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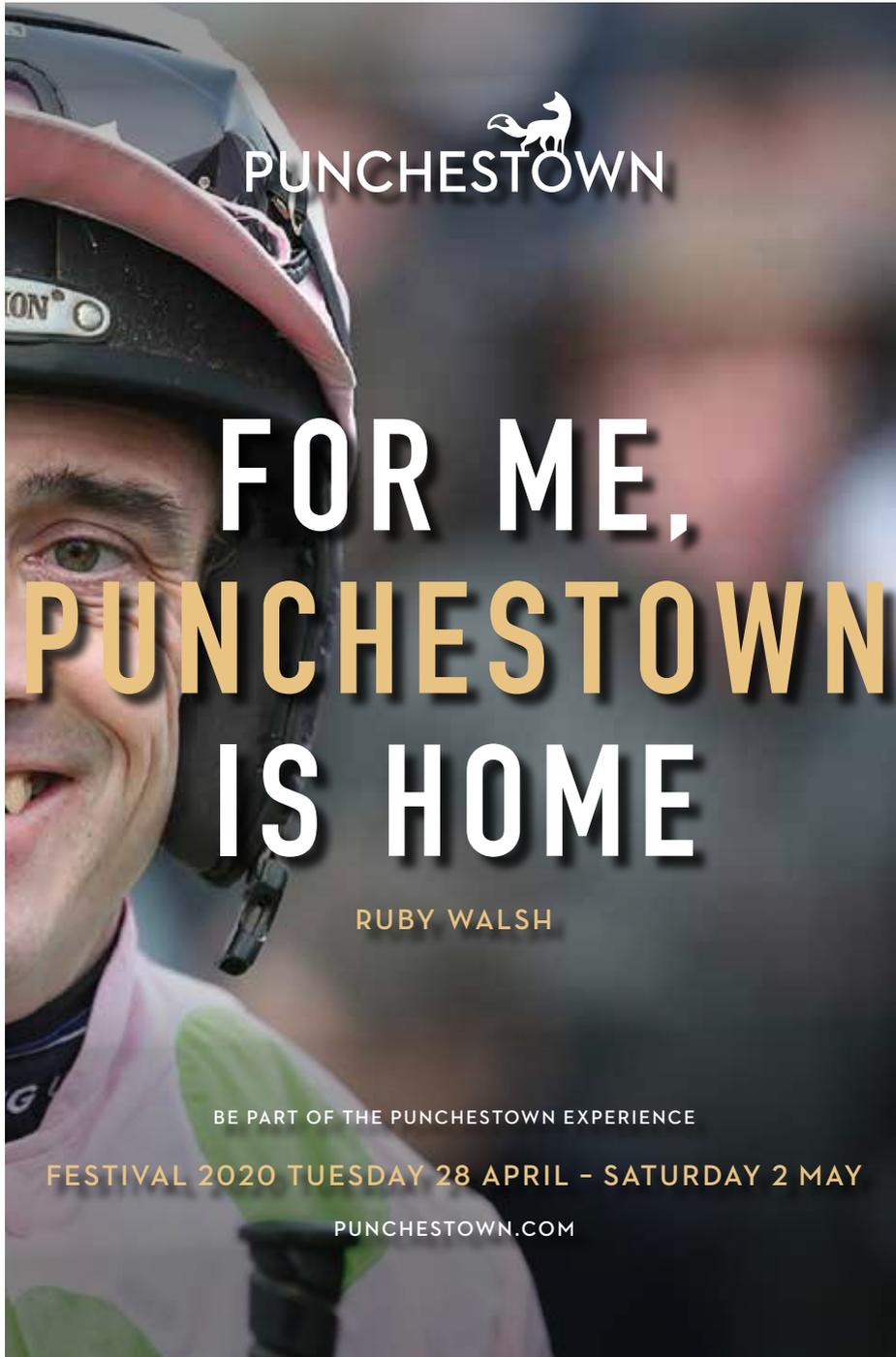


FINISH LINE

Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club



Members on a stable visit to Paul Nicholls



PUNCHESTOWN 

**FOR ME,
PUNCHESTOWN
IS HOME**

RUBY WALSH

BE PART OF THE PUNCHESTOWN EXPERIENCE

FESTIVAL 2020 TUESDAY 28 APRIL - SATURDAY 2 MAY

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CTCRC Visit To Punchestown Races 15th/16th October

I think it was in 2013 that I had my first taste of none Festival Punchestown racing and every summer since then I have looked forward to the trip to the first meeting of the year almost as much as my annual April pilgrimage to this most excellent and welcoming of venues.

The contrast between the two events is immense, the crowds, the best dressed ladies, the fairground, the reserved enclosure and the champagne bar have all gone replaced by a small but enthusiastic and knowledgeable racing crowd.

If Cheltenham in early October is the unofficial start of the British jump season this Punchestown meeting is definitely the Irish equivalent.

This was the third year that our club has attended and although the numbers were down from the previous year it was a most enjoyable experience enhanced by the company of the other members.

There was some quality racing served up on both days and certainly a couple of the races reminded me of a conversation I had with Ted Walsh (name dropping!) at the same meeting some years ago when he bemoaned the lack of attendees in comparison to the numbers attending Cheltenham's opener the following week given the horses that compete.

Following a visit to The Irish National Stud on Tuesday morning to pay homage to The Fly where I met up with Sarah and Mike and Sarah Lawrence it was on to Punchestown where we met up with Nigel and Nicola and Peter.



The first race was not exactly a surprising result with Rachael Blackmore taking the Beginners Chase on the Henry de Bromhead/Giginstown Notebook who appears to be a useful prospect. Someone said recently that within 5 years no one will be talking about female jockeys and that all participants will be jockeys. Rachael is proof that it should not take that long.



The two mile 6 furlong handicap chase followed and watching the runners in the paddock Nicola, Nigel and I agreed that if it was a beauty contest Number 12 would win hands down and just for once he did. Fruits of Glory at 8/1 was a nice result.

The 3 year olds hurdle belonged to Joseph O'Brien whose runners filled the first two places. It seemed until the final strides that his unfancied 25/1 Cerberus would provide a shock result but favourite backers breathed a sigh of relief when 4/5 Fav A Wave of the Sea rallied to score by a neck.

