

SUMMER 2020



FINISH LINE

Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club



The O'Neill Family riding out during Lockdown
photo Joe O'Neill

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

Final Placings for the 2019 – 2020 Season

1st	Connor Brace	239 pts
2nd	Jonjo O'Neill Jr	212 pts
3rd	Ben Jones	178 pts
4th	Bryan Carver	117 pts
5th	Charlie Price	93 pts
6th	Richard Patrick	92 pts

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

Editors Note:

I will apologise for the lateness of this magazine but life has been very strange and manic for the last couple of months. I would like to thank everyone for their condolences on the death of my father which came as a shock to my mother and I as very sudden after coming home from hospital.

I would also like to send my sincere condolences to close family and friends of Liam Treadwell who was a friend of the club and recently passed away. Many of you will have read his articles in our magazine.
#itsoknottobeok #mentalhealthawareness

TIPSTER COMPETITION

Overall Winners		Amount
1st	Richard Shaw	£250.00
2nd	Terry Poulson	£100.00
	(Club Trophy Winner)	
3rd	Hugh Edwards	£50.00
4th	Carol Mapson	£40.00
5th	Michael Ogilvy	£30.00
6th	Phil Bradley	£25.00
7th	Paul Walker	£20.00
8th	Michael Ogilvy	£15.00
9th	Neil Jakes	£10.00
10th	Alan Wellsted	£10.00

Monthly Winners		Amount
DEC	Grenville Davis	£10.00
JAN	Neil Jakes	£10.00
FEB	Hugh Edwards	£10.00
FEB	David Makin	£10.00
FEB	Penny Sturgis	£10.00

Club Events

At present we have nothing arranged for the rest of the year due to the current situation with Covid-19. We will do our best to keep you updated via email and on the website. Please do look out for any correspondence coming your way.

If you have any queries or questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or even if you would just like a chat.

Email: ctcrcchairman@gmail.com

Mobile: 07729 847724 (please leave a message)

Racing seems to be getting back to some sort of normality although there are still restrictions in place and online certificates to take so you can go racing as an owner.

David Massey Article

So, how's the lockdown been for you? How much weight have you put on? Come on, stop kidding yourself, you have. I know for a fact I have, mainly because I have found a new hobby to keep me entertained during these difficult lockdown times.

I'd decided that I wanted to learn something new whilst we were all stuck at home, something to make it feel I'd not completely wasted my time by sitting on my backside all day every day. My first thought was to learn how to speak French properly, so that the next time I go to Auteuil I know a bit more than simply how to order two croissants in a boulangerie, but then I remembered how much I detested learning French at school, and that lasted about ten minutes.

So then I thought about learning to play bridge, something I have always wanted to do but never really had the patience for. And things were going well, until chapter 4 of my Bridge For Dummies, which basically told me to forget everything I'd learnt so

far, because bridge was waaaaay more complicated than that. At which point the book got launched through a window, and I needed a new hobby.

And I found one, in baking. I hadn't baked since I was in Mrs Wain's class (3N) back at grammar school, but the thought of something to eat as a reward for my labours made great appeal. So, with the remaining flour we had, I made a lemon drizzle. And, dear reader, you'll never guess what. It was superb.

Since then, I've baked every week. Cinnamon biscuits, chocolate cakes, scones, another drizzle. So it is hardly a surprise the bathroom scales and I are not on speaking terms at present. I've now set myself the target of getting on Bake Off in a year or two. The Lockdown Baker. The story writes itself, my friends.

I suppose we had best talk about racing, given that's what I'm here for. Well, there's not been much of it, that's for sure. I tried watching the Australian stuff for a short while, but the World Paint-Drying Championships were on Sky Sports 8 and I found that

considerably more interesting. The Hong Kong racing is slightly better, if only to see what crazy names they have come up with for the ex-British runners (my personal favourite being the Queen's Maths Prize, now renamed Kungfumaster Panda at Happy Valley) but now we have the French racing back, and that means some jumping action. Auteuil was originally staging most of the good stuff, but they have been temporarily forced to close, due to being in one of France's Coronavirus Red Zones, so it's Pau that's taken the lion's share of the good stuff.

I thoroughly enjoyed watching the X-Country from Lion D'Angers the other day. Their course makes Cheltenham's look something of a picnic, what with a massive three-step hill to climb and a huge water splash that resembles a small lake. Amazing Comedy, who we have seen running well at Cheltenham a couple of times, won well, leading almost all the way, and I expect we will see him try his luck over here later in the year.

