

**Winter 2021**



# **FINISH LINE**

**Cheltenham & Three Counties Race Club**

***MERRY CHRISTMAS***

***AND A***

***HAPPY NEW YEAR***

***ONE AND ALL***

*Nomination for committee. Details at the back of magazine.*

## **RICHARD DAVIS AWARD**



For the Top Conditional Jockey riding at Cheltenham, Chepstow, Hereford, Ludlow, Stratford, Warwick and Worcester

during the period 3rd May 2021 – 22nd April 2022

(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 3rd December 2021)

1st	Liam Harrison	185 pts
2nd	Kevin Brogan	136 pts
3rd	Jack Tudor	94 pts
4th	Chester Williams	68 pts
5th	Fergus Gregory	66 pts

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

## **TIPSTER COMPETITION UPDATE**

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that post-Covid produced a reduced number of entries for this season's NH Tipster Competition, with just 239 Line Entries representing a huge 27% drop from the 2020-2021 level. Having said that, a big "Thank You" is deserved to all those Club members/new members and non-members who continue to support this long-running Competition, which raises significant funds for Racing Charities each year as it has done, now for well over 30 years. The last nineteen days of November saw thirty-nine horses record a total of 289 points to leave the end of November Leaderboard as shown below, with some new names appearing in the initial TOP TEN. Meanwhile, in the only 'short' month of the Competition, our Congratulations go to long time Club member, Claire Abbatt, who will receive our first £10 prize.

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

POSITION	NAME		NOV MONTH	NOV CUM'VE
1	Claire ABBATT	A	85	85
2	Michael OGILVY	E	80	80
3	Peter BATT	B	75	75
4	Ian ATKINSON	B	70	70
5	Steve HEARLE	B	70	70
6	David MILLER	A	70	70
7	Michael OGILVY	A	70	70
8	Susan PANIKKAR	C	70	70
9	Roger SMITH JNR	B	70	70
10	Mark STRANGWARD	A	70	70

Please don't forget that you can track the status of your entries on-line by accessing [www.ctcrc.co.uk](http://www.ctcrc.co.uk), selecting 'MENU' and then 'Tipsters Competition'

If you have any questions about your entry, or its status, please contact Tony Coleman either on 07795 146242 or by e-mail at [tonyandles@aol.com](mailto:tonyandles@aol.com).

## ***A Life At Kirtlington Stud By Ruth Johnson – Stud Secretary and Stud Hand since 1996***

I was born in Oxfordshire, with a passion for horses from an early age. I followed my older sisters to their riding lessons, and I started riding a pony at a local stable when I was 10. I quickly discovered a love for jumping and going fast, and we used to call the meadows our racetrack.

After my A levels and with very little idea of what I wanted to do, my best friend and I found out that our local college was running a Higher National Diploma in Business and Finance, Stud and Stable Administration. The two-year course at West Oxfordshire College offered the opportunity to combine my love of horses with some business sense and gave me my first taste of the Thoroughbred industry. The college had its own small stud and took us on trips to Tattersalls. Kirtlington Stud was also local and so when I needed to organise a work

placement in the summer of 1996, I contacted Chris Budgett. My six-week placement was a real eye opener for me in the hard work needed to keep the stud in shape, and the skill needed to handle young Thoroughbred horses from the ground. I received many a knock, one of which was a black eye from a 3yo colt out of training. At the end of my work placement, Chris was considering taking on a secretary for the rapidly growing stud and offered me the position when I left college. I continued working on the stud at weekends and went to my first sale at Tattersalls that December. We sold one of the mares from the family of Windmill Girl bred by Arthur Budgett. The mare was called HI LASS and sold for 250,000gns which was thrilling, and helped fund the continued development of the stud. Chris purchased the farm and 345 acres of land in 1989 and moved in a small group of his own broodmares from the original stud across the road

at Park Farm, where his father Arthur had bred Morston and Blakeney from Windmill Girl. It was just some farm buildings and land when Chris bought it, but he quickly built the foaling unit and yearling yard from his own designs along with staff houses.



