies in Racing

April 20th

Stable visit to Philip Hobbs

names to Sarah ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com by April 6th

Punchestown 30th April - 4th May

Racing and stable visit

names to Sarah ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com

May tbc at Worcester

Picnic and Richard Davies Award

October Punchestown Opening 2 days.

Racing and stable visit to Gordon Elliott

names to Sarah ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com

#GoRacingGreen

This article is to tell you about a new initiative called **#GoRacingGreen** and to let you know how you might be able to help out by simply wearing a green ribbon when you next go racing.

In mid January 2019 a lady called Debbie Matthews decided that she would make a trip to Ascot to watch her favourite horse, Altior, run for the first time. You might be thinking that there is nothing remarkable about that but you need to know that Debbie suffers from social anxiety. To travel on her own to a crowded racecourse meant she had to face her mental health issues full on – even getting into the car to start the journey was a big battle that had to be faced and won. Setting out on this journey was an incredibly brave thing for her to do.

Before she set off Debbie made a posting on Twitter which simply said that she was heading off to Ascot on her own to face some of her anxieties head on. She didn't give the tweet a second thought until checking her phone at a Service Station. She had received lots of messages of support and encouragement which kept her going on the

journey.

Social Media can be something of a curate's egg. There is no doubt that it can be a negative influence but by the same token it also has the power to do a great deal of good. Amongst those who saw the tweet were the Racing Post who printed a story about Debbie and Altior. The story went viral and prompted Debbie to launch **#GoRacingGreen** to encourage people to support others who might be experiencing similar feelings.

Her initiative very quickly caught the imagination of people involved in racing, the media and some race courses too. Support has come from many quarters including Tom Lacey, Nicky Henderson, Fergal O'Brien and Kayley Woollacott. Hereford named a race **#GoRacingGreen** (though it sadly fell into the period where racing was cancelled) Ascot, Ffos Las and Chepstow have also shown their support. The initiative has been featured on ITV Racing, Racing TV, Horse & Hound and many more. Debbie has sent **#GoRacingGreen** hats to all quarters of the country from the top of Scotland to the Isle of Wight. I am writing this article in

mid February, I am sure that by the time you read this list will have grown and grown.

So what is **#GoRacingGreen** all about? It's an initiative to help people that would not normally go racing because they have anxiety. Many people would love a day out of the races but the thought of large crowds, noise, the size of the venue, the consumption of alcohol or simply being nervous about what to do, where to go and what to wear. I know from my own experience that simply being alone in a large venue can be a very uncomfortable experience. I also know that I have (and sometimes still do) opt not to go to an event or venue if I am on my own. The feedback Debbie has received shows that there are a lot of people who feel the same.



Some of these race goers will suffer from mental health issues. There will be others who may have lost a partner and are now alone, some may be suffering from dementia others may be lonely or shy. There are many reasons why people may decide not to go racing. Those that have analysed the statistics suggest that if only 1% of those who suffer from anxiety or depression could be encouraged to go racing that would be an additional 30,000 race goers. That is a lot of people who are missing out of the sheer excitement and exhilaration of being trackside, enjoying days out and getting that sense of wellbeing that comes with a good day out at the races. I think back only a few weeks when Katie and I were jumping up and down, and punching the air as Frodon battled to the line. Weeks have now gone by but we still talk about the buzz of that moment. It's not the same on the TV.

#GoRacingGreen aims to encourage racecourses to make small changes and additions that will help open up a whole new sector of people into the racing community. This could be as simple as a meeting point in a quiet room where visitors can take a time out. While most have access statement in place – level

access, disabled toilets etc – none have an Invisible Access Statement to cover those with mental health issues. In truth a lot of businesses are in the same space. What a great opportunity exists for the racing industry to lead the way? It also makes sound commercial sense; 30,000 is a lot of turnstile clicks and revenue.

We also want to create a **#GoRacingGreen** community. The aim is to encourage race goers to wear a green ribbon or hat to signify either that you are on your own, are anxious or that you are happy for people to come and say hello and sit with you. I wore my ribbon for the first time at Ludlow at the start of February and met up with John, an older race goer who was on his own and wanted a chat. We had a most enjoyable afternoon picking the winners (sometimes) and chatting about the horses.

Cheltenham is a marvellous place to watch racing but for some the size of the venue must make it a daunting proposition. I know a lot of you who read this are regulars at the course; imagine the difference it would make if we were all to wear ribbons?

If you would like to know more about **#GoRacingGreen** and get

involved (or even buy one of their hats – the profits go to the Samaritans and Retraining of Racehorses) check out

<https://goracinggreen.co.uk>.

This initiative has moved very quickly since the start of the year and I am sure that by the time this article is printed there will be a lot of new and exciting developments to read about.

David Miller



Ed sends Apologies to David as he wrote the article on our January meeting and silly me credited Helen with writing it.

You can't get the staff these days!