And so, as I type this, we are just five days away from the resumption of racing on these

shores, with Newcastle taking centre stage. I'm throwing a caveat of "hopefully" in here, because the ultimate decision about whether we get to race or not is going to be determined by the government, not the BHA, and I still have a nagging doubt at the back of my mind that we may not get going on the 1st, but possibly later in the week. We will see. As far as jumps racing goes, Southwell have stepped up and will be staging the first fixture a month later, God willing. A lot can go wrong between now and then, but my word, am I looking forward to horses jumping over things again. We could do with some rain between now and then as well - in true fashion, as we've all been cooped up inside our houses, the weather for May has been glorious, and it looks like breaking a few records for least rainfall in the process.

The main thing is - you all stay safe, and let's get back racing safely as soon as we can. I'm off to Barnard Castle for an eye test.

Thanks for reading, and see you all in September.

David.

John Hales Article

All of the horses are now back home enjoying their Summer rest.

Up until the Cheltenham Festival we have put up with bad conditions due to the excessive rain, Which has presented us with a number of problems especially with the young horses waiting for their first race. It is ironical now that we need rain to improve the grazing.

Maire Banrigh has just come home from the veterinary hospital at Newmarket. They have looked after her very well and I want to thank them. We will make a decision in September regarding her future but at the moment it looks as if she may never race again. Having won 6 races on the trot, her fall in the Arkle may prove to be the end of her racing career. I have been very lucky over the years to own

some very good horses and Maire Banrigh was up there with the best of them. She was the perfect racehorse, she had plenty of pace and was a natural jumper. In addition she had a "Stayers Pedigree" her temperament was excellent and she totally relaxed at the start of her races. We may now never know what she could have achieved but this week she is back to being a very happy horse in her stable. We are waiting to put her out. We are waiting for AuxPtits Soins to have stitches taken out of his head (cut his head when jumping up on the box walker.) then they will both be together in the field. We will wait until September before making a final decision but in the meantime we are looking at potential stallions with a view to putting her in foal next Spring. With her looks breeding and temperament she should make an excellent Brood

Mare. Politologue now shares a 15 acre field with 4 other horses (Fidelio Vallis, Protektorat, Eclair Danaïy, and Grandads Cottage) looking ahead to next season you will see Protektorat and Eclair Danaïy go over fences and maybe Fidelio Vallis, Grandads Cottage and Flash Collonges over hurdles.

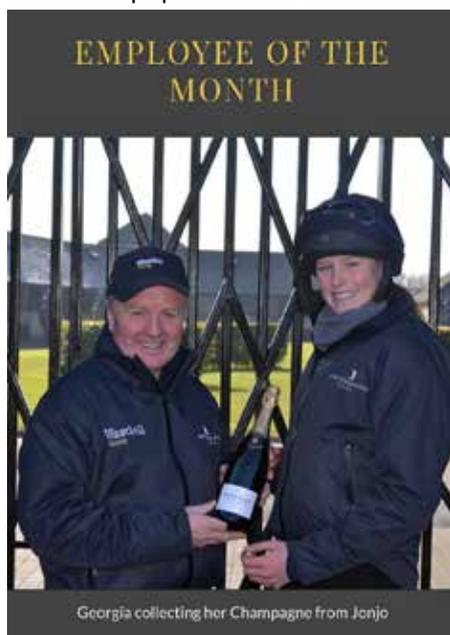
By the end of July they will all be back in training and in the meantime I will continue to watch Politologue win the Queen Mother Chase usually 2/3 times per day. A fantastic exhibition of jumping at speed. Congratulations to Paul Nicholls and team Ditcheat for producing the horse in such fantastic racing condition.



Politologue in the winners enclosure after winning
The Queen Mother Champion Chase
at Cheltenham on 11.3.2020

JoJo's Article

The Employee of the Month for March went to Georgia Plumb, 19, for her hard work with Soaring Glory, a duel bumper winner. She looked after him and rode him every day, even on her Sundays off. Georgia came from the Northern Horseracing College and this was her second season here. She recently passed her driving test and holds aspirations to become a pupil assistant.



Sunday 16th March – The Grand National was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. This left everyone staggered at how the Cheltenham Festival had happened merely days before.

17th – Racing, 'pointing and sales were called off until at least the beginning of May, resulting

in an early end to the season. We finished up with 61 winners, beating last year's total. Thirty horses were moved into the barn to be roughed off. The yard introduced coronavirus procedures – no one riding upsides, a two-metre rule, only one person in the tack room and office, and the hostel-dwellers were asked to stay within their own hostels and not mingle. Tommy Frogley was sent home after continuing to cough and conditional jockey Ed Austin stayed away for a fortnight after there was a case of coronavirus from Hereford Racecourse where he had ridden. There was no need to put up hand-sanitisers as there are about thirty dotted around the yard already!