Richard Evans was the first Stud Groom at the new site in 1992 and he had the new stud running smoothly by the time I started. We raised World Champion Harbinger during that time, and Richard mentored many good staff who went on to become Stud Managers after being a Stud Hand at Kirtlington. When I started there were four staff and a broodmare band of 30 with their followers (foals and yearlings). A third of the mares were owned by the stud and a handful were owned by Prince Faisal Salman, who was

studying in Oxford at the time and had a house in Kirtlington which made the stud an ideal base. The rest of the broodmare band were owned by a small number of loyal owners who have been with us for many years. The mares were a mix of top quality and average but producing hardy winners which soon put the new stud on the map.

We had stallions standing here for the first few years. Chris bought Kylian with a good pedigree but with some fertility issues. He taught us a lot about standing a stallion, and he sired some winners, the best of which was Group 2 winner LADY IN WAITING. We stood Blushing Flame and Safawan for Cheveley Park, and Sheikh Albadou and Bien Bien for some American owners. We ran a prize draw to win a nomination to Bien Bien and the result of the mating was a horse called Dream Alliance, who inspired the film 'Dream Horse' showing in cinemas this year.

We don't stand stallions on the stud anymore, but we have a

thoroughbred teaser stallion called Harry, he helps us tease the mares during the breeding season to see when they're ready for a cover. Occasionally he gets to cover a foster mare which he finds very exciting!

We foal around 30 mares on the stud between January to June each year. During that time, we are also following mares through for a cover by stallions standing in this country, and a small number go to Ireland each year to visit stallions standing over there. The vet is coming in almost every day during the breeding season, and the farrier visits the stud once a week. The office work consists mainly of getting paperwork in order for each mare going for a cover and liaising with the stallion studs and mare owners with updates. By the end of the foaling season as the spring turns into summer, most of the horses on the stud will be living out again and the main jobs are maintenance; grass cutting and painting. In the office, the foals born that year all need to be registered with Weatherbys to receive their

passport and be eligible to race. Yearlings are nominated to the sales and the representatives from Tattersalls and Goffs visit the stud to see which sale to allocate each yearling to, and then entries are made.



During the summer, the staff take some well-earned holiday and we can entertain some visitors to the stud. Elite Racing Club members visit once or twice a year to see their mares and youngstock. We also parade a few other well-bred resident mares and yearlings for the 400 plus visitors over morning and afternoon visits. People seem to enjoy visiting the stud which helps us appreciate what we have here. The burger van which accompanies these visits is always welcome too! Preparation for the yearling sales start at the beginning of July for the sales at Goffs UK in August, and just after that

for the sales at Tattersalls in September and October.

The yearling sales for us is the pinnacle of our work with the youngstock born on the stud, after that they leave our care to start the next stage of their life in training.

Sale preparation traditionally takes eight weeks. The yearlings start coming into a stable and get used to exercising on the horsewalker, in hand walking and being lunged. They are also groomed daily and start wearing a rug. They are taught to stand and show correctly as they will be expected to do at the sales. The feed and exercise is built up and tailored for each individual yearling to have them in the best possible shape for the sale. It's hard work and quite intense as hopes are high and we all want the best for the horses. But it can be incredibly rewarding, especially when a yearling makes more than expected, or just goes to a good trainer where you know they will have the best chance. We often use a consignor for the earlier sale at Goffs, but we

have our own consignment at the Tattersalls Sales. We arrive with the yearlings a few days before the start of the sale and have allocated stables where prospective buyers can come and view them before the start of the auction.

The October Book 1 Sale is particularly exciting as you get to see the very best of Thoroughbred breeding on offer, and it's a real thrill to see some of the prices topping a million.



Our best price was 1.25 million guineas for a colt by Kingmambo out of a mare called Last Second bred by Prince Faisal Salman. He was the highest priced yearling sold at auction in Europe that year but sadly didn't have much of a racing career.

We have a hospitality box at the Book 1 sale which I look after and get to meet some

interesting and charming people and see some well-known faces in the industry. Chris sets up the box with his wife June. They make it into a cosy lounge with a chandelier and some wood panelling reclaimed from an old house and fabric covering the walls. We have a TV for people to watch the racing or the sales, with refreshments ranging from coffee and cookies to a glass of good wine at the end of the day. Anyone is welcome that wishes to call in on the way past or whilst viewing our yearlings. It feels like family and we all enjoy the chance to catch up at the sales.

