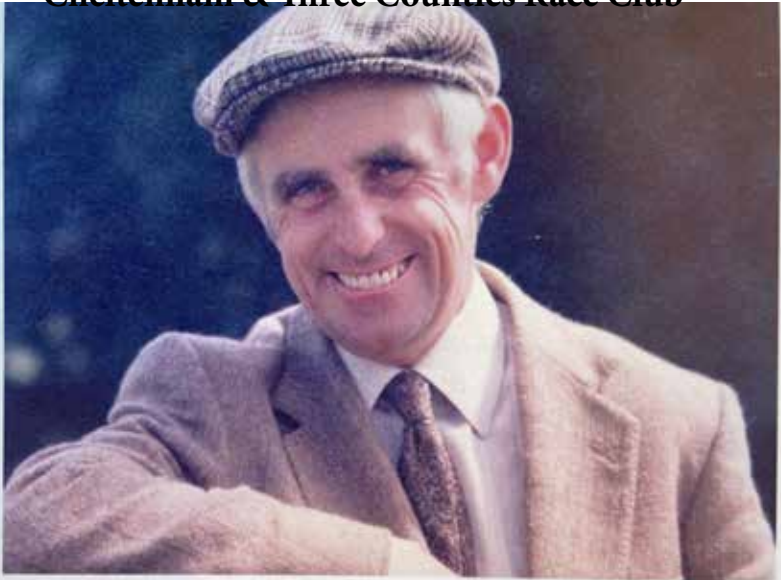


*Autumn 2020*



# FINISH LINE

Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club



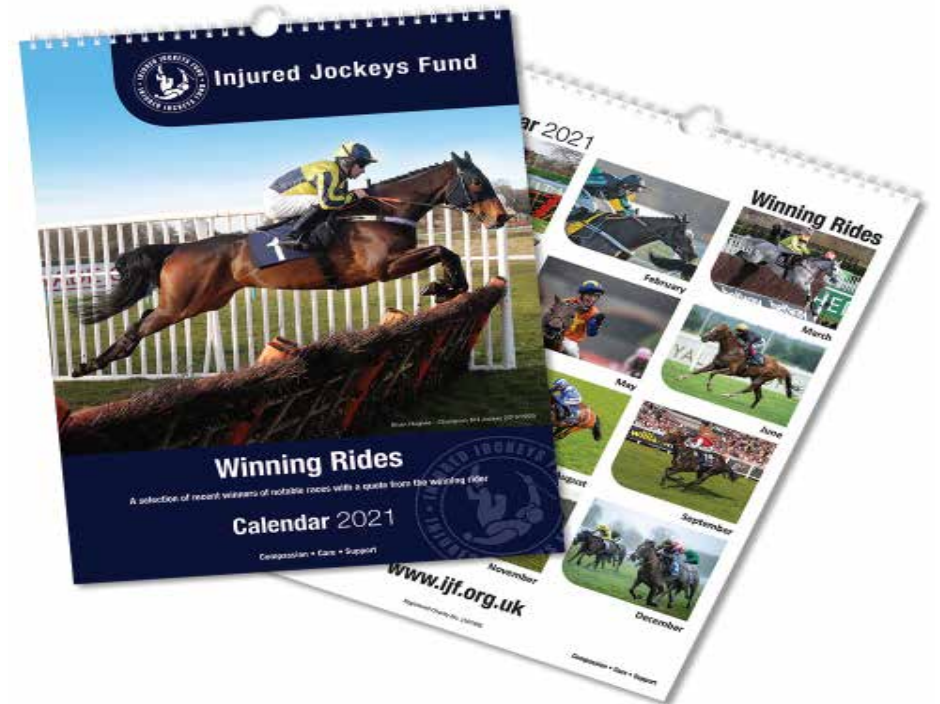
**STAN MELLOR MBE**

10.4.1937 - 31.07.2020

## INJURED JOCKEYS CHRISTMAS CARDS & CALENDARS 2020



This year's Christmas card is entitled "**Snowy Beach**" Painted specifically for the *Injured Jockeys Fund* by renowned equine artist *Caroline Cook*.  
Pack of 10 cards and envelopes.  
Pre-printed greeting of 'Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year' are £7.50



This year's Calendar is "**Winning Rides**".  
A selection of recent winners of notable races, with the Jockey describing in their own words, how it felt. The Calendar may only contain part of the year's fixture list or possibly none at all, depending on when the fixtures are released.  
The Calendar is being produced in three different formats, Wall (£12), Desktop and Slim line (£10)  
(Available November)