Tommy in PPE

Daisy celebrated her third birthday with a new squeaky ball, a long walk and lots of fuss.

19th – First lot was shunted back to 9:00 to enable staff to go shopping. There were empty shelves and no loo roll, but plenty of other provisions. By now, terms

like coronavirus, Covid-19, social distancing, self-isolating, furlough and lockdown were familiar. Rachel McMahon was overheard saying, "I've got wine, frozen pizza and IJF Monopoly so I'm all sorted."

Rachel, 23, came to us in last September. She had previously studied a degree in Equine Business at Maynooth University and, after graduating, moved to London to partake in the 2019 BHA Graduate Programme. She was based within the BHA headquarters and divided her time between the Stewarding and Disciplinary Departments. Rachel spent one day a week on various racecourses where she was based in the Stewards Room, aiding with stewards' enquiries and collecting post-race reports.

Growing up in Limerick, Rachel was involved in racing through helping her father train ponies at home for pony racing and 'flapping'. She rode her first winner aged eleven. Rachel began working at Martinstown at sixteen and continued to work there for six years, dealing with a multitude of horses including legends like Istabraq, Don't Push It and Binocular. She spent a summer in Wales working for Rebecca Curtis before returning home to complete her degree. She then rode out for Gordon Elliot before university lectures. Rachel has made good progress since starting here, has driven to the races alone and introduced weekly 'Wine Wednesdays' throughout the hostels. In March, she led up her first winner when Darsi In The Park won

at Uttoxeter and she cannot wait to lead in a winner for JP!

24th – All pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants were shut for the foreseeable future. Becky Chanin, the landlady from the Plough Inn, left crates of food over the wall, at the bottom of the gallops. The food would have been thrown away and included mushrooms, tomatoes, peanuts, tubs of banoffee pie, lemons, grapefruit juice, treacle tart, crème brulee, cottage pie, fish pie, wheels of camembert cheese, even baked beans! It was very thoughtful of Becky and we all feasted for a couple of days.

The Olympics were postponed for a year, and Irish racing until at least April.

25th – The yard received four scrumptious sponge cakes from our amazing owners Sir and Lady Broughton, iced in their red and green colours. In line with our new coronavirus regulations, the office sliced up the cakes and took them round as it was more hygienic! Firstly, there was a carrot cake, rocky road flavour and a traditional Victoria sponge.

Notawordofalie (Tabitha) left for Coolmore. I was sorry to see her go; she won a bumper for me in Kelso and, under the nervousness, she was sweet. She was fairly well bred, a half-sister Class 1 winner Winter Escape, so hopefully she will have lovely foals.

For the first time ever, the Racing Post stopped printing paper

issues and only became available as the App and online versions.

There was much washing of rugs and equipment. Katie Stubbs and Alex Howitt, working hard and trying to be helpful, put loads of grooming kitbags into the industrial washing machine. When I pulled them out at the end of the cycle, the drawstrings were all tangled, and lots of the Wasdell Group lettering had peeled off. (Usually I handwash them.) There were white and yellow letters everywhere; a crazy alphabet lying in the bottom of the drum and littering the floor, which took a lot of sweeping out. To this day, I keep finding random little letters!



The 31st March was many of the staff's final day before they stopped work 'on furlough'. It coincided with the last of the Broughtons' cakes, a delicious lemon sponge, which was a lovely touch.



Lots of the horses went on holiday, small herds in warm turn out rugs in lush fields. Mountains of dirty rugs and sheets were piled up alongside the washing machines, overflowing into the former farrier's box. Lead ropes, bandages, fibergees, webbing headcollars also awaited cleaning; as well as Polypads and number cloths from the tack room. Georgia and I started by washing brushes, leaving them out in the sun to dry.

The total of horses left in training was seventeen – one on the walker, one on box rest and fifteen being ridden.



1st April – Punchestown Festival was cancelled.

2nd – The BHA cancelled racing for the foreseeable future. The next day, those fifteen in training went out in rugs, without needing roughing off as it was so sunny. This left two in training our flat horses Itoldyoutobackit and Imperial Command.



Even though my three lots were now turned out, I remained to wash the rugs, whilst the majority of the yardies were drafted into the maintenance team. The two head lads fed the fields twice daily; this was a big task with ninety-three out. The sons Jonjo Junior and AJ rode one lot and then worked around the estate. Junior has proved very able at tractor-driving, chain-harrowing all the grassy areas into Wimbledon-worthy stripes! He achieved Conditional Jockey of the Year and we felt proud of him.