The big race of the day the 20,000 euro Ladbroke Hurdle had three good class runners in the odds on favourite Bothar Dubh for Declan Queally, John McConnell's Play the Game and the Fred Winter runner up Coko Beach for Gordon Elliott and Jack Kennedy. The four year old Coko Beach prevailed, and is said to have a bright future.



Another Rachael Blackmore ridden Gigginstown 4 year old Sixshooter took the 2m 4f Maiden Hurdle, and the handicap hurdle was won by the favourite Premier D'troice in a very competitive race.

The Bumper was just what one expects at Punchestown since the retirement of Nina Carberry, Jamie Codd and Patrick Mullins locked together in combat on the turn for home. On this occasion it was JJ who prevailed on the 15/8 Larquesbuse from Patrick on the 11/8 favourite Rhyme'n Rhythm related to Voy per Ustedes. Time will tell what we witnessed.



The highlight of day two should, for me, have been the 35,000 Euro Grade 3 Buck House Novice Chase with 3 Gigginstown runners of comparable ability trained by Gordon Elliott, Noel Mead and Henry de Bromhead taking on a Willie Mullins outsider. Within 4 fences the contest was over as a spectacle with favourite Daly Tiger pulling up with a slipped saddle and Swordsman falling at the fourth and sadly injuring Jack Kennedy in the process. That left the grey Jan Maat and Rachael Blackmore to win easily from Cool Colonnade and Paul Townend. To my untrained eye all these runners could have a good future.

Rachael had already taken the Maiden Hurdle first scoring easily on Beacon Edge another Gigginstown runner for the in form Noel Meade by 10 lengths.

The Grade 3 Irish Daily Star Chase for a 40,000 euro purse was seen as a 3 way battle between Gigginstown class chasers Alpha Des Obeaux, Balko Des Flos and Tout Est Permis. Surely the winner would come from one of these. The punters discounted Jessie Harrington's Jett at their peril however, the 22/1 shot holding off Alpha Des Obeaux by the shortest of heads.

It wasn't a bad day for Mrs Harrington and Puppy Power. My friends and I always take a very close look at their runners in handicaps at the April Festival, I regret not doing so in the October equivalent which they took with Conron at 7/1.

Other winners on day two were Shumaker and Allduckandnoddiner which gave the very competent Miss Emma Sweeny her first ever winner. She led from start to finish on her mother's owned and bred horse and there was considerable celebration in the winner's enclosure.



The last race of the day saw Lisa O'Neil get Gordon Elliott's Fantasio D'alene up to beat Jamie Codd on Good Time Jonny by a head. Some

ride as she had been headed near home by Mr Codd and there are few occasions when he doesn't go on to win in those circumstances as we all know. Lisa is another who supports the theory that five years is too long to wait.

We thought that was the end of our entertainment but as Sarah and I were saying our goodbyes we noticed a number of horses being mounted in pre parade and were then treated to a series of racecourse gallops which include, it transpired, none less than Samcro. The highlight for me however was seeing amongst the 'work riders' a hero, Paul Carberry, still riding with that unmistakable style. Anyone who witnessed it will never forget his ride on Harchibald when he chased down Rooster Booster from a seemingly impossible distance at Kempton Park in the Christmas Hurdle. As they say "it made my day".



All in all an unforgettable couple of days for many reasons, and the sun was shining to the end.

Punchestown really is worth a visit or two, so it is.

By Dick Purcell

CTCRC Stable Visit to Gordon Elliott



It didn't seem like it when the visit was announced by our Stable visit supremo Sarah but it had been two years since we last went to Cullentra House Stables, County Meath. Now a lot can happen in two years, old favourites bow out, new stable stars come in, Brexit deals can be sorted out. Oh hold a minute, forget that last one, but you get my drift. The small number of us that were over the water bowled up at 08:30 prompt to be met by Mary Nugent who was to give us the tour once again. I stood by the first stable door waiting for my colleagues to decamp from their vehicles and on turning round found it's inmate to be a certain Mengli Khan, whose career earnings are over £160,000. Not a bad start to the tour then. Mary took us off to have a look in the tack room at a board controlling which horses were in which lot for the gallops and who was to ride them. There were around 40 horses a lot as far as I could work out, but with 200 stables on site it would take a while to give every horse its exercise. We had a little look round the stables before heading to the new observation post on the gallops and it was hard to take the size of the operation in.



One little block housed Shattered Love the first mare to win the JLT, Battleoverdoyen winner of 60k in only 4 completed runs and a funny little horse called Tiger Roll, no idea what this one has done apart from 2 nationals and 4 Cheltenham wins and £1.3 million in earnings. I can tell one end of a horse from the other, just, but I couldn't tell you what sets this little fellow apart from his stable mates by just looking and neither could anybody else. All three of them however were totally relaxed and at ease and almost posed for all the photos that were taken.



Up on the gallops there was a new observation deck which gave a

wonderful view all down the incline so when the horses had warmed up on the circular sand track we had a fantastic view as they galloped their way up the inclined sand gallop towards us. There are in fact two gallops running parallel the other being for speed work. In amongst all these gallops there is an all weather strip with the practice hurdles and jumps on and a grass gallop with hurdles and fences too.



Back at the stables afterwards I noticed there were three new stables of a different design to the others, these being open at the back onto their own little yards. Samcro, Cracking Smart and Alpha des Obeaux were the residents, and there, as Mary explained, because it was felt the horses benefitted from the air and the chance to socialise. Samcro for whom the stable holds high hopes is there because he had a cold at the end of last season which effected performance and the stable is trying to ensure no such niggles get in the way of this seasons campaign. The commentator's nightmare Coolongolook was stabled just round the corner as was Flawless Escape

and Andy Dufresne who has yet to taste defeat on the track.



At this point it was beginning to get a bit too much to take it all in and I came across Black Tears a five year old mare who must be the best looking horse in the yard and is quite an accomplished performer over hurdles too. Vyta Du Roc and Uchello Conti a couple of Munir and Souede owned horses also poked their heads out to say hello. After almost three hours of stroking and taking pictures of over 140 horses we finally had seen it all and what an all it had been. Many thanks to Gordon, Mary and the team for letting us through their doors again for another fantastic visit.

On the way back to Punchestown for the races and wondering what to bet I called in at tarot card reader in Naas. My wife has arranged this as a birthday treat

I explained. "Can you tell me what the cards say please?"