Cards, Calendars and other items can be purchased via the website <https://shop.ijf.org.uk>

## RICHARD DAVIS AWARD

For the Top Conditional Jockey riding at Cheltenham, Chepstow, Hereford, Ludlow, Stratford, Warwick and Worcester during the period  
7th May 2020 – 24th April 2021

*(Sponsored by the Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club)*

Scoring:

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

Latest placings (up to and including 6th October 2020)

1st	Charlie Hammond	44 pts
2nd	Bryan Carver	36 pts
3rd	Jack Tudor	30 pts
4th	Page Fuller	21 pts
5th=	Tom Buckley	14 pts
5th=	Theo Gillard	14 pts

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

### Chairman's Note

I hope everyone is fit and well in these strange times. Still no racing for normal folk but if you are lucky enough to be an owner there are still limits on numbers attending. Still no club meetings but I am hoping to get some Zoom interviews done and I have also asked Edward Gillespie and David Massey if they would be willing to have a go. These will only be short and might be a bit hit and miss but

I think it would be good to try something.  
The Tipping Competition starts soon so I hope you have got your entries in.  
Sad news came that Stan Mellor had passed away. In the eyes of quite a few a true gentleman and a legend. Many of our members were lucky enough to meet him when he came and gave a talk.  
Stay Safe.  
Sarah

### Article from Edward Gillespie



Photo: Insider Media Ltd

It's a real honour to have been invited to become your President. All those who have previously held this role have been influences in my life. I first met John Oaksey at a University of York Turf Club Dinner when he was our guest speaker; Alan Lee and I were pals for 30 years having run a little business, on the side, that took Jump Jockeys abroad during the summer; Alastair Down and I were at the same school and university!

Having stood down as MD at Cheltenham Racecourse eight years ago, I'm aware there will be

an increasing number of people who have no idea who I am, probably not many yet. They were the most extraordinary 32 years and I have enjoyed the next eight just as much.

The pandemic has impacted on our lives to a massive extent. One aspect has been to isolate individuals, families and communities. Since lockdown, my impression is that people are far more focussed on their familiar territory than was previously the case, whether that is shops or restaurants. What is missing is 'culture' which includes sport, where people from a whole range of backgrounds and communities spend time together and enjoy each other's company. There is no greater 'mixer' than Cheltenham Races. I only have to wander through town, even now, and all sorts of different people will ask me about the races. That friendliness is often remarked upon by those attending the races for the first time. Hopefully, that will return soon and long may it continue.

Taking down barriers between different people is certainly something that was part of my

strategy in the early days as Manager at the Racecourse. 'Club', 'Tattersalls', and 'Silver Ring' are terms of an era that are, thankfully long gone. Iron railings, no less, protected those in Club from the vices of the lower classes. Merging enclosures brought fear to a few who sought higher ground but, for the vast majority, it brought them into contact with people who enriched their raceday experience, released their emotions and widened their perspective.

There's a lovely saying – 'Everyone is equal under the turf and on it'. By good fortune, my first job in racing was as trainee, then manager at Sandown Park very soon after it reopened in the early 1970s. This is designed under the auspices of the Levy Board Chairman, George Wigg as a socialist environment. Regrettably, Esher was a poor choice for such an experiment and the rather soulless, utilitarian ground floor was particularly alien to the females who craved the comfort of the old Round House, at the top of the straight.

At Cheltenham, we genuinely surprised customers by creating a Course Enclosure, the Best Mate,

that is just as good as Club. No longer would they only be able to sample the Members' experience by being provided with their cast-off furniture on its way to the dump.

I love the topsy-turvy quality of racecourses where kings of industry come in their jeans and their doormen dress up in tweed suits. You really cannot tell by how people dress or behave who they are in the outside world. You can never be quite sure who you are standing next to or slapping on the back.



Photo: Daily Telegraph

Well over £60m was spent on 'facilities' in the 30 years that I was around. That's just the frame of the picture. I challenge anyone to design a better setting for horseracing; the view of the course, the angles of the turns, the amazing backdrop, the sunlight

(occasionally) and the sky all create a canvas upon which the athletes startle us with their talents. What sticks in the memory are the colours and sounds and laughter and misery; the squeals of delight and sprints to see a winner return to unsaddle that has just pipped the one you backed.