The dogs, Hughie and Daisy, were good company when I spent hours folding up the clean rugs. They sunbathes, slept, snoozed, sniffed and sprawled near me, often on top of the rugs I was attempting to fold. In the afternoons, when I was doing the horses in the barn (the three left

in!), Daisy ratted down the drains, ears pricked, nose squashed to the grates, poised to pounce.



I had created a card via Moonpig to thank Sir and Lady Broughton for the cakes, personalising it with photos of their runners and winners. Regrettably, I had ordered it too late for many of my colleagues to sign, so the number of signatures was more sparse than usual. Yet, I still wished to thank the Broughtons for their



11th – I pulled the last of the stable rugs out of the washing machine and hung them up to dry. The big washing machine had been going constantly and I had commandeered the domestic washing machine, usually only used for racing silks, only putting in a single sheet as I did not want to

break it. I used about forty litres of detergent. I hung everything to drip-dry on the fence up at the helipad or on the 'winner's circle' hedges in first yard. The sunshine really helped, and then I dried them off completely in the two drying rooms.



We spent all the morning in the fields, stripping off the horses' outdoor rugs. All except for Adicci, who would not be caught even after being corralled and spent the day sweating in the heat of 24°. Funnily enough, he was caught that afternoon...

Even though the stable rugs were all washed and stored neatly in the rug room, I now had a big pile of dirty outdoor rugs so was not jobless for long!

22nd – I power-hosed the final turn-out rugs. I felt rather sorry to have finished all the rugs but relieved too. I had been consistently assisted by the hot temperatures and sunshine. There were eleven drip-drying on the fence by the helipad and the last twelve hanging on the hedge.

Despite lockdown, I went on a journey, but it was regrettably

to rush a colicky youngster to our vets on the outskirts of Lambourn. In different times, hitting Swindon at rush hour would have been a hinderance, but there was no rush hour, no queues and not many cars on the roads.

The next day, I was given the sad news that the horse had not survived – he was unraced for us but had been placed in an Irish 'point. This kind of event becomes "all in a day's work" but never stops being sad. Yet, I knew when he was obviously suffering, glassy eyed and listless that I probably would never be picking him up to come home.



John Dina won Employee of the Month for April. He joined the team in September 2015, and now manages the swimming alongside Florin 'Fred' Mirea. He looks after Hang Tough, Quarenta, Django Django who all won last season and talented but fragile Palmers Hill and Champagne At Tara. John helps Johnny to feed on his weekend, has been pressure-washing the dirty stables and is a deserving recipient of

this award.



Racing Welfare's singing contest, the Furlong Factor, is a cheerful initiative. It has been fun watching the heats, seeing trainers, stable staff and jockeys on social media. Though, the video of Lizzie Kelly that changed halfway through into a braying donkey was rather mean. And the one of Luke Harvey in the bath, where the bubbles were thankfully plentiful, and the camera remained at the top end. Jamie Osborne and team need to be saluted for their wonderful shows with a trumpet, familiar National Hunt faces, guitar, great songs and fantastic choreography. Rebel Racing and their trainer Richard Spencer also made amazing videos and put up lovely photos of their daily life in Newmarket. Social media has been refreshing, fun and positive in an otherwise darkly worrying time.

As racing endured foot and mouth and, more recently, equine influenza, it will survive this. The race

days will start up again but, at the moment, people are more important. Stay safe, stay well and see you again in the autumn.



Jo hard at work

(photo courtesy of Jonjo Racing)



A belated Happy Wedding Anniversary on May 19th to Jo and Joe from all of us at CTCRC.

Editor: Don't kill me for putting the last 2 photos in but I couldn't resist.

I also totally agree about the Jamie Osborne and Team videos. They kept me laughing when most needed.

Interview with **Charlie Parkin**

Race Day Presenter

Having called announcements for years, Charlie Parkin has become the voice of many racecourses, most notably Cheltenham. A lifelong racing fan, he has also made this sport his profession.

1) ***How did you get into race day presenting?***

Having graduated from Huddersfield Polytechnic with a degree in Business Studies, I wrote to selected racecourses and racing bodies with the hope of getting into racecourse management. I was offered an interview at the Racing Information Bureau (the commercial wing of the Racecourse Association) and moved to Ascot in January 1985 to train as a Public Relations Officer. After a couple of years working at all the courses from Newton Abbot in the west to Lingfield Park in the east, I relocated back to the Midlands, to work at several courses here and made Worcester my home. Under a cost-cutting exercise two or three years later, the RCA and Racetech merged the jobs of Public Relations Officer and Racecourse Announcer and Raceday Presenters evolved

– six of us countrywide with about ten courses each. Then more cost-cutting at the RCA led to us all being made redundant, but instantly being re-employed directly by the courses we were working for, thus becoming self-employed.