After the yearling sales, the yearlings to be retained start coming in at night and having a little education before they leave for training. If we have foals entered for the December Foal Sale at Tattersalls, they start a shorter, less intense period of preparation. We are then back to the start of foaling in January. HARBINGER is the most successful horse to be foaled, raised and sold by the stud. He was bred by one of our

owners at the time Mrs Ooi. We sold him to John Warren at Tattersalls October Book 1, and he went onto be a Group 1 winner and World Champion in 2010, and now stands as a stallion in Japan. SELINO is our most recent Group 1 winner to be foaled and raised on the stud, he won the Sydney Cup in April and was bred by one of our owners Dr Catherine Wills under the breeding entity of St Clare Hall Stud.



RIBBONS is the most successful homebred winner to come back here as a broodmare. She was bred by Elite Racing Club and won the Group 1 Darley Prix Jean Romanet in Deauville. She was bought out of training by an American owner and by chance, returned to us as a broodmare. We have kept a share in her 2yo Frankel colt in training with William Haggas. He has been named 'Soulcombe' after the

main house on the stud.



I still enjoy riding horses in my spare time and for many years I looked after Xanthus after he finished racing. He was bred on the stud from the Windmill Girl family, and when he didn't sell as a yearling, he went into training in France as one of the last horses owned by Chris with his father Arthur. He was weak and backward but won well as a 4yo and there were hopes of him being a Cup horse, but tragedy struck when a French Air Force plane got into trouble and crashed into his trainer's yard. A horse was killed and Xanthus had to be broken out of his stable which was on fire, he was injured along with some other horses and was unable to race again. I re-homed him and we had a lot of fun eventing together which had always been my ambition. He is now happily retired on the stud at

the age of 22 with a group of retired broodmares. I have another horse out of training to ride now called Jam Session, he is by Duke of Marmalade and was a successful hurdler for Ian Williamson.

I am truly grateful for my time here at Kirtlington Stud which has been my work, passion and home for my adult life. The staff have been like family over the years and many of us have remained friends after they have moved on.

Sadly, the stud is now on the market, which has always been the plan as Chris' children have followed other career paths and don't wish to take it over. Chris' nephew Charlie Budgett is developing his own stud over the road at Park Farm and has named it Kirtlington Park Stud. When the stud sells, Chris plans to continue breeding his own mares on a smaller scale without the pressure of a large concern, and hopefully this stud which has been so carefully developed will continue to be home to a family of horse lovers producing World class athletes.

## **Punchestown Visit** **12th & 13th October** **By Dick Purcell**

As is becoming an annual event, save for 2020, Sarah and I set out for Dublin at some unearthly hour on Tuesday 12th of October. We were advised to expect a long wait at departures but that did not materialise leaving us time to spare before making our way to the Gate. En route my first fitness test of the week was set when I realised that my mobile phone was sitting on a table in the Costa Cafe, running in a racegoer's winter coat is not something I would recommend for those of somewhat advanced years. I was certainly warmed up for the trip when the final call was made.

We are creatures of habit and on arrival we agreed to make our way as soon as possible to The Irish National Stud with the main intention of seeing the veterans enjoying their retirement, or in my case making yet another futile attempt to persuade Hurricane Fly to grace me with his presence. I failed but I will persist with the quest in the future, a bit more on him later.

I jokingly asked for entrance tickets for one senior and one student and it was not until I emptied my pockets of losing betting slips on my arrival back home that I saw that was exactly what I got. I will have to pay for two adult tickets on our next visit to ease my conscience.

Our visit was brief given the time constraints but we still found time to sample the excellent food on offer there before making our way to the course.

On arrival things were rather different from the norm and there was certainly a more professional approach to the Covid restrictions than anything experienced on British courses and that is no bad thing. Attendance was by ticket only and these were free in an effort to attract punters back to the course one assumes. All had to produce evidence of double vaccination and in the case of the British, Passports were required to confirm identity.

I am a hoarder of racecards and I have seen the quality of those sold at our courses (Cheltenham in particular) diminish over the years so I was rather disappointed to find the usual glossy replaced by a flimsy booklet. It was however free and again a reminder of the efforts being made to attract the Irish back to racing. It seemed to be working as the crowd although still smallish was considerably larger than in previous years. It always amazes me that a course not far from Dublin attracts such a sparse attendance save for Festival week in April.