"Easy" she replied "Happy Birthday Mike, love Mum and Dad!"

Happy Days

Mike

CTCRC Stable Visit to Paul Nicholls

How do you compete with a recent CTCRC stable visit to Gordon Elliot I almost hear you asking. Well I think Sarah Matthews found a decent enough answer, go and have a look round Paul Nicholls yard and meet some of the horses that carried him to an eleventh trainers championship last season. So the day before Halloween found 16 of us battling our way down to Ditcheat in Somerset full of joie de vivre and not caring a jot that the M5 had been shut down for the day, and we had a 1hour detour. My short term memory is awful so I couldn't tell you who were present but as always it was a very friendly bunch. Also I have to tell you my short term memory is awful.



We were met at the yard by one of Pauls PA's Hannah Roche, slightly later than a normal visit as the yard has now cranked itself up into top gear and she had only just returned from riding out. She started the visit in the front yard with a look at Politologue the grey 2 miler who has a couple of grade 1's to his name

and would probably have had more if not for being around at the same time as Altior. The current plan is to stay over two miles this season. One of the notable things about the yard, in keeping with a few others, are the name plates of the horse and the grade 1 race that they won are up on the stable door from where they were incumbants at the time of their victory. We could see Politologue's stable had therefore been home to Strong flow at the start of the century and then Denman shortly after that. Paul may need to get bigger doors before long! Clan des Obeaux was also housed in the front yard, whose main target of the current season is likely to be the King George at Kempton as it appears that he prefers going right handed. Hannah was proving to be a fount of knowledge as she knew all the horses, their backgrounds, intended targets etc and was very patient with our questions. She explained at some point that because of the ridiculous price of young horses that had shown any sort of promise on the track the yard had invested in store horses. The feeling was that this may now beginning to bear fruit with a lot of young horses now performing at a very good level. This leads me onto 4 year old Quel Destin who won 5 races last season including a grade 1 at Chepstow and is in the same ownership as Dodging Bullets. Another horse along the same lines is 5 year old McFabulous who won a grade 2 bumper at Aintree last

season and is reported to be a very good jumper already. Ecco is another horse who is expected to do well in novice hurdles this year after having been on the back foot last year due it is thought, to having been gelded, which seems reasonable enough to me! Golden Gift was yet another novice hurdler to look forward to although he is a big horse so may take a bit longer to really get going.



Truckers lodge was housed at the bottom of the main yard (it's built on a hill) who it appears is going for the Welsh Grand National in December. There are two yards in operation as Paul has so many horses in his care and Paul Barber his landlord makes the hay for them all and takes a great deal of pride in the quality of it. Some of the big name National Hunt riders come in 1 day a week to ride out and supplement the 56(ish) full time riders and 30 odd other riders who help out.



As we continued to wander round Frodon came back from the gallops and was quite obliging when it came to the taking of photos. Another horse to look forward to this season and one that seemed a particular favourite of Hannah's was stabled near to Frodon and is called Silver Forever. A lovely mare that is reported to be a quite brilliant jumper and will win lots of races. It was also interesting to note that Yala Enki is now part of the Nicholls team and so is Mercy Mercy Me which was formerly a Fergal O'brien horse of some promise. It's hard to keep up with it all but I dare say we will keep trying. After saying farewell to Hannah most of us repaired back to a local hostelry to for a spot of luncheon and partake of lively debate as to what we had seen that morning although not me as I sat and contemplated my fate for that afternoon, Ditcheat being rather to close to Clarks Shopping Village for my wallets liking.

Mike

Ps Ecco romped home at Ascot the following Saturday



October Club Night with Graeme McPherson and Jodie Mogford

A Foot In Two Camps



For our October meeting we welcomed local trainer, Graeme McPherson and his former stable jockey and now assistant trainer, Jodie Mogford. Yet another evening galloped by with a range of racing stories past and present. Both guests have 'alternative' careers in ensuring racing is a clean sport as Graeme is a QC and Jodie sits on the BHA Disciplinary Panel. This wasn't an evening about training but

a highly entertaining talk on Racing and the Law by a leading QC for our sport.

Graeme told us he always had a passion for horses and arrived in racing through his attempts to be a point to point rider. He does not come from a racing family (his mother only went racing once and was unimpressed) but used to run a book at school and only started riding later in life at a Club based in

the Royal Mews! His racing career started with John Upton, progressing to point to point riding, then training. He managed to win one race but was otherwise pretty useless as a jockey. He switched his attention to training when he met his wife and has now been training for 10 years with a current yard of some 65 horses at his Martins Hill Stables, Stow on the Wold.

Long before he started training Graeme qualified as a barrister and has now been a QC for 11 years. Graeme was very frank about his early involvement with racing when the system was by no means fair and often based on social prejudices. Disciplinary hearings were once very one sided and not at all impartial. What really changed things was the Human Rights Act which brought sports tribunals to an end as an unfair 'trial'. The BHRA was one of first sports bodies to make changes.

Current hot legal topics in racing are use of the whip, equine welfare and the ever present risk of corruption which continues to plague so many sports. Jodie also felt we could not ignore the increased use of

drugs by jockeys and their problems with weight management were wider moral issues facing the racing community.

Graeme has seen '*the best and worst of racing*' having worked for both the BHRA, the Jockeys Association and the Trainers Federation. The list of racing personalities for whom he has worked includes two of his childhood National Hunt heroes, Jonjo O'Neill and Ginger McCain, and numerous leading National Hunt and flat jockeys, including Frankie Dettori. He led the appeal for the reinstatement of Simple Verse as the 2015 St Leger winner and was involved in the enquiry into the chaotic start of the 2014 Grand National, acting on behalf of 39 of the 40 riders in the race. This latter Enquiry led to a review of starting procedures with many less false starts today. He also spoke strongly about the risks of corruption occurring in the sport from stopping horses, and how that corruption has in the past been uncovered – from unwisely shared pillow talk, analysis of betting patterns and phone records, and '*following the*

money'. He also talked about the widely-reported Jim Best Enquiry and how that Enquiry led to the root and branch Quinlan Review into the Disciplinary Panel, Licensing Committee and Appeal Board of the BHA, which in turn resulted in significant changes being made to the way discipline in horseracing is maintained and administered.