2) ***In a nutshell, what does your job entail?***

Basically, to liaise with the racecourse management regarding the day's events and in particular regarding sponsors of races. To assist sponsors with the judging and presenting of best turned-out horse awards prior to races and to MC the presentations of trophies to winning connections post race. Also, to provide racegoers with information regarding withdrawals, non-runners, the going, stewards enquiries, jockey changes, colour changes and weight changes on behalf of the BHA – and to call

individuals (usually trainers or their representatives) to the Weighing Room and to announce the starting prices and Tote returns.

3) ***Which racecourses have you worked at?***

To save space, it's probably easier to mention those for whom I have not worked – none of the Scottish courses, nor Newcastle, Carlisle, Redcar, Sedgefield, Catterick, Ripon, Wetherby, York, Beverley or Chelmsford.

4) ***Which is your favourite racecourse?***

Jumps – Cheltenham, Flat – Salisbury.

5) ***Please describe your typical race day:***

I always arrive at a course three hours before racing. Do my homework into the sponsors and make my notes. My time is spent between the Broadcast Office in the Weighing Room, the Paddock and the Winners Enclosure. 45 minutes before the first race, announcements begin – the welcome, going report, Tote details, non-runners, jockey changes and the framing of the first race, plus any particular announcements from the racecourse management about things that may be going on during the afternoon. Repeat the

non-runners, jockey changes and going, and then to the parade ring to meet the race sponsors and judge the BTO. Oversee the presentation of the award and then to the weighing Room to announce the winner's name. Watch the race, announce the SPs and Tote returns and then head to the Winner's Enclosure to contact the winning connections and learn who will be receiving the trophies. MC the presentations and then back to the weighing Room to repeat the process for the remaining races.

6) ***What aspect of racing has been perfected?***

Not everything by a long way, but probably the most pleasing is the advances made in medical and safety measures for jockeys and for the welfare of horses.

7) ***Where could improvements still be made?***

I have been 'campaigning' for years for an audible sound (similar to the bing-bong used to announce a Stewards' Enquiry) to accompany the 'Weighed-In' announcement. Probably the most important industry announcement that is made (to help the betting money turn over) - and yet it is often lost with everything else that is going on.

- 8) **Have the themed race days (ladies' days, Irish music nights, family fun days, concerts, etc) broadened the appeal of racing?**

Without a doubt they have, but being somewhat old-fashioned and certainly cynical, I do prefer courses that concentrate on the quality of racing and prize money above gimmicks and sideshows.

- 9) **Who do you admire in racing?**

Plenty of people both now and over the years, but at the top is Sir Anthony McCoy.

- 10) **Which was your favourite racehorse(s)?**

I don't have one, but rather have favourite races. So, Troy's amazing win in the 1979 'toilet roll' Derby and Baron Blakeney and (whipless) Paul Leach giving Martin Pipe his first Festival Winner in the 1981 Triumph Hurdle. And for monetary reasons, For Auction at 40-1 in the 1982 Champion Hurdle and Hallo Dandy and Neil Doughty leaping to victory in the 1984 Grand National at 13-1.

- 11) **Has any race day stood out above all the others and why?**

The scenes after Dawn Run's success in the 1986 Cheltenham Gold Cup were

something very special.

- 12) **Have you ever had any involvement in racehorse ownership?**

I was the manager of Cheltenham Racing Ltd (Cheltenham Racecourse's racehorse ownership group) from 1995 until it ended a few years ago. Have since managed the Cheltenham Racing Club (made-up of existing CRL members) and our horses are trained by Sophie Leech.



- 13) **What are your hobbies?**

Being a season ticket holder at Elland Road means much of my time is spent on the road to and from Leeds. I love a game of Backgammon (was once rated 52nd in the country), enjoy gardening and growing stuff and cooking. I am addicted to TV and Gran Turismo on the PlayStation!

Editors Note: Charlie will be very happy with Leeds going up!

By Jo O'Neill

Interview with .. Leigh Pollard

Head of Travelling to Kim Bailey

Leigh Pollard, 37, is a familiar sight alongside Kim Bailey's runners.

Her love of horses goes beyond the racecourse and she competes her own horses. Leigh lives in Churchdown, only about fifteen minutes from the yard.