That said at least those attending were there for the racing.

Many years ago at the same meeting I had a conversation with Ted Walsh when he expressed his disbelief that two weeks later he would be at

Cheltenham for the opening meeting when a crowd of many thousands would see in his words - horses of lesser quality. Having attended both this year I am not all that sure that his remarks would apply but we will see.

We got underway at 1.15 with a beginners chase which Cape Gentleman 7/4 took for Bryan Hayes and Emmet Mullins a pretty easy victory and basically all over when odds on Ballyadam tipped up at the first.

The 1.45 held no shocks as the 5/2 joint favourites contested the finish Direct Image for Robert Tyler beating First Touch for Donal Cumins by three parts of a length.

Two closely fought contests in the next two with 4/5 Bell Ex prevailing in the first and Dysart Diamond of Willie Mullins turned over at 5/4 by Gavin Cromwell's Wolf Prince.

The 3.30 was back to winning odds on with Quantum Realm taking the maiden hurdle with ease.

Just when I was on the verge of thinking it was not to be my day Christmas Jumper and JJ Slevin got up at 7/1 to come pretty close to paying for the day. As a friend of mine says "I don't go racing to win but I do go hoping not to lose"

The bumper was almost unique with no Patrick Mullins to bring the day to a prosperous end. Not to worry Jamie Codd on Silver Breeze at 6/1

and each way Finnie Maguire at 22/1 would surely change an even day into a profitable one. The race was won by yet another favourite the 15/8 Lizlucky. I suppose the answer is always follow the money in an Irish Bumper unless of course your name is Elizabeth in which case you would have the winner in any event.

That was it for day one and we made our way into Naas to book into the Osprey. I had stayed there 17 years ago on my first visit to the Festival and very little had changed except for the quoted price for that particular week. I cannot remember the exact amount but it is a re-mortgage for me.

I thought I had done well getting a large room until Sarah announced that her top floor suite was two rooms with three beds, she just has to go one better!

Following an evening meal at Burt Mullins Restaurant (Sarah and Mike Lawrence to note -the Pavlova is still enormous!) we returned to The Osprey. I think we were both pretty wacked and we retired for the night at 9 o'clock. I must be getting old because I slept for nine hours without waking.

Up bright and early on the Wednesday we struck off for County Meath heading for a visit to Gordon Elliott's yard. We should have arrived on time but I knew best over Sarah's Satnav so we were well over half an hour late!.

Everyone has an opinion about Gordon Elliott and that photograph, some are forgiving others not and where you sit is entirely up to you. I express no view on the issue but the horses under his care are quite obviously loved and cared for by his excellent staff and it is a pleasure to be in their company equine and human.

We had an excellent morning on the gallops, the weather was kind to us with just a little drizzle and we roamed around the yard taking many photographs. Sarah's I am sure up to her usual standard and mine sadly up to my standard as well. It was good to see Tiger again and Samcro posed for photographs in his private quarters. Not the force of old but a lovely horse.



It was a real pleasure to be invited into the office to see the workings of a busy yard first hand as the logistics of getting horses and staff to Cheltenham and America were in full swing. The two girls, Pip and Alex were clearly very busy but still found time to chat to us between the constant stream of phone calls

and internet searches and make the coffee. Very impressive.

Visit over it was time for a quick dash through the country lanes back to Naas and Punchestown. I followed the Satnav this time!.

Day two started with the 1.15 two mile maiden hurdle which My Mate Mozzie took for Gavin Cromwell. The gelding is a lovely looking individual who beat Jessie Harrington's Barbados comfortably at 11/8. He has won since at Navan. Today (28/11/21) He was beaten a short head at Fairyhouse. He is only 5 and I like the look of him.

The two mile handicap hurdle went to Ambrose McCurtin's Romella despite the burden of my Euros.

The 2.20 was won by the 6/4 favourite Mighty Meggsie for Puppy Power and Mrs Harrington. It seems I was influenced by the fact I once owned by a beautiful Gordon Setter named Meg so the Elizabeth factor of the previous day seemed to be working.

By about 3pm I was beginning to think it was my lucky day as I sought out Sarah to proudly announce that I had selected 10/1 Aldo the Apache who duly obliged with ease. He has also gone on to win again at Navan and is also a promising five year old.