Jodie completed our evening telling us all he ever wanted to do was be a jockey. He started his mission with David Wintle at 16, moving on several times – not always successfully - to various trainers including Tim Forster. His first winner was at Bangor on Dee at 33-1 at which point it all seemed easy to a young man in a rush. His next two rides were PU! As a retired jockey he now serves on the Disciplinary Panels which draw members from all aspects of the sport – stewards, jockeys, vets,, owners, farriers, trainers all of whom create a diverse panel of judges. The Panels are 'truly independent' with 8 QCs as possible chairs and 23 other members to chose from. There is also a fast track phone panel system

to deal with simple errors such as passports.

Both our guests felt that British horseracing is now in a good place with one of *'fairest systems in place across our domestic sports'*.

Graeme and Jodies Seasonal Stable

Tips

Zulu Dawn

Ami du Bois

Hatab

Written by

Helen Cameron



Cheltenham

The November Meeting

The three day Bet Victor meeting is one of the most eagerly awaited racing events of the autumn. This is when the jumps season really takes off, with some old favourites returning to do battle alongside some less experienced horses hoping to emerge as stars of the future at the home of National Hunt racing.

Unfortunately, as we are all aware, the weather intervened, and Simon Claisse had to take the unenviable decision of abandoning Friday's card. Two days remained. I must admit, my thoughts turned to the 2008 Festival. Would the majority of the Friday's card become scattered over Saturday and Sunday? These thoughts were quickly assuaged with the announcement that only two of Fridays races would be transferred to the weekend. The Ballymore Novices' hurdle was moved to Saturday, with the Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Chase transferred to Sunday.

Saturday started very bright and sunny, a total contrast to the previous few days (or was it weeks?!). To the casual observer the course looked in good nick but the going description of heavy, soft in places, hinted that it would be an arduous weekend for horses and jockeys alike.

The day commenced with a now customary visit to a watering hole for a pre-race tippie and banter with my drinking buddy Sarah Matthews (who you may know). It's probably just me but buying a pint under the new plastic cup rules is proving a tad stressful and confusing. Once I had downed my drink, do I walk around with the cup in my pocket or hand it back?! I ended up taking it home! I now have the ritual before I set off to Cheltenham; membership badge....check, membership card....check, binoculars....check, money....check, plastic beer cup.....give me a break.....

Back to the racing. The aforementioned Ballymore Novices' Hurdle gave us an interesting prospect for the season ahead with Philip Hobbs' Thyme Hill finishing a cosy three lengths ahead of Champagne Well with Happygolucky in third.



It was the turn of the three-year olds in the next race with Dan

Skelton's Allmankind making all to win in eye catching style despite losing his near fore shoe with Botox Has and Repetitio making up the places in his wake.



The highlight of the day, the Bet Victor Gold Cup produced a thrilling race where the first five to finish were of double figure odds. Happy Diva provided compensation for trainer Kerry Lee after being brought down four out in the previous year's race. Barry Geraghty nearly spoilt the party going down by a neck on Brelan D'As. Warthog, who ran a cracking race, finished third and Belami Des Pictons fourth. The result might have been very different if Slate House had not forgotten to engage his landing gear two out when travelling like he had just entered the race. Interestingly Happy Diva was the first mare to win the race since Lady Cricket in 2000. It was to be Splash of Ginge's last race as his retirement was announced later that day.

The final race of the day, the Karndeian Designflooring Mares' Standard Open National Hunt Race was won by the Hughie

Morrison trained Urban Artist. The mare totally outran her odds of 16/1. Considering that she came from a flat dominated yard, she seemed a cert, (in hindsight)

Special mention goes to jockey Sam Lee who managed to slip out an expletive live on ITV when being interviewed straight after winning the Spinal Injuries Association Big Buck's Handicap Hurdle aboard Golan Fortune.

Sunday brought us a cloudy, misty day, described by Rupert Bell, on Cheltenham radio, as 'dreek'. I met Sarah again for our customary imbibe, walked (plastic pint cup in pocket.....check) to the nearest bar for another 'plastic' of the black stuff. I'd like to say that it is a lucky ritual but my betting left a lot to be desired on the previous day and little did I know that the bookies would be planning their holidays on the money they would make out of me from the seven races on the day!



The Glenfarclas Cross Country had a French finish to it with Diesel D'Allier ahead of Urgent De Gregaine. Both were trained by Emmanuel Clayeux and one

can't help but be impressed with the manner they finished the race. Enda Bolger and Gordon Elliott will have some tough competition come the Festival.



There was an interesting race ahead in the Racing Post #responsiblegambling Arkle Trophy Trial Novices' Hurdle. The talk was whether Getaway Trump would have revenge on Al Dancer now that he was better off in the weights. Unfortunately, nobody told Put The Kettle On (6/1 outsider), who strode on from the front and was never headed. She was Henry De Bromhead's only entry on the day and made the trip over from Knockeen well worth the effort.



Next, we had the Shloer Chase. Politologue led Defi Du Seuil until

the final 120 yards when Philip Hobbs charge stole the show with a fine turn of foot. Nicky Richards' grand old servant did not disgrace himself in third. He will be back at Leopardstown over Christmas where he seems to excel.

The Greatwood Hurdle treated us to the best finish of the weekend with four horses in with a chance at the last. I wasn't easy to call the winner even as they approached the winning post. Alan King's Harambe triumphed over the likeable Gumball in second with Monsieur Lecoq and Quoi de Neuf third and fourth respectively. Less than two lengths separated the four combatants.



There were some very competitive races over the weekend coupled with some cracking finishes to boot. The meeting has definitely set the juices flowing for the rest of the season as National hunt racing starts to go through the gears building up to the spring festivals. I can't wait!!

Ian Blick

Stable Life at Jonjo O'Neill Racing

By Jo O'Neill

At the end of August, news came out that Jewson was no longer going to sponsor Jonjo O'Neill Racing. They had backed the yard for thirteen years and the royal blue uniform had given us nicknames such as Smurfs and blueberries. Our new sponsors are Wasdell Group, a pharmaceutical packaging company owned by Martin Tedham. He is also an owner, having Wasdell (now retired), Wasdell Dundalk, Tedham and Papa Tango Charly run in his yellow and navy colours. It was the end of an era but also a new start.