Did you ride as a child?

I started riding at the age of 5 and had my own ponies from the age of 10. I have always had horses since then and now have three ex-racehorses of my own. One is retired but I enjoy eventing and team chasing when I have time!

How did you get into racing?

My ex-boyfriend followed racing and owned racehorses, so I was able to go racing with him regularly and spend time with his horses. I was a member of Cheltenham racecourse and attended every meeting. I worked at a riding school then a thoroughbred stud and when I left there, I wanted to get into the riding side so joined a point to point yard in Surrey.

What trainers have you worked for?

I worked for point to point jockey/trainer Phil York for 2 years and I have been with Kim Bailey for 8; starting as a stable lad then moving to second travelling and now travelling head girl.

What other equestrian activities do you compete in?

I compete in one day events through the summer and team chase in spring and autumn. I also enjoy hunting, but I don't often have time to go!



What is your favourite racehorse?

My favourite racehorse that I used to look after was Wedger Pardy. He arrived at Kim Bailey's at the same time I did, and I was lucky enough to look after him and ride him regularly. He was a cross country specialist and so ran at Cheltenham Racecourse and at the Festival. I try not to get too attached to individual horses now as it gets difficult when they

retire or move on but I do have a soft spot for certain horses that I lead up on a regular basis, including Wandrin Star who has won several races and recently ran in the Beecher around the Grand National fences.

What is your favourite racecourse?

Cheltenham has to be my favourite because of the atmosphere, and the fact that it is unlike anywhere else. I used to go to every meeting there before I worked in racing, so I feel I know it well. It is notoriously difficult to win races there and so any good run is a real achievement. It is the only place I don't complain about the long lead up!!



What has been your favourite day's racing so far?

There have been so many good days racing that it is hard to pick them out but winning at the Festival was a huge highlight,

and leading up Charbel in the Tingle Creek at Sandown always stands out. He didn't win but I felt very lucky to have a runner good enough to be in the race.

Do you have any plans for the future?

I have worked hard to get to the point I am at now and I am settled in my job and have no thoughts about moving on. I feel that I have been with Kim Bailey for so long now that, if I was to leave, I would come out of racing rather than move to another yard. I plan to get my HGV license in the near future, which will give me more options when the time comes.

What is your typical day going racing?

My typical day racing would be to arrive at the yard around an hour and a half before I am due to leave for the races. I will clean and sort the kit (bridles/girths etc) from the day before and make sure I have all the correct kit for the day. I will prepare the horses for travelling and load them and the kit on the lorry. We aim to arrive at the races around 2 and a half hours before the horse is due to run and on arrival I will bath and plait the horse and declare (signing

them in and putting the colours in the weighing room). I will get the horse ready for the race and leave the stable yard half an hour before he is due to run. After the horse has run, I will wash him and walk him until he has stopped blowing. Wash the bridle etc then, if all is well, take the horse home. Once we return home and the horse is rugged up and happy in his stable, I will repack the kit for the next day.

What is your favourite aspect of racing?

I feel very lucky to be at the business end of the job and to see the end result. Everyone works towards getting the horses to the races in the best possible condition and we all hope they will run their best, so it is nice to be there to see it.

And your least favourite?

The weather!! Especially this year that has been particularly wet and the ground has been soft, everything comes back covered in mud and it takes a lot of cleaning!! It is not much fun being outside all day when it is wet and windy.

What is the best advice you can give about working in racing?

To work hard and prove yourself. You won't get given opportunities for no reason but if you work hard, you will be well rewarded.

What is the best advice you were given?

Not so much advice but I applied for the travelling head girl job straight from being a stable girl, but I was turned down as Mr Bailey didn't feel I was ready. I was devastated at the time but then he created the second travelling job for me. I look back on it now and I am grateful he did it that was as I was definitely not ready. I learnt a lot that year so when the job came up again, I could do it well.

What is your ideal day off?!

Spending time with my horses. Some think I am mad, but it is completely different from working with them. I particularly enjoy a successful day out competing!



By Jo O'Neill

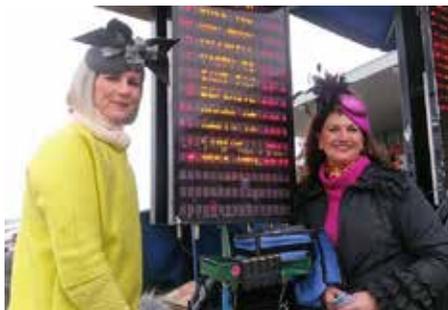
Interview with **Louise Armour** *By Jo O'Neill*



Louise Armour has been involved with racing for most of her working life. A racing secretary for six years before the need to spread her working wings saw her relocate back to her native Scotland. Since then, there has been no looking back with varied, colourful jobs at different racecourses. Yet, Louise has not strayed that far from her former office work whilst working for Grand National-winning jockey Jason Maguire. She performs secretarial and administration work for Jason and his wife Lauren, including aiding their new venture of a rehabilitation and pre-training yard near Birdlip.