It's enormously rewarding to hear so many people comment on the space that was created by the most recent development. That's like readers praising a publisher for leaving the white space without words, playwrights and composers being remembered for their pauses. Those are the gaps that we leave for our audience to fill, spaces for them to dwell, to breathe, not to be hurried, meet old friends and new.

Understanding the expectations of customers and then predicting what they like is key to any successful business. I expect it's called marketing, a term that no one had on their job description on my watch.

The Panoramic Restaurant and the Centaur both came about by sensing what it was that customers would like if they knew it existed.

That corridor upstairs alongside the Centaur is one of my favourite spots to take visitors on a busy day. In the alcove by the window, there will be a dozen people in armchairs studying the form in library silence. "What do you think is through this door?" Open it to be assailed by thousands of voices, raised to a crescendo at the climax of a close finish.

Perversely, perhaps, of all the developments that were undertaken during those years, my very favourite is the walkway from the stables and the pre-parade ring. It was only when I visited other courses that I fully understood how special Cheltenham is. Imagining that through the eyes of those looking after the horses, the walk, under the bridge, past the Hall of Fame entrance, through the curly section that leads to the saddling boxes must make the hairs stand on end. It's a wonderful amphitheatre with an atmosphere all of its own. There are other pre-parade rings that are absolute gems – Newmarket July Course and Sandown, which used to be the parade ring where I first saw Lester and Arkle – are two good examples.



One aspect of my time at Cheltenham that I am most proud of is the training of future Managers. For many years, we made it a policy to have a Trainee Manager or two in our team. Having been somewhat thrown in at the deep end myself when appointed Manager at Sandown and Kempton within a year of arriving as a 21 year old, I appreciated the value of being able to spend time working in as many different parts of the business as possible. Like most courses, Cheltenham has three activities – as a sports stadium with all the complexities and regulations that implies, as sporting activity 16 days a year with the preparation, recruitment and requirement for decision-making in a live environment – the horses will be coming round again in two minutes, and as an events and leisure resort. For the last three years of my time, I had the same team of nine managers looking after every aspect of those businesses. Knowing that team was likely to break up was one of the several reasons I decided to call it a day. Putting a new team together, as every sports manager will know, takes several years.

For an aspiring young person, a two-year trainee period gave essential grounding and proper understanding how the machine works. We were not concerned about knowing there would be a role for them after two years. That was up to them to force or find one elsewhere, no less a good investment for us.



Photo: Gloucestershirelive.co.uk

We had a good start with a fellow called Ian Renton, who went on to be Manager and Clerk of the Course at Wincanton and Salisbury. I wonder what happened to him! Adam Waterworth (now Goodwood) and Jeremy Martin (Salisbury) were an amazing double-act. Lisa Hancock (Haydock and Newmarket) came into the team at Warwick, where Christian Leech was later Manager before moving on to become a Handicapper and then train with Sophie. Peter McNeile remained

with us for a glittering career as Sponsorship Manager having been Clerk of the Course at Warwick and Kempton Park along the way. Rebecca Morgan is now Regional Executive Director for ARC, covering Worcester and Hereford.

Promoting the careers of young people has remained one of my passions since leaving the Racecourse. Pony Racing was one of many recommendations in the Jump Racing Review of which I was the author back in the early 2000s. Every Irish jockey hit the ground running at 16 with extensive experience in their unregulated pony racing, some riding hundreds of winners. British racing had become reliant on an endless supply of jockeys from Ireland. Setting up the Pony Racing Authority under the auspices of the BHA with Levy Board funding allowed us to create a route map for young riders through the three levels of Pony Club fixtures such as the one at Cheltenham on Good Friday, through Point to Points and the Charles Owen Racecourse series. Rebecca Morgan managed the PRA from the Cheltenham Office before handing over to Clarissa Daly.

On my retirement, I was asked to become Chairman and it has been incredibly rewarding to be part of this success story. On the flat, Tom Marquand is now leading the way – he comes from my village of Gotherington and along with Harry Bentley and Hollie Doyle who set history in August with her five-timer and continues to break records. Over the jumps, Conor Brace and Liam Harrison are a good examples, at Fergal O'Brien's, of the high standard in the saddle and in front of the microphone.