The website got updated and I was added (including a photo, in which I scooped up Daisy and was being nibbled by Piggy Winkle) as a head of travelling. To be honest, I am more head of emptying the washing machines!



JOJO
O'NEILL

TRAVELLING HEAD LASS

Two days before the annual owners' day, there was a major upset when the newly painted, sparkly pool suddenly emptied to half full overnight. Gallons and gallons had seeped out. As the whole pool had taken longer than two weeks to fill up, there was no time to refill it. It meant there were no swimming demonstrations scheduled for the owners to watch. After excavating with a digger and manpower from the maintenance men, the leak's source was a broken pipe.



Owners' days take a lot of plotting and planning. There is much cleaning; lists are made and often changed; there are weeks of preparation in the office! Amber Cartlidge and I ransacked the racing tackroom and took all the colours to hang up in the marquee. It took many goes to get it looking correct: "Too many orange colours over there" and "Two blue next to each other there", like we were sewing a crazy quilt pattern that was never quite perfect.

Our owners' day was on September 1st and was the first day of wearing the new Wasdell Group gear: navy emblazoned with the new logo. At the beginning, it was rather strange seeing everyone in a different shade of blue, but we all liked it!

A couple of hundred owners came for the day that was mostly sunny. All us staff had a couple of horses to lead round in the parade. Some brushed dust from coats, shavings from tails and oiled hooves; others ran the bridles and lead ropes around the yard. I led round 'my' Arrivederci, who was hot-headed, and I had to keep him circling round me to retain any control. It was unfortunate he was inside the indoor school when everyone applauded Mr Tedham for sponsoring us – none of his feet on the ground!

I had not been on an overnight for five years, so was happy to go to Kelso with two runners and head of travelling, Harrison Day. We shared the seven-hour journey, with stops for refuelling and a tasty meal at Tebay services. Kelso is a friendly racecourse, and not a lot had changed, including the clerk of the course, who gave us a big welcome. The accommodation is still the pebble-dashed square box situated next to the stables. Only inside had altered: the dormitory-style bedroom had gone three years before. Replaced by six twin rooms, with comfy beds, shelves and plug sockets handily placed for charging mobile phones. It was a delight! Less delightful was the unchanged bathroom: one lone shower cubicle

in the toilets with a transparent curtain and no lock on the door... just the same old handy chair to wedge beneath the door handle! Even the terracotta paint was the same, but it was very clean, and the shower had plenty of hot water.

In previous visits, we had been escorted to town and had a meal with all drinks paid for, but this must have been costly, especially when it inevitably became a knees-up. This time, we were presented with a £15 voucher for a local pub and a number of a taxi. There was a small group of us, with staff from Graeme McPherson's and we had a fun evening, chatting.

The next morning after the mucking out and leading out, Harrison and I walked the track, which was interesting to see the groundsmen watering the track. It resembled a tripod out of *War of the Worlds* and was moving slowly round the hurdle track.



We had a good day with Tidal Watch (Tiddle) coming second in a chase and my Notawordofalie (Tabitha) winning the mares' bumper.

She is a tiny, delicate filly, with a nervousness about her but she stuck on well under Jonjo Jnr. It was my first time leading up winning Coolmore colours, the purple and white of many Derby winners, and possibly their first winner at Kelso. With Tabitha winning the bumper, it was too late to leave for home. We tucked them both up for another night, their feed supplemented with carrots from the large net that Kelso winners are presented with! I was up at 4:00 to feed and we were on the road an hour later. It was a lovely visit over the border and great to have a winner too.

On October 1st, the permanent closure of Towcester Racecourse was announced. It was sad news about a course where I had led up winners earlier in my career and where AP McCoy had had his 4000th winner. It had been a track that continued to improve (a new stable yard metres from the pre-parade – the old, dingy stables had been a box-up) and diversifying with a greyhound track. The track itself was unique, with the uphill finish and horses had to jump well. Towcester has followed Folkestone, and I hope no other racecourses are doomed.

Throughout bickering and squabbles, I continuously tell the younger staff to embrace hostel living! And occasionally I am proved right. Amber organised the cooking of a communal Sunday roast. The lamb joint was home-reared from Amber's family's small flock and donated to the meal. Each hostel-dweller was dealt a culinary task;

even new girl Rachel McMahon was delegated cauliflower cheese. Amber, assisted by Matty Gill, took over the vast amount of the cooking so it was down to them that a huge and delicious roast was served up.



Amber is in her second season here, having spent many years riding out for Ben Pauling. Amber graduated from her degree and rides out in the morning and works in the office during the afternoons. She is an asset to the yard, a brilliant rider who has tamed difficult Pop Rockstar, and rides regularly in team chases on her own ex-racehorse.

She also got the maintenance men to make a mounting block, a vital object missing from Jackdaws Castle. We would leap on from an upturned big bucket (once full of pool cleaning chemicals) but this was far from graceful if the horse tall, or impatient or the bucket wobbly from being on uneven ground. The new mounting block is wooden, painted black, solid – a mountain at a metre high. At first, only the quietest horses would stand alongside it; all others would refuse, shy away and snort. Now, having been there long

enough for the horses to become accustomed to it, nearly all stand upside down and the rider steps up, throwing a leg over. No scrambling, struggling leaps into saddles, or worst: the leaps of faith that would often go wrong. We have Amber to thank for this.



I started looking after Prefontaine this summer. I love his dark steel grey colour and friendly character; he is cuddly, nuzzling and pokes his nose into me. I nicknamed him Fonty. He had run on the Flat for trainer Roger Varian, winning once. He ran twice in a week when unseating at Huntingdon at the second hurdle, then coming second of three runners round Fontwell. Just sometimes we cannot go racing with our horses, if we are short staffed on our weekends on – so hence why I was not able to go to Kempton when he won on 20th October. Yet, I was delighted: for Jonjo Jnr for giving him a brilliant ride, for the blinkers making him concentrate, colleague Ben Haig for leading him in and having his first winner and for owner Paul Smith (son of Derrick Smith, of

Coolmore) for having his first Jumps winner. Fonty is a quirky little horse, who is still on borrowed time due to his first couple of runs, but at least he won, and it gave me a lot of satisfaction.