Louise lives in Ayrshire

but travels constantly for her freelance work. It is not unusual for Louise to be in Doncaster for the Sales, or staying with friends in her beloved, former haunt of Gloucestershire, or in a B&B in Johnstown, near Kill, Co Kildare, where she has stayed so much during working for Goffs she is one of the family! Louise has a true love affair with Ireland and has even helped bookmaker (and good friend) Mary Carty, whose "Mammy" was the first ever female bookie in 1979 at Galway Racecourse.



When did your interest in racing begin?

I've always had a love of horses and have ridden since I was 4. I used to love watching showjumping and racing on television – Olympia, Horse Of The Year Show, Hickstead, the Grand National and Cheltenham Festival. I suppose I took a keener interest in racing after getting a retired racehorse from local trainer, Linda Perratt –

Scottish Gold ("Scottie") was my horse of a lifetime!
After leaving University, I worked for Nationwide Building Society (I was actually chosen to be in their national TV adverts!). I then moved onto a local Housing Association doing their PR and Marketing, before moving to the Middle East to work for a PR Company in Bahrain – the Formula 1 track was being built there at the time. It was a fantastic experience – I was the only Brit in the office, the other staff were all Bahraini or Indian – I loved learning all about the different cultures. On returning from there, I moved to the Cotswolds and started working in racing – I couldn't believe I could get paid to do my hobby!

Do you prefer Flat or National Hunt?

National Hunt.

Please describe the job of a racing secretary:

The Racing Secretary job is everything from being a secretary, an organiser, a nursemaid, mother and counsellor to the staff... and a cook – cooking breakfasts for owners and mornings on the gallops, as well as making dinners

for some of the staff! It's not a job – it's a way of life, but a bloody good way of life!

Which trainers have you worked for in his role?

Ian Williams for a few months, before moving to Jonjo O'Neill.

What is your favourite racing memory?

Imperial Commander winning the Cheltenham Cold Cup in 2010 for the Nigel Twiston-Davies team, followed up 3 weeks later by Don't Push It winning the Grand National for us at Jonjo's. I think we partied in the Cotswolds for a month! Fantastic memories that money can't buy.



Which roles have you had since? Since leaving Jonjo's,

I've been very lucky with Vix Bowen-Jones at Cheltenham Racecourse asking me to help her with the organisation of

Owners & Trainers Badges. I am usually in the office a couple of days before racing, and for the Festival, two weeks before. Anthea Morshead and Andrew Tulloch were also very good to me, with Anthea asking me to take on the Stable Manager role at Cartmel Racecourse, as well as Parade Ring Assistant at York Racecourse. A role that, later led onto running the Owners & Trainers Restaurant at York with the introduction of the complimentary lunches there. Andrew Tulloch asked me to help and assist both him and Carly Sage on the lead up to the Grand National meeting.



This gave me a clear behind-the-scenes feel of all the preparation required to stage such a huge event from the Clerk of the Course's point of view.

I also did Owners & Trainers at Carlisle Racecourse, as well as organising Overnights and

Stable Staff Accommodation at Ayr Racecourse – oh, and I was AFO (Advanced Flag Operator - “Flaggie”) there too!

What is your favourite racecourse?
Punchestown.

What is your favourite meeting?
A toss-up between Leopardstown Christmas Festival and the Punchestown Festival.

Have themed race days (Irish music nights, family fun days, etc) improved the accessibility of racing?

I wouldn't be a lover of themed race days – I think it takes away from the racing itself, can attract the wrong sort of people, at the same time as putting off the real racegoers from attending.

'Ladies' Day' is no longer exclusive to Royal Ascot – how has this and other aspects, like Colour Me March at the Cheltenham Festival, increased the appeal of racing?

I think it's a great incentive for ladies to dress up – albeit not all dress appropriately! I think it's important to dress for the occasion and the weather - less isn't always

more. There are some great stylish outfits and hats out there.

Do you feel that fashion is important at the big meetings?