Forgive me if I sound as if I know what I am talking about, I am deluded.

Back to normal in the 3.30 Embittered the 5/4 favourite won for Joseph O'Brien and Brian Cooper without me troubling the bookies. Isn't it good to see Brian having some success of late.

In the 4.05 Grade 3 Chase Davy Russell allowed the Willie Mullins pair Annamix and Brahma Bull (third in The Hennessey) to bowl along in front until approaching the last he brought Galvin the evens favourite to life and went on to win by half a length for Gordon Elliott. Galvin is said to be a Grand National hope for many although two weeks later at Cheltenham he did not impress. We will see.



After two days of entertaining racing we came to the final bumper, no Patrick so one assumed either Derek O'Connor or Jamie Codd would win despite the experience of Hey Johnny. A cracking little race with less than two lengths between the first three resulted in victory for experience under a stylish ride for Thomas Mullins. The jockey involved was just the latest of the Mullins dynasty to burst onto the scene ,7

pound claimer Charlie. What a family.

That was that for another October meeting, the journey home was unremarkable except for a stationary tailback on the M42 which we could have done without.

I mentioned a little more in relation to Hurricane Fly without whom my April pilgrimages are not quite the same. I really miss the sight of him and Ruby hurtling around that last bend before opening the throttle to ping the last and win yet another Grade 1.

Patrick Mullins sums my feelings up in a far more eloquent way than I could ever attempt :-

***If you watched him rage against the dying of the light with his head down, his ears back and that fire in his eye never made the hair above the tip of your spine stand bolt upright and your heart race faster, never made you jump in the air in delight and punch the air in celebration, never made you clench your fist in willing him on and roar out the warcry "Come on the FLY" or never made you simply nod your head in appreciation that here was a horse out of the ordinary, a horse that was actually worth going to the races to see him run, then perhaps my friend you are in the wrong sport or maybe you were forged in a place elsewhere than the rest of us.***

Let us hope more members can join us next year to race and to pay homage to The Fly.

## Charlie Longsdon Stable Visit

### By Mike Lawrence

So what is there to do in October in Chipping Norton? Diddly Squat could have been an option but instead of following the masses heading that way the good and sensible folk from the CTCRC headed in the opposite direction and descended upon Hull Farm Stables the training establishment of a certain Charlie Longsdon. It was a little misty on arrival although not enough to hinder viewing the horses on the gallops, which were up a little rise half a mile or so from the stables although some seemed to struggle seeing things in the yard. The gallops themselves were five furlongs long and woodchip and as is the way with most gallops these days built on an upward gradient (dependant from which end you're looking I suppose). Mr Longsdon couldn't be present as he had to go to Market Rosen so we were shown around by his wife Sophie, Amber who does "a little bit of everything" and head lad Alan 'Roachy' Roach. There is also a circular sand and microfibre gallop available and grass can be used but only when conditions allow, otherwise it's off to Lambourn or Kempton.

First on the gallop was Hoot at Midnight who has recently gone chasing and although hasn't won yet has been running consistently well.

Largy Nights, Tea for Free and Train Hill quickly followed on behind as did Castle Robin who is expected to go well in novice chases this season. He will not run until the ground is on the soft side but having already won a couple of times over hurdles and ran well in the highly competitive Lanzarote he is one to 'keep on your side'. Byzantium Lad made up the little group and is another who is going to be needing soft going to be seen at his best.



The horses had a couple of goes up the gallop working side by side before going off to have half an hour or so on the horse walker. There are currently sixty five borders with room for over eighty with current stabling arrangements although the yard is determined to concentrate on quality rather than quantity. All the horses get turned out together throughout the day and Alan explained that they stick together in their own little friendship groups and they are left to

be horses rather than being spruced up and left in their stables looking good. There are around ten staff currently which means on a busy race day there is plenty of work to go round.