Photo: Ponyracingauthority.co.uk

Pony Racing Academies are an intrinsic part of the mix, providing opportunities for those who do not have their own ponies to be given coaching and race-riding experience. Together with the other BHA supported agencies that encourage young people, the PRA were recently awarded a grant of £900,000 (£180,000 for five

years) by the Racing Foundation to develop more academies particularly in locations with greater racial diversity than racing has previously attracted. Exciting times!

Other activities that I have thrown my energy into since 2012 have been the committees for Blenheim Horse Trials, the School of Equine Management at the Royal Agriculture University and Cheltenham (Arts) Festivals where I continue to chair the Music Festival. Plenty of challenges there with Covid 19 causing the cancellation of this year's events up to next month's Literature Festival which will have a limited physical audience capacity but reach a global audience digitally.

I have also been part of Jonjo and Jacqui O'Neill's team, encouraging ownership and it has been rewarding to see the number of partnerships and syndicates grow year on year. Jonjo and I have been pals since the days Alan Lee and I took jockeys around the world in the summer. He is the most admired and loved character in the sport and the team at Jackdaws Castle is an exemplar of how a racing stable can and should be

run. Receiving the Lycetts Team Champion Award for 2020 for yards with more than 40 horses was well-deserved recognition.

My only other active current role is as the Queen's representative in the county as Lord-Lieutenant, which means I organise Royal visits and have involvement in promoting Honours, Citizenships, the Military, Civic and Voluntary organisations. Lots of dressing up and turning up though the pandemic has impacted massively on the amount of events happening. As with every other aspect of these challenging times, we focus on the light at the end of the tunnel.

The Race Club means a lot to me and has been a valuable scrutiny group though my years at Cheltenham. I look forward to doing whatever I can to furthering its influence and, most importantly, keeping well out of the way of those who are doing such a fine job in keeping it alive and well.

***Note from Chairmain:***

I would like to welcome Edward as our President and here's to a happy future together.



OWN A SHARE IN A RACEHORSE & AT THE SAME TIME HELP A REALLY GOOD CAUSE!

Introducing 4Racing which has been set up by Graham Arnold & Ian Griffiths as a fundraising campaign to help horse-racing stable staff, the heartbeat of the industry, that have suffered due to COVID-19, both financially and mentally. They feel it is important to give something back to the industry that gives pleasure to so many people and employment to thousands as well.

4Racing is an official charity partner of Racing Welfare and are fundraisers for Riders Minds, an initiative to support any horse rider that may be having mental health issues.

They have a website, Facebook page and group, the links are shown below.

One big part of what they are doing is to have a racehorse leased to run for the campaign. She is a 4 year old mare in training with Rebecca Menzies. Rebecca is a young, ambitious trainers who was happy to get behind the campaign as a Brand Ambassador too, as was well known commentator Derek 'Tommo' Thompson, trainer James Ewart and former jockey and his wife; Brian & Jackie Storey.



4Racing are charging no admin fees at all for this and any surplus over and above the expenses of having the horse go to the fund. 4Racing are selling shares in Snowy Burrows, limited to 100 in each. They are available through the website: [www.4-racing.com](http://www.4-racing.com) at £325 for the year as a one-off payment or £30 per month in instalments, making them affordable to all. If they manage to sell all 100 shares, thousands of pounds will be raised for the

campaign.

Racing is such a huge industry and important to so many economies why not get behind this a little and show some support and at the same time have some fun!

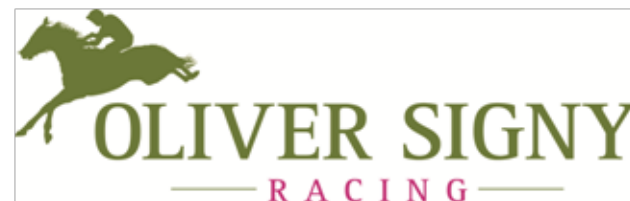
Graham said, "We are delighted to have sold 75 shares at the moment, which is an amazing achievement considering we have not been able to get to the races to promote our campaign. I am sure at £30 per month so many people would want to get involved if we can we get the message out to a wider audience as possible.