Then, on October 24th, a grey wet day, I took 'my' March Is On (Marty) to Southwell and he won under Adrian Heskin. Marty had suffered a very bad over-reach back in February, which could have been career-ending, but his owners willingly paid for his treatment and gave him lots of time off. There were times in the summer, when he was on box rest, that his leg looked very bad with weeping proud flesh, even I was not sure Marty would make it.



Yet, he did me proud and it may have only been a little race at

Southwell, but it meant a lot. Little Marty proved his big heart and won by a few lengths. He rewarded his patient owners and deserved the win.

The next day, Imperial Command ran on the Flat at Doncaster. I drove up with Rachael, who was having her first day's racing for us. I was told to show Rachael how to do everything correctly. Yet, I forgot grooming kit, so there was no plaiting, improvised brushing and we used my own hair detangler on his tail. There was a lot of laughter, and the colt ran well on horribly soft going!

At the weekends, I look after the horses who are trained from the pens and are holidaying in the fields. The pens are tranquil if not a bit soggy, but doing the fields mean trawling through the pockmarked, muddy ground with feed bags to empty into their bowls. The rattle of nuts brings the horses stampeding over, often bucking, kicking and frolicking like they are not fed twice daily! There may only be three in each field but feels more like a herd of wild Mustangs with all those hooves flailing about.

One Saturday evening, a fat cock pheasant was crouched by the jeep. He was unafraid, pecking happily at the nuts I put down for him. I could not touch him, but he came close. He was so beautiful; a shiny myriad of russets, golds, reds, browns; like the colours of autumnal trees. I called him Philip. Yet sadly, I did not see him again

and at the weekends, I found myself thinking about the tubby pheasant who obviously loved food; sadly, concluding a fox had eaten him or he had been shot.



Until, approximately six weeks later, a small but rotund feathery figure followed the jeep's wheels. Every other pheasant ran away in their hapless way, but he ran as fast as he could towards me. My friendly pheasant was back, and he was there in the evening too! I got close enough for him to peck at my coat sleeve, so maybe he was not totally affable! I know the odds are definitely not in Philip's favour, especially when those beater's trudge the countryside with their flapping flags, but I wish he could come and live at the pens where there would be lot of nuts to eat and several places high up to perch.



Upton Viva Stud By JLB

Our first two foals were weaned at the beginning of September. Stravinsky Dance and Liberthine were quietly walked out of their paddock to another field at the far end of the farm. They have both had several foals and seemed to know that this is how it goes..... the foals called for their mums for a short while but as both were already pretty independent they soon settled and stood with Granny Violet eating haylage. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly both mums and foals get over this separation but as I've said previously we always wean our foals well into their six month when they aren't so dependent on their dams.

Also at the beginning of September I decided that the time had come to start getting Blue back out into a paddock after her four month incarceration. As you may remember she had surgery on an infected pedal bone at the beginning of June and although the sole has not completely regenerated, there is still quite a large area which hasn't granulated as yet, I felt the time was right. Obviously she is well bandaged and the foot covered in at least half a

roll of duct tape!!! We used electric tape to cordon off a small area of paddock behind the barns, had two ponies either side of her and for the first few days a good dose of sedative.....Her digestive system needed to adjust to eating grass again, so to start with she was only allowed out for a couple of hours at a time. She threw some amazing shapes those first few days and I could only imagine how good it must of felt to be back out albeit in a restricted area.



Only once in the history of the stud, prior to this year, have we had an infected pedal bone.....at the beginning of October we x rayed a broodmare who's lameness hadn't improved after poulticing for three days and once again an infected pedal bone was diagnosed. Obviously an in foal mare is always going to be at risk if taken out of her usual environment especially a maiden and Dotty (Nonesuch) was unfortunately no exception. She was taken to our vets practice for the

standing surgery to her front foot and all went well but two days later she started to show signs of distress and colic symptoms. Despite numerous scans, rectal examinations etc etc, no cause could be found. The only conclusion was that she was possibly reacting to a sudden change of diet and our usual vet Naomi was so concerned that she was going to abort that she stayed up all night with her initially, even hand grazing her by floodlight at 2am!! The hand grazing continued at hourly intervals over the following two days, not overnight I hasten to add, and as Dotty did not show any more colic like symptoms she was allowed home. She was put in a foaling box so I could monitor her via camera and the hand grazing continued at regular intervals. If she even so much as looked at her belly she was whisked outside for some Dr Green. As Dotty's surgery had not been as invasive as Blue's was, it wasn't long before I was able to pair the two of them up and gradually increase turnout for them both. Happy to report that they are both out all day and in at night now, which I suspect will be the norm for the rest of the winter. I would never normally pair an in foal mare up with a two year old but as Blue hadn't had contact with another horse except the resident ponies, since the end of May there was no risk factor to

be considered and I needed both horses to be in as near normal routine as I could.

We have had our usual amount of casualties with pus in the foot with both young stock and mares but thankfully after a few days poulticing all have recovered well. The ground is so saturated with copious amount of mud, that obviously all horses like to stand in, so with the quantity of horses we have it is inevitable that the odd one or two will be become affected.

Another casualty who moved in with Blue and Dotty at the end of October, was The Missus..... she had a very nasty over reach to the underside of her fetlock joint which needed dressing and bandaging daily and kept free of mud, not an easy task with this last months deluge. Also being another in foal mare she needed to be moving about and not stood in a stable so our duo of ER patients increased to three! Even Missy's wound was not straight forward as it was inevitably infected and a couple of weeks down the line started to grow proud flesh which then resulted in treating it with copper sulphate..... pleased to say that the bandages are now off and the wound is starting to heal.

Also at the end of October we

weaned our last two foals and just as the first two had settled very quickly these two were no different. Now Granny Violet has four playful boys to contend with over the next few months. She does her job brilliantly as all her lessons are taught by body language to which the boys are quick to respond and those that are a little slow in getting the message get shown a set of teeth and the "mare stare"!! The picture below was taken moments after the last two mares were taken away.....as can be seen, food was far more important than watching their mums walking away.....