Jo O'Neill Article

Jonjo Junior turned 21 on January 26th, only a week after winning the Lanzarote Hurdle on Big Time Dancer at Kempton. He is maturing into a talented jockey and he rides out every morning, except the ones he's going to different trainers. On the Monday, there was a huge gooey chocolate cake for everyone to eat during coffee break!



On the 29th, the snow returned and then everything froze so working conditions were slippery and so cold. Snow fell deeper and, by February 1st, the snowplough was out. Maintenance men Federico Bazan and Madaline 'Doc' Radu were incredible: Federico snowploughed, and Doc got up extra early to harrow the gallop. The snow lingered a little, until all that remained were hillocks left by the snowplough, ever diminishing as they melted.

My little Jack Russell Daisy, a gift from the boss last summer, is as accurate in weather-prediction as

the Met Office. Whenever a day is even slightly drizzly, let alone tipping it down, she must be encouraged to get up and leave the house. A very wet day results in Daisy staying in the office, curled up next to Hughie. I even bought her a little Barbour waterproof jacket but given the choice, she'll stay sleeping, fossilised in cosiness. Daisy, clearly, is hankering for the summer – she's not the only one!



February 7th saw racing cancelled due to cases of equine flu. There were over 170 yards on "lockdown", including us. We quarantined our four runners from the previous day at the satellite yard. The atmosphere strangely buzzed, and I was reminded of foot and mouth in 2001, when I worked in my first fulltime job in racing and the sad day at Newbury when two horses died from electrocution in the paddock. These were surreal times in racing, and the equine flu can go alongside these.

There was a national shortage of swabs (a one-ended oversized cotton

bud) and many yards had to make their own with lengths of wire, cotton wool and gauze. Vets and veterinary staff were under pressure and worked overtime with the extra workload. Harrison Day, our head of travelling, drove to Newmarket to pick up 200 swabs from one of the big veterinary practises there. On Friday lunchtime, the head lads helped the vet swab every horse's nose on the premises, including the two in the field and Federico's daughter's Shetland pony!

By Tuesday, we had been declared clear, boosters administered, and racing was back on by Wednesday. Now, horses go racing with a Health Declaration Form, all officially signed, and their temperature added before departure.



Every so often, as stable staff, we must 'go with the flow'! On Monday 18th, I rode first lot and then took Dreamsoftheatre to Cheltenham Racecourse for a 'photo shoot' for Great British Racing, an enterprise dedicated to promoting horseracing, but everything was a bit ambiguous. I was simply told to bring the horse to the pre-parade ring for 10:00.

Before leaving, I plaited Dreamy's mane and swapped my breeches for black trousers. Not knowing what to take, I gathered up a bag containing a racing bridle, lead rein, paddock sheet and roller. We arrived before the allotted time, found the way to the pre-parade was barricaded. I was fascinated to see the racecourse how I never normally see it: quiet of revellers, dozens of dark green wheelie bins lined up like a battalion, decorators touching up paintwork everywhere. There was a quietness never present on a race day, only the sound of drills and the voices of workmen.

I waited awhile in a saddling box, where Dreamy cooled off from sweating in the lorry. I had to remove the paddock sheet as they brought over a saddle. "I need a pad and a girth," I said. I hadn't been told he would be ridden, otherwise I would have brought the appropriate equipment! Fortunately, a young groundsman was there, having been sent to mow the grass in the pre-

parade and he rang his boss, head groundman Ben Hastie, who grabbed a pad and girth from his own ex-racehorse.

There were three lady jockeys being interviewed in front of a camera. Brigette Andrews in lilac and purple stars, Harriet Tucker in red, black and white and Lizzie Kelly in green, blue and white – the colours they had all worn when winning at the Festival. Brigette walked Dreamy, now with a number cloth under the saddle, round the paddock three times and then he stood like a statue for a "reveal shot" with the other two jockeys. he was so well behaved and stood out being a light grey. Hopefully, the film will be used as a promotional tool about the Festival for Great British Racing. On arriving back home, I took Dreamy for two canters!

The next day, I took Lad of Luck to a yard in Kemble, near Cirencester. He was once a bumper-winner with a promising future, whose wind got too bad to continue to race. He's now trying the new job of eventing!

It seemed an age since I had gone racing, as equine flu hit when I was previously scheduled to go. On the 22nd, I had my Presenting filly, nicknamed Tabitha but officially named Notawordofalie, running in the bumper at Warwick and Arrivederchi (Lucky) in the Exeter bumper. I couldn't choose so the office sent me to Exeter. I was very pleased with

Lucky who finished fourth, still only four and ditto with Tabitha, who was green but would have learnt a lot.

February was indeed an odd month, starting with snow and ending with summer temperatures nearing 20s°! This ironically led to a few not running due to the lack of rain!



By the time you are reading this The Cheltenham Festival will have been and gone and we will be looking forward to The Grand National meeting. Safe and sound at both meeting to all.

Publication No. 329 - March 2019

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