This is where we need help from everybody that loves their racing or rely on it to earn a living. People will surely want to get involved as they will be contributing to a good cause at the same time as having fun with the horses"

**Website is:** [www.4-racing.com](http://www.4-racing.com)

**Facebook page is:** [www.facebook.com/4racingvcovid19](http://www.facebook.com/4racingvcovid19)

**Facebook group is:** [www.facebook.com/groups/905156079910239/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/905156079910239/)



### ***Year One at The Croft Stables***



Ollie and I have been at The Croft Stables for just over a year, having purchased the yard in September 2019 for Ollie to start his career as a racehorse trainer. On getting the keys we had 10 days to clean and repaint the place, move in and get married before Chloe Fitzgerald hacked over the first horse to arrive, French Paradoxe for the Mick Fitz Racing Club. It was a mad couple of weeks to start off life in a racing yard for a rookie trainer, with a new wife and team of horses!

The road to training has been a long one for Ollie, who started his equestrian career eventing in Suffolk. He represented Great Britain at Junior level and produced a string of horses competing to advanced level. His family always had an interest in racing and alongside his breeding program which has produced a Prix St George dressage horse, Ollie also home-bred some point to pointers. After a serious fall required a year out of the saddle he gained a degree in International Equine and Agricultural Business Management at Cirencester Agricultural College. When the opportunity arose to work as assistant for Oliver Sherwood it coincided with the Many Clouds era, cementing the dream of becoming a trainer in his own right. A year in America with the legendary Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard and three years as Jamie Snowden's assistant back in Lambourn gave him the experience to take the plunge and



apply for his own licence. Knowing the gallops and having some great contacts to support the yard meant Lambourn was the obvious place to start and we were lucky enough to secure The Croft Stables.

In the past year we have done a lot of work to improve the yard and bring it back to its former glory. Ollie wanted owners to come and feel confident that their horses were being cared for to a really high standard and that included the quality of the boxes, turnout and walker to match the outstanding Lambourn Jockey Club facilities on our doorstep. The top yard of 16 boxes has been completed with Quattro wall and floor matting, making the boxes lovely for the horses and actually much easier to muck out. We have also installed Equilume lights, the same as those used to get broodmares cycling, to enhance the benefits of natural light for the horses. There is an adjustable sunrise and sunset cycle, changing the light gradually from the ambient red night light to the bright day lights, which helps keep bacteria down in the box and the horses looking healthy. Work has just started on the next set of 15 boxes to bring them up to the same standard ready for us to spill

into this yard before Christmas. At present there are 12 horses in, with a further three 3 year olds being backed and ridden away with Colin Tinkler just over the hill in Baydon, in particular we are excited about the purchase of a cracking Balko gelding, full brother to the Alan King trained Blacko.

We have refurbished the walker with dogbone tiles and matting, lights and the new custom Claydon walker is being installed in the coming weeks. As it's a short hack to the gallops the horses all have a leg stretch on the walker before being saddled for their lot so it was key that the walker, which is also the first thing you see on arrival, was in tiptop shape. We fenced in the 3 acres of turn out with horserail and foal wire with smaller individual paddocks within to create a lovely turn out space. The horses get turned out most days, allowing them time to unwind and socialise in the fresh air, something which Ollie feels is key to keeping them happy and engaged in their work.

Lockdown came at exactly the six month mark for us, cutting short Ollie's first season before having a handicapped runner and still sporting the rookie title.

Like everyone's, lockdown was filled with challenges, getting the delivery of 840 mixed thorn bushes to plant by myself certainly kept me busy in the first weeks! Whilst it was disappointing turning away the horses, especially with entries after the ground had finally dried up, it did give us time to continue improving the yard and a chance to get the paint brushes out again. The horses benefitted from the extended summer holiday in glorious sunshine and it's been noticeable how they have grown up both mentally and physically from last season. With our head lad furloughed Ollie and I brought horses in and headed out trotting, with time to put the ground work in and start the horses in our own routine. We also started using Jamie Osborne's new 3 furlong round Wexford sand gallop in addition to the Jockey Club facilities, which has added another layer to their training on the deep surface and enabling them to work on both reins.

By July we had brought a few more back into work and were really excited to have the first runner back over jumps, both Etat Major Aulmes and Ollie's first entry in a handicap hurdle. 'Al' has been

brought on slowly as a leggy, athletic French horse and with Gavin Sheehan onboard at Newton Abbot we hoped he would have a good run. I stayed at home to do evening stables whilst Ollie and head lad Albert went racing, 'Al' ran a great front running race and we were absolutely thrilled to have Ollie's first winner, especially running in his parents colours.