Santa Adelia, of which we had such high hopes of a good racing career before coming to join the stud very sadly broke down days before she was due to run at Warwick at the beginning of November. Despite a very damaged tendon our vets are confident that with three months box rest and

the usual rehab exercise regime she will be sound enough to be a broodmare, although much sooner than anticipated. Delia came to us in June 2018 from France after damaging the tendon on her right fore. She was brought slowly back into work after three months walking in January of this year and the leg regularly scanned to check on any abnormalities that may have developed. The tendon remained strong and seemingly coping with training when going on to Warren Greatrex in September but after heat was found and the leg scanned it revealed that once again the tendon was damaged. Their diligence was greatly appreciated by us all because she is quite a favourite and at least she will have a new career to start next year when given the "all clear"

They say things come in threes but in our case recently it seems to be "multiples" as Fin du Match, a 4 Yr old by Poliglote bought in France earlier this year has also done a leg and is also now retired to the stud. Her injury was more severe than Delia so we have gone down the route of BMAC. This is a cross between stem cell treatment and PRP.....a concoction of bone marrow which is injected directly into the damaged tendon. She and Delia will follow a strict exercise regime of daily

walking in increments of 5 minutes over several months. Both mares seem in good spirits and coping with box rest very well.

Another incident was Makadamia aborting her Jack Hobbs foal in early October. She would have been due at the end of January so finding a foetus at this stage in pregnancy was distressing for us all. As is protocol for all TB Stud, the foetus was sent to the Animal Health Trust for a post-mortem. The results concluded that the umbilical was almost double the normal length so sadly as the foal moved around in the uterus the cord twisted cutting off the oxygen supply. The mare was completely fine and as nature dictates she carried on with life as normal.

In mid October whilst doing one of our regular field checks I found Tidara Angel, (another brood mare) not looking her normal self and very reluctant to move. My brain went into overdrive as she was 9 months into her pregnancy, the time when a condition called placentitis can occur. This is an infection that thickens the placenta, making it less viable and can cause abortion. I dragged the poor mare very unceremoniously down to the barns while talking to the vets on the phone and within half an hour my diagnosis was confirmed. The onset of this

condition can be very subtle, so knowing your horses is paramount for a good outcome. At this point in time Angel has now been on antibiotics for almost a month and her SAA is zero (a blood test showing levels of infection) We will have to monitor her very closely for the remainder of her pregnancy and she will probably remain on antibiotics as a precaution but so far so good.

Here's hoping that the next couple of months will be uneventful and that the constant rain will stop for at least a week or two.....

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from Upton x

Note from Editor:

Robert Waley Cohen sends out an email regarding his runners. If anyone would like to be added to the circulation list please email Sarah on

ctcchairman@gmail.com

John Hales Article

We have had a very encouraging start to the season with plenty more runners before the end of the year. The star so far must be Maire Banrigh who has now won both starts over fences. Her jumping at Warwick was electric and accurate and beat last year's runner up in the Supreme Novices at the Festival in Thomas Darby who was having his first race over fences. It was not our idea to take on a horse who performed brilliantly at the Festival but the going dictated where we went. Our first choice was Bangor but the weather forecast was for rain and more rain and Dan advised that the meeting at Bangor could be cancelled. So the switch to Warwick. Maire has shown great enthusiasm and electric jumping and of course she will get the mares allowance. I am not keen on pursuing Mares races but they will play a part in her progress. We are now looking at the Arkle if she continues to progress. We can only dream on as Maire has a great stayers pedigree and what could we be targeting at the Festival in 2021.?

Two young horses have made their debut. Fidelio Vallis by Saint des Saints is with Paul Nicholls and made a promising debut in a Bumper. We have the normal challenge in getting the horse to settle but when Paul

achieves this I am confident we will have a good chaser on our hands. Another horse which I own with my daughter Lisa and Ged Mason plus Sir Alex Ferguson is Protektorat who is learning to settle but today at Sandown came a promising second to a Nicky Henderson trained horse Keen On. This horse has an excellent pedigree but you will not see him at his best until he goes over fences. We are planning to go back to Sandown on Tingle Creek day with Politologue in the Tingle Creek and a return to Sandown with Protektorat.

I am looking forward to the debut of Grandads Cottage by Shantou who is with Olly Murphy. He is showing a lot of promise in training and he should make his debut within 2 weeks. Politologue has had a breathing operation and following his brilliant performance in the Queen Mother in finishing a close 2nd to Altior will concentrate on races over 2 miles this season starting with the Tingle Creek at Sandown. I believe 2 miles is the optimum distance for him.

Another horse still to make his debut is Eclair D'Ainay. I am very confident this is a grade 1 horse but he is slowly recovering from a bone problem. I am still hoping we will see him before the end of the year. Politologue will make his debut at Cheltenham in a 2 mile race on the Sunday of the forthcoming Cheltenham meeting.

David Massey Article

Yes, it's that time of year again already. The time to gather the family around the telly tree, swap presents, eat half your bodyweight in Quality Street (I like the green triangles, please take note), watch Auntie forget the rules to charades again (Grandad's "Gone With The Wind" last year literally cleared the room in half a minute) before we can get on with the true meaning of Christmas the day after - The King George. Oh yes! So why not try and pay for the Christmas expenses with my ante-post pick for the big race?

King George

As we go to press, which is before the much-anticipated clash between Cyrname and Altior in the Christy's 1965 Chase at Ascot this weekend, we are undoubtedly missing one of the big clues towards the outcome of this race. Having said that, I'm still in the camp that says Altior won't be getting three miles this season and when all is said and done, I believe he's most likely to rock up in the Champion Chase next March. I get the fact he's getting a bit cleverer and wiser as he gets older, and isn't doing much more than the bare minimum to win

his races, but that alone doesn't mean he needs a new trip, and I haven't seen a lot to convince me that 3m will see him improve, or indeed even stay at the level he's at now.

Cyrname is a different kettle of fish, though. We know he has to go right-handed and a tight(ish) track seems to suit, and although he too has yet to try 3m, he gives more of the impression he'll stay it. Or moreover - he'll have his opponents legless by the time we get to the latter stages of the race, as they try and keep up with his relentless pace and razor-sharp jumping, and he'll be able to finish the job off whether he truly stays or not. For what it's worth, I think Cyrname will win at Ascot and then come to Kempton.

Will the likely appearance of Cyrname frighten a lot of these off? Possibly, and it's always to be remembered that there are other big pots to be won around the Christmas and New Year period. For all the prestige this race carries, it's not the be all and end all. So what each-way value is there in the race?