Walking round the yard with Alan as our guide we came across Glencassley who is one of the yards favourites and is expected to be a high class hurdler and in time a staying chaser. Look out for him in races over two miles four furlongs. As is the way with a lot of talented horses he is not without problems and the staff have done lots of extra work to get him sound and ready for this season. The bedding in the individual stables varied from straw to shavings as some horses were prone to eating the straw. Champagne Noir poked his head out for some fuss as we went past and has been brought in early this year to get ready for a more 'consistent' season. Free Thinker explained 'Roachy' could be anything once he gets over his aversion to tack! Normally very placid he doesn't like to get dressed in the morning. Scene not Heard is a good prospect and for those of a gambling disposition will be going first to a bumper where good

things are expected. Following a bit of a trend The Mighty Arc and Glen Forsa came next and both will be out as the going gets softer, the later has a big Autumn race at Ascot as his target and Charlie is hopeful he can show the form he had two years ago before last years blip and that his arrival at Hull Farm can be the catalyst for a return to better things. The yard doesn't have a retained jockey and although they don't seem precious about what jockey to use Paul O'Brien rides quite a lot for them.

The yard has received the Royal Seal of approval with the Queen having High Yield in situ. Charlie has the honour of speaking to Her Majesty directly as she doesn't want any second hand information and as we know is a very knowledgeable owner. All the horses looked very content with their lot and if the welcoming reception we had was anything to go by I'm not surprised. Very relaxed and very professional are two terms that spring to mind, so relaxed that the yard beanie hats were forgotten about until the very end but sales were brisk to say the least. After saying our farewells more refreshments were taken at the Red Lion just down the road.

On the way there we got stopped by an excited farmer who said his pigs had escaped their field. "There's 248 of them, could you help round them up?". "Of course" I said, that will be 250.



## *A Season of Mist and Rainbows*

*By David Miller*

For Katie and I, and I suspect many of you, the 2021/22 National Hunt season has been something we've been looking forwards to for many months. There is nothing quite like the excitement and anticipation of a big day at the races, particularly when shared with good friends. The sights, sounds, smells, the chill of an autumn afternoon – oh how we missed our days out last season.

Our first trip out was to the Jump Season Opener at Chepstow and while this was, as always, a wonderful days racing, for us the season does not really get underway until The Showcase meeting at Cheltenham a few weeks later. As we drove back from Wales, the conversation soon turned to the horses and jockeys we hoped to see at Cheltenham. There were memories of Frodon's exciting win last season, the runner we had at the meeting and of the marvellous

win by Rouge Vif. All roads seemed to head towards Cheltenham.

I then received a message from a good friend who was travelling down to Exeter a few days before The Showcase and asked if I was planning to go as well. In truth it had not crossed my mind and I replied that I was not planning to go down. However, you know what it's like I am sure. The seed had been sown! I woke up on the morning of the fixture; the weather was fine, it was not too cold and the weeding I had planned to do (I am a volunteer gardener for a charity) could wait another day. So out came the tweed jacket, sandwiches were made and I set off to Devon. Driving down past Burnham-on-Sea the sun was shining and the sky was blue. It looked a great day to go racing and I thought to myself it was a good idea only to wear a light jumper and to leave the usual

jump racing warm top at home. Yes, I know Exeter race course is on a hill and can be a bit of a law unto itself when it comes to the weather. I arrived to mist and drizzle! I stepped out of the car and it was a bit parky to say the least. I scrambled around the glove box to find a glasses cleaning cloth to keep the rain at bay and hoped there might just be a scarf tucked away as well. Sadly there was not. Still, it was nothing that a cup of warming coffee and some exciting racing would not sort out and sure enough, the first horses appeared in the Parade Ring for the opener; The Best Mate Novices Handicap, and I got chatting to my friend. There were only two runners but one was Sebastopol who Tom Lacey mentioned to us at a Club meeting a few years ago and has been one we've looked out for ever since.

As the race card moved on, the mist and drizzle grew worse. I am not sure quite what stage mist becomes fog but whenever it is, I saw it that

afternoon. The course itself totally vanished from view. The large screen TV, despite its size and brightness became just a gloomy silhouette. The horses themselves even disappeared from view on the far side of the parade ring. Quite how Richard Hoiles kept the commentary going I do not know, but to his credit he managed it and made us smile at the same time. "As they round the back turn it's A followed by B and C.....you'll need to remember that order as we are not going to see them again for a while". "It looks as though the grey has dropped out of contention, or he could be there but I just cannot see him!". "Any minute now they should appear over the last"... and with that they appeared almost next to the winning post having already cleared the last invisibly. It was an afternoons racing to remember!