We never imagined it wearing face masks with lockdown haircuts and an empty racecourse but the photos will always be a reminder of an amazing day at such a strange time. We celebrated with a suitably embarrassing amount of champagne in the kitchen that night and despite the headache, riding out in Lambourn the next morning was a fantastic experience. It's such a great community to be part of and it meant a lot to have so many well-wishers from the different strings and yards.

Thanks to the support of some



fantastic owners Ollie has some nice horses ready to run this winter and we are looking forward to the season ahead, despite the challenge of racing behind closed doors. It's a young string, despite adding in a couple of more seasoned campaigners so it's an exciting time for the yard. As we start working and schooling some of the younger prospects it's fantastic when the jockeys get excited and start asking for the ride! We have a young amateur joining the yard full time in October which is a great addition for us and will come at the right time as we have more runners heading out this winter. The first year of training has been both an exciting and a strange one, it's particularly odd that Ollie will be in his 3rd year of training before he can have a full season for the 2021/22 fixtures. In the meantime we are going to kick on in the hope of chalking up some more winners and filling up a few more boxes on the yard.

### ***Ollie's ones to watch***

***Fancy A Dance*** – a good looking 5 year old Arcadio gelding, he will step up and head chasing where he will excel. He's schooled over fences at home and is classy with

a big scopy jump, he is being syndicated & there are a couple of legs still available (incase you wondered!).

***Sambezi*** – French bred by Rajsamman, he's another rangy type who looked exciting before falling in his first point to point start, we then bought him for some lovely new owners at Cheltenham in February. He will be heading for a bumper in the coming weeks when the ground has a bit of give in it.

***French Paradoxe*** – a 5 year old chaser in the making, now standing at 17h he's grown into himself this summer and will head to the racecourse again this autumn for the Mick Fitzgerald Racing Club.

***Be The Best*** – A Declaration of War 4 year old, named after the British army motto & nicknamed Joey by Henrietta Knight as he looks just like Warhorse. He had a disappointing 2nd bumper run on New Years Day at Cheltenham when he picked up an injury but he's back on form and is another bumper prospect.

***A visit to Croft Stables is being arranged so names to Sarah ASAP***  
***ctcrcstablevisits@gmail.com***

## ***Jo O'Neill's Article***

Back in March, which now seems a lifetime ago, I got a new car – not brand new but a 67 plate, which was near enough for me. I got a Suzuki Swift in a colour similar to our former Jewson royal blue uniform.

Previously and seemingly forever in the past, I'd always had bangers and sheds: older cars that had little niggly problems that exacerbated into major, expensive ones. I had always bought those run-about of VW Polos or small Peugeots outright but, this time, I went for a PCP payment plan – so much a month, then a change of car after three years. So, I'm hoping there will be no costly issues.

To be honest, I am a typical horsey girl and, whereas my horses are gleaming, my cars were messy. The passenger footwells were rubbish bins, mostly full of chocolate bar wrappers that would overflow into rest of the car. Loose Polo mints would absorb moisture and morph into a white circle of mush, ten times their normal size. Giant Cadbury buttons fell down the side of the seats and would fester or – worse – melt

in the summertime. There was a bakery worth of crumbs from shop sandwiches and snacks. Millions of white hairs from Daisy, mud that had dried to dust, paw prints, horse hairs and my own long hairs. An acrid whiff of hoof oil from a pot that had toppled over and the lid leaked; several air fresheners that had lost their scent.

The outside fared even worse – potholes took the toll on the suspension and tracking, country lanes muddy from farm vehicles and quarry lorries left a thick cakey layer of brown up to the bottom of the windows. I always wiped my back number plate to prevent being pulled over.

Now, I take much better care of my car – there are still some dog hairs and dust but I have a car-bin, set covers and higher standards that make it incomparable for all the right reasons than every other car I've owned. My little car pays me back with lights that not only come on by themselves but dip automatically, heated rear and front windscreens, keyless ignition and a DAB radio that means I can listen to Virgin Radio.



Back in July, the yard won the Lycetts Team Champion Award for big yards of over forty horses. I was delighted as I had written, alongside my former colleague Amber Cartlidge, the nomination (over eighteen and a half thousand words, so I joked it was my master's degree), which got us initially shortlisted to the final four. Due to lockdown and yard visits being cancelled, we then had a Zoom call with a different array of judges involving an array of our team members, including the O'Neill family, the secretary Jade Aspell, Joe O'Neill and I and Katie Stubbs, proving the internet signal in Shap, Cumbria was as strong as anywhere. To be honest, it was nerve-wracking, as challenging as a job interview and Katie's message to me as it finished, "And breathe!", portrayed she'd felt the pressure too! AJ O'Neill shone brightly,

as did bubbly, bouncy Katie and Joe spoke insightfully into our recruitment policy. It was a brilliant, thought-provoking experience.