I have been Lostintranslation's biggest fan since I clapped eyes on him and if you ask me what's going to win the Gold Cup, then here's my answer. I know it wasn't much of a race he won at Carlisle

on his comeback but some of his jumping was breathtaking, to say the least. He sauntered away from some decent opposition despite the fact there was clearly a lot left to work on - he's a big lad and would have needed the run. In fact, as I have said before, he's almost the perfect physical specimen to my eyes. However, is a sharp 3m around Kempton his bag? Now that's a different question. Galloping types can win this but it tends to go to something a bit quicker, nippier - and to that extent, I'd rather watch than bet him this time. In fact, he has lugged left a bit at times in his races, something that wouldn't help him here.

Clan Des Obeaux was a fancy for this last year after his Betfair run, and it was no surprise to me that he came good after showing so much promise. It's easy to forget that, with the good season he had, that Clan Des Obeaux is still only seven, and there might even be a bit more to come from him this year. His best to runs on the figures last season both came on right-handed tracks, here, of course, and at Ascot where he gave the useful Terrefort 3lb and a 11l beating. I suppose where he ends up over Christmas might depend on what Cyrname does at the weekend, but surely they will want to come here and try

and retain their crown, regardless of what the stablemate does? Seems the logical choice and Clan Des Obeaux has to be high on the shortlist, given how well he travelled and won it last year.

Road To Respect got the better of Clan Des Obeaux at Down Royal in the Grade 1 Ladbrokes Champion Chase by four lengths but I'll be very surprised if the latter doesn't reverse the form on Boxing Day. Not least the fact that most from Ditcheat were needing their first runs of the year, but Road To Respect often goes well fresh in the autumn, only to disappoint later in the season. He's not hard to pass over.

I can see this test suiting last year's Gold Cup winner Al Boum Photo, as he's not short of speed either, and at one stage last season I was convinced that he'd be the perfect JLT horse. Right horse, wrong race. However, Willie Mullins has already pencilled in the Savills Chase at Tramore on New Years Day for him, so he looks sure to miss this.

Chacun Pour Soi was mightily impressive in beating Defi Du Seuil at Punchestown last year but that was over 2m, not three, and this simply looks too big a task for him at this stage, exciting a prospect as he is. Frodon would

bring the house down if he was successful here but they'll surely not ask him to gun it up front with Cyrname, and I can see him going elsewhere too.

La Bague Au Roi's win in the Kauto Star here last year brings her into the equation, as it shows she won't have any problem with conditions at the very least. She was most disappointing in the Charlie Hall on her reappearance and although it's possible to blame the ground there, her overall form still requires improvement. Might Bite looked a shadow of himself last year and Min surely stays in Ireland. So what does that leave us with?

Well, Vinndication had dropped a big hint in last year's JLT that

he was crying out for three miles this year, and when stepped up to that trip in a competitive Ascot handicap on his seasonal debut, took them apart with a solid round of jumping and he could be called the winner some way from home. Never stronger than at the winning post, he is really starting to look the prospect his trainer always thought he was. Given he's raced almost exclusively right-handed throughout his career, this would look like a more natural target for him than a few other races and although he has to improve again, he really doesn't need to improve as much as 25-1 quotes suggest. With the potential of more to come, at this stage, he would be my idea of an e/w bet here.

Club Events:

Saturday 28th December Ben Case Stable Visit

Wednesday 15th January Club Night

Clerks of the Course with Simon Claisse and Robert Bellamy

TBC

Stable Visits to Fergal O'Brien, Noel Williams, Katy Price, Colin Tizzard Laura Morgan and a rearranged visit to Alex Dunn.

For interest in stable visits please email Sarah on ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com

Wednesday February 19th AGM and guests.

Nominations for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to Helen

Cameron at poindexter203@hotmail.com by February 1st 2020. Would you like to help guide the future of this club then please consider being a committee member.

Tipster updates on website.

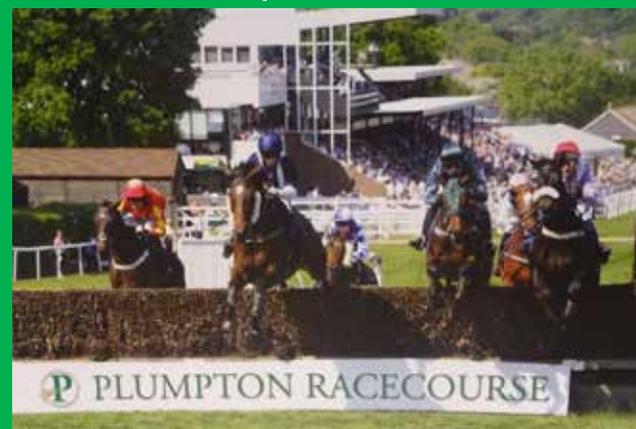
A fully revised and updated edition covering the history of Plumpton Racecourse from its beginning in the 19th Century to the present day will be launched at Plumpton on 18 November.



PLUMPTON RACECOURSE

1884 - 2019

By Stewart Nash



RICHARD DAVIS AWARD

For the Top Conditional Jockey riding at Cheltenham, Chepstow,
Hereford, Ludlow

Stratford, Warwick and Worcester during the period

6th May 2019 – 26th April 2020

(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 11th November 2019)

1 st	Connor Brace	183 pts
2 nd	Jonjo O'Neill Jr	138 pts
3 rd	Ben Jones	84 pts
4 th =	Charlie Hammond	73 pts
4 th =	Charlie Price	73 pts



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



Sam Twiston Davies winner of Leading Jockey at Worcester 2019

Natter from Sarah

I will start by wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am sure I will see lots of you racing over the Festive Season and as long as not driving some of us might have a tippie or two.

Those of you who go to Worcester Racecourse will know that our own member Jenny Cheshire who was General Manager has retired so we all wish her well in whatever she does and Thank her for all of her support.

Sad news came through that photographer Les Hurley passed away due to complications when having a heart operation. Many of you will know him from local tracks including: Stratford, Wolverhampton and Worcester plus others. We all wished him well only 2 years ago on his retirement.

We wish Cheltenham's Sophia Dale all the best as she is off on maternity leave at present.

If anyone has any visits or guests they would like for the club or any other comments regarding the club please do email me on ctrcchairman@gmail.com

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