Fashion is very important, and it's great to get dressed up. Depending on the racecourse, the outfits can be when town meets country and vice versa – you see a whole diverse spectrum of fashion. I love getting dressed up, and wear hats at every opportunity (not only do I love them, but they hide a multitude of sins when you haven't had time to go to the hairdressers!) I'm very lucky in that both Aoife Hannon (sister of Gold Cup winning jockey and trainer, Jim Culloty) and Fi Johnson (wife of Champion Jockey, Richard Johnson) sort me out with hats. Aoife is a milliner, based in Listowel, Co Kerry; whilst Fi does hat hire from her home on Herefordshire. Both have an incredible eye for fashion; I send them photos of my outfits and they post hats to wherever I am! I never need to be near either to receive their fantastic hats.

What is your advice to racegoers to get the most out of a day's racing?

Have a big breakfast before you go,

wear comfortable shoes, go with a great group of friends, don't plan too much, go with the flow, enjoy the spectacle and soak up the atmosphere!

What is your role at Goffs?

I work for both Goffs in Ireland and Goffs UK. In Doncaster (Goffs UK base), I can either be found on the Welcome Desk with Pam Paxton or will be hosting Client Hospitality. In Ireland, my time is split between the Welcome Desk with Barbara Bashford, helping to organise courtesy cars, hotels, among many other requests; being on the Rostrum as the Auctioneer's Assistant and operating the Bidboard (one of the first lots I had to put through was a yearling at €1.7 million!) I was also lucky enough to be asked to work at the London Sale this year, in the private gardens of Kensington Palace on the Eve of Royal Ascot – it's quite an occasion!



Racing at Southwell

By Sarah Matthews

So you have a horse declared to run. You are both excited and anxious at the thought of going racing for the first time since The Cheltenham Festival back in March.

Do you really want to go and how do you go about getting a badge allocated to you? Ask your friends on Facebook and they didn't disappoint.

First you have to do the certificate to show you are aware of what Covid-19 is and the advice to be followed.

Then ask your trainer if you can have a badge allocated to you. Luckily there were only

2 of us who wanted to go so no fighting over places (only 2 owners are allowed to go).

Read up on all the directives such as get there no more than 45 minutes before your race and stay no more than 1 hour after. Take your own food and drink and do not go if you have a temperature or new persistent cough.

Celtic Artisan was going back over hurdles after going on the flat, mostly due to the fact that he had been having such a wonderful time leading the babies at Rebecca Menzies so she thought he might like to have a race and as he was so well, why not?

So an email came through with a print at home pass which you were to take along with photographic I.D.

So on the morning of the race it was fill up with petrol as I had not been on such a long journey for ages. Get supplies of food and drink. Don't forget the pass and I.D, I also took a mask ... just in case.

Southwell here I come ...

Well I took a wrong turn on the way even with my SatNav on ... no comment.

Horseboxes, trainers and staff went along to the usual car park and owners took a left into a back car park.

I presented my pass and

passport at the window. I was given a wrist band and an A4 sheet of paper with the runners on. At the entrance there were 3 questions to answer and then have your temperature taken. Mine was 36.5 so I was fine. The young man explained where I was allowed to go and not allowed and he also explained there was food and drink which was a lovely surprise.

As I went in I could see the difference immediately as we were not allowed in the pre or parade ring and from the sweet shop by the jockeys room was fenced off so I could not get to the weighing room, The Pantry or the Winners Enclosure.

Going into the building it was lovely to see smiling owners and staff. There was plenty of food so I grabbed a chocolate bar!

I went out front and saw 2 friends so went up on the balcony to watch their horse run (social distancing of

course).



Next it was Dylan's turn. I didn't really care where he came as long as he came home safe and sound. I found Becky in the parade ring and had a chat with her over the fence. Dylan looked a picture. Conor O'Farrell got legged up and took Dylan safely down to the start.



Orders were to keep him out of trouble on the outside, which he did do and he came home safe and sound with Conor looking after him when it was clear he wasn't going to be placed.



Becky had a runner 'Major Snugfit' in the next so I had time to watch that race as well.



He was a monkey in the parade ring and on the way out to the course but Nathan Moscrop rides him at home so knows him very well. First time over jumps so Nathan looked after him.

I had a chat with Becky after both races and we were both just glad that the horses were going home safe and sound in one piece.



I took the opportunity before going home to use the facilities and get myself something to eat and drink. There was a very good choice and plenty available. Going home I did not make any wrong turns and was glad to get there safe and sound.

It was a very strange days racing as I could not recognise half of the people behind the masks. If they didn't say hello they went unrecognised.

I was glad I went and if anyone owns horses do take the opportunity to go.



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Club Events and Magazine are on the website so please keep checking. Please all stay safe in these very testing times.