The weather, thankfully, was clearer for The Showcase. The Jockey Club are to be commended once again for putting on a Friday fixture

during half-term so Katie could come with me!! What a wonderful day it turned out to be. From the drive in to the anticipation of pulling into the car park and buying the first race card – the day unfolded just as we had imagined it would in those dark days when we could only dream about a day out at the races. We have our own routine and the first job is always to get Katie's Junior Jumpers book stamped and have a chat with the race course team who run the Information area. It was like meeting old friends, folk we have not seen for over 18 months and so good to catch up. This really set the tone for the rest of the day. We lost count of the racing friends we met for the first time in ages, many of whom are members of our Club. Lots of smiles and laughter – wonderful.

Kate and Harry D from the Nicholls Yard both made a point of waving and, in Harry's case having a quick chat with Katie. This made her day, well almost, as to our great surprise Bryony

was there too and came over to have a long chat with Katie as well.

As for the races themselves, by the time you get to read this you will know all of the results and quite probably some of the form we saw on the day will have been franked or otherwise. That said there will have been a few people who came away on Friday evening who were not mightily impressed by Third Time Lucki for the Skelton's who produced a near perfect round to win by good 8 lengths. Did we see the Arkle winner in only the second race of the Cheltenham season? It will be interesting to see how he goes; it strikes me that the horse has that bit of sparkle and charisma that will make him fun to follow.

Gordon Elliott returned with his first winner after his ban but for me the real story with Top Bandit's win was Davy having his first Cheltenham winner since the 2020 Festival and his subsequent terrible

injury. There may have been two Irish winners on the day but the flag was flown high for Gloucestershire as well with an excellent win by Guard Your Dreams who looks likely to be quite some horse for the Twiston-Davies Yard. Chris Gordon's Annual Invictus will have made a few note books I am sure after a fine run. While we saw many talented and impressive horses there was one who stood head and shoulders above them all. Prior to the Andy Stewart Memorial Amateur Jockeys' Handicap Chase, we were treated to a parade by Big Bucks who looked an absolute picture. As he went around the Parade Ring one of those magical moments that Cheltenham produces from time to time happened with the most amazing brightly coloured rainbow appearing in the sky to loop over the course and stand brightly against the grey sky and golden Cotswold countryside. It was so beautiful that it stopped people in their tracks just to look and marvel. My camera does not do it justice.

So onto Saturday and another cracking Card to enjoy.

Without doubt the Course was a lot busier which I am sure pleased the accountants. It's a shame though that the crowds bring with them those who cannot handle their drink and whose behaviour can be loud and boorish. There are parts of the course on these days we avoid which is sad and also wrong. However, despite the behaviour of a minority, it was another great days racing with a good atmosphere and yet more friends to catch up with. Katie's autograph book also made its seasonal re-appearance!

What a day it turned out to be for Sam Twiston-Davies. His first ride of the day was The Hollow Ginge for Nigel. It looked for all the world that he would be bagging the win but was pipped close to home by Definite Plan for Gordon Elliott. The next race on the Card saw Sam on I Like To Move It again for Nigel and this time there was no mistake. It seems this

season Cheltenham have opted to play a pop song over the tannoy when the winner comes back into the Parade Ring. I've no idea who chooses the music which was different each time (I think). Personally I am not convinced it works that well but for this lad "I want to move it move it..." really did hit the mark! Sam described the horse to the press as 'scary good'. I'm thinking we will be hearing that music again soon.

Next up Sam was riding Before Midnight for Sam Thomas who made no mistake staying on well to beat Sky Pirate. Is there anything better than seeing two Gloucestershire horses go head to head up The Hill? Does He Know (Kim Bailey and David Bass) and Undersupervision (Nigel and Sam T-D) were all set for a ding dong battle, the crowd were cheering loudly when suddenly Sam's mount hit the railing and the race was over with Sam hanging on for second place.