We obviously did well and it was our team relationship, camaraderie, friendly manner and laughter that, adding to the Certificate of Excellence in Reward and Recognition, won us the whole award in our category. It was a great achievement and something to be proud of for the whole team. We won £4000 for a communal area with a gym, as voted for by the staff in a questionnaire prior to winning.

Regular readers will recall my beloved ex-racehorse Patman du Charmil, who I looked after at Nigel Twiston-Davies' and who was a familiar sight at Cheltenham in owner Raymond Mould's emerald green and white stars. Back in January, he turned eighteen and is my pride and joy. However much I ride out at work, it will always be Pat that I love riding the most; he's an old friend and forever my favourite.

During the coronavirus pandemic, I've been sharing Patman with Aaron Sutherland. Aaron is Jonjo Junior's housemate, having moved here last year

from his native Dublin and is a Racing Operations Executive at Cheltenham Racecourse. Last winter, Aaron had a couple of disasters learning on Jacqui O'Neill's pointer (and former yard legend) Monbeg Gold, including a fall. When he was furloughed and only working part-time, Aaron had a lot of spare time. I offered Patman's services and Aaron came to the yard as much as possible, starting off in the relative safety of the small indoor school. I taught him initially, probably instilling all the bad habits of someone who has worked in racing for too many years – holding the neck-strap and bridging the reins but also good habits like never yanking or jabbing Pat in the mouth and keeping his heels down. Aaron then took up weekly lessons with an instructor and ventured out on hacks and, by now, Pat and Aaron are cantering around fields. There's been a couple of falls, once due to a brace of deer, leaving a couple of skidmarks in the gallop woodchip. Yet, Aaron has been heroic, listening, learning and looks after Patman in relation to my lengthy list of picky requirements. Now, Aaron also rides Monbeg Gold (Monny), helping AJ exercise his pointer or accompanying them on

pub rides to the Halfway House, in Kinton.



Since retiring, Patman has never been fitter and I've done the fun ride at the local farm park three times this summer. He is now on veteran's mix, looking shiny and loves living with Monny. They are always in each other's shadows and wait patiently by the gate before walking into their own stables.

On the 18th August, at about 5.15am, Alex Howitt tottered up as I mucked out. She was pale, tearful and clutching her side as if suffering a bad stitch. I sent her straight back to bed, informed the head lads and just presumed it was caused by a dodgy bacon sandwich, as Alex had pondered the day before. She went into hospital later that day and had

surgery in the early hours for acute appendicitis, the doctors informing her if her appendix had been left any longer, it would have burst.



Alex, 21, came here two years ago from the Northern Horseracing College, having previously studied horse care at the neighbouring equine college. She is from Doncaster and her ultimate ambition is to join the army and be in the King's Troop. However, at the moment, Alex is loving working alongside the racehorses. Her riding has improved no end and she is quiet at handling the horses. She loves riding As You Like (Ruby) and Tidal Watch (Tiddle), and looks after self-confessed favourite On The Bandwagon, Apache Creek, Frisco Bay, Shantou's Melody, Manintheshadows and Write It Down. She was learning to drive before the coronavirus frustratingly halted all tests, but

Alex still managed to attend the family holiday in her beloved Cornwall.

After recovering for six weeks, Alex returned in time to lead up 'her' Apache Creek when he won at Perth.

On 21st September, Daisy had her yearly vaccination and my question to the vet was "Is she too fat?" (Bear in mind, she shakes, trembles and quakes so much in the vet's that the weighing scales probably gave an inaccurate reading). He eyed her, pursed his lips and said, "Well, she wouldn't want to get any fatter." The scales didn't lie: 4.8kg to 6kg in a year. I knew she'd got more rotund, wider and tubbier!



*Daisy*

The vet then added she must have been quite thin a year ago but whilst if she ideally lost a bit, she does not need to go back to her previous weight. So, she's on a little diet with strict orders of no titbits,

which is always impossible on sausage roll Wednesdays.

The yard is bristling with activity – we've been fuller this season than the last few years, and there are loads of new horses and a few new members of staff. I still look after Minella Rocco, Arrivederci (Lucky), March Is On (Marty) and a youngster called Gulliver Collonges, whom I have nicknamed Gully and will hopefully run in an autumn bumper. My former Prefontaine (Stevie) went to Doncaster sales and sold for £10,500, having ran on the Flat at Lingfield and over hurdles at Sedgefield and portrayed an obvious reluctance both times. Last season, he won a good juvenile hurdle at Kempton but sadly, he was far from revitalised by the long break during lockdown.



*Prefontaine*

*Photo courtesy of Pete Wilson*

There have been many stops, stalls, backstepping and disappointments about crowds being allowed onto racecourses again, even after a successful pilot event at Warwick. The latest being, with the new restrictions the government has just introduced, crowds may not be allowed at the Cheltenham Festival 2021. Yes, it's odd to have no crowds at the courses, to have no claps, cheers or festivities accompanying winners, and there are racecourses out there being crippled but racing behind closed doors is keeping the sport in some sort of forward momentum. The meetings are still occurring daily, so if that's keeping the racing industry going and the workers in jobs then let's welcome the autumn and the winter months. I, for one, can't wait.

I've also started a new venture of a website, continuing from my Groom's Life column in the Gloucester Echo and my diary and interviews in this newsletter. I have recycled a few interviews but also have done new ones too. Please take a look at [www.overthestabledoor.com](http://www.overthestabledoor.com).

*Editor: Well worth a read x*



## Lizzie Partridge

### By Jo O'Neill

Back in July, Lizzie Kelly, 27, announced her retirement from the saddle, simultaneously announcing she was expecting her first child. She had ridden at the top level with lots of success, mostly on horses trained by her stepfather, Nick Williams and mum, Jane Williams.

She was the first female jockey to win a Grade 1 over jumps when winning the Kauto Star Novices' Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day in 2015. Tea For Two, her winner that day, had previously won her a Lanzarote Hurdle and won her the Betway Bowl at Aintree in 2017, beating Cue Card by a neck. He took her to three Gold Cups, enabling Lizzie to be the first female jockey to have a ride in the race for over thirty years.

Lizzie rode two Cheltenham Festival winners, Coo Star Silvola in 2018 in the Ultima Handicap Chase and Siruh Du Lac in the Brown Advisory and Merriebelle Stable Plate. She also scored three big successes on Agrapart – the Betfair Hurdle at Newbury in 2016, the Relkeel Hurdle and Cleeve Hurdle at Cheltenham.

Lizzie married husband Ed Partridge, and together they are setting up a pre-training yard in South Molton, Devon.



WHAT WERE YOUR FAVOURITE HORSES?

Tea For Two for all the obvious reasons but Siruh Du Lac was pretty special to ride.



WHAT WAS YOUR BEST EVER DAY'S RACING?

Winning the Betway Bowl at Aintree.

IS THERE ANY HORSE, PAST OR PRESENT, THAT YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE RIDDEN?

I'd have loved to have ridden Moscow Flyer.

WHAT WAS THE BEST ASPECT ABOUT BEING A JOCKEY?

All of it!

I had a blessed career but the people I ride with and against made it very special.



WHO WERE YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES?

I've met so many amazing people in racing who did wonders for my riding and worked with some very talented people. I'd like to think that they all helped in one way or another.

DID YOU EVER MEET ANY ANIMOSITY TOWARDS YOU AS A FEMALE JOCKEY?

Not particularly - not from anyone I know and respect anyway.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR

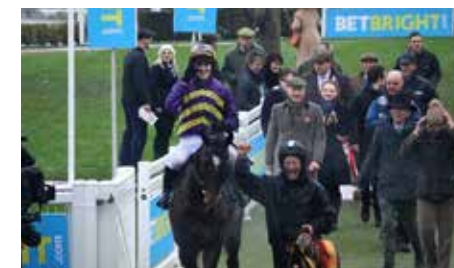
THE FUTURE?

Me and my husband are setting up a pretraining and breaking yard at the moment which is exciting!



ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOTHERHOOD?!

Yes, I can't wait - I've always wanted a family.



Editors note: All of us at CTCRC wish Lizzie all the best for the future in both her private life as a wife and mother but also in the pre-training and breaking yard.

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