Another local Yard was having a good afternoon with Fergal

(O'Brien - McPherson) taking the first and last race honours. The Yard is flying right now. The Pertemps Hurdle Series Qualifier threw up another of those special moments when 7lb claimer Vic Malzard on board Kansas City Chief took the top prize. Trained by Neil Mulholland the 20/1 shot gave Vic her first win in Britain. In the racing press the following day her Mum (herself a 15 time champion trainer in Jersey) is quoted as saying "I'm speechless. That was amazing. It's Cheltenham for goodness sake and we're just a little family from Jersey. The horse is a family pet. We've had him at home all summer and that's my little girl that's just rode him. I'm being a mum now but it was just really brilliant."

On a weekend, which for many of us was more significant than just another trip to the races, Cheltenham delivered a memorable two days racing. We cannot wait to get back and do it all again.

We hear much about the Irish dominance - the two days finished Gloucestershire 5 Ireland 3! Yes, I know, but you have to take the moments when they are there!



The Paddock

Rainbow over the paddock



Rainbow over racing



FOG  
or should that be mist



## John Hales Article

We always regard the November meeting at Cheltenham as our start to the season. That weekend we had four runners and ended up with two winners and two seconds. Politologue finished 2nd in the Schloer Chase giving his usual 100% effort. I do not want to tempt fate but he must be the best jumper we have had. He has now won over £1 million in prize money and all being well he will go to Cheltenham for the 7th time for the Festival in March. That is an exceptional record as not many horses achieve that. He loves his racing and has been a wonderful horse for us and we must look after him now that he is in the twilight of his career.

The next 2nd was Protektorat in the Paddy Power Gold Cup. This is a very talented horse and we admired the speed he showed after the last fence to finish 2nd to a worthy winner. I am not a big gambler but I could not resist the initial showing for horses that may go for the Gold Cup. That is now our objective and I managed to get a substantial ew bet on him at 50/1. The first of our two winners

was Time for a Tune in the Bumper at Cheltenham. Having won his last three bumpers we must now start jumping hurdles which he has never seen before. We must be patient with him. He has shown speed and stamina but now must learn to jump over hurdles. Our other winner was Lakota Warrior who won a novice hurdle at Wetherby. This horse will take time to mature as he is just a big baby at the moment. Harry Skelton loves the horse so in time we believe we have made a good purchase. He has a fine temperament. We have just come home from the meetings at Newbury and Newcastle. Monmiral lost his unbeaten record in the Fighting 5th at Newcastle. He gravelled up from Ditchheat on the Friday and the combination of the over night storm on Friday night and his first overnight stay prior to the race did not help. He was never in the race but remains a very talented horse who you will hear a lot more of. We have to decide if he stays hurdling or go over fences. Paul Nicholls much prefers to wait until they are 5 years old before they tackle fences. We had Message Personnel come fifth at the December meeting but more on that next time.

## CTCRC November Meeting



I don't know if it's politically correct to be quoting Gary Glitter any more but it was very much "good to be back, good to be back, hello, hello" on the third Wednesday of November as 50 plus members congregated in the back room of the Victory Club for the first club meeting in an absolute age. So after much fist bumping, hand shaking and various other forms of greeting the crowd settled down to be entertained by Moreton in Marsh's Richard Phillips who has had his own training yard for the best part of 30 years and who brought with him David Bass, the newly crowned jumps president of the Professional Jockeys Association and racing journalist / author Cornelius Lysaght.

Richard introduced himself and said he would be chairman for the night as he wanted to speak about National Racehorse Week which had its first of (hopefully) many weeks back in September. He explained about how the idea had come to him via national nut day, yes that's right...national nut day!

After Richard had been talking to the queens vet who thought it quite possible jumps racing could disappear in the future and learning that Taylor Swift wouldn't sing at the Melbourne cup as she was scared of ostracising some of her fans. he had started to think about the public's perception of racing. On the way to Warwick one day he heard on the radio of national nut day which gave him

the idea a national day or week for racehorses. With different racing factions being disconnected Richard took it upon himself to start the ball rolling to get people together to celebrate the one factor they all have in common, the racehorse. One hundred and forty stables opened their doors to the public during the week so we could see the care and dedication the horses get and experience first hand the conditions the horses live in on a day to day basis. Cornelius said that Richard should be proud of what happened and inquired whether more stables would be open next time. Richard thought they would and told us about Andrew Balding who although hadn't opened to the general public had school children round after school to have escorted tours. Cornelius thought this a fantastic idea - to get them young - as mass media had lost interest in racing, It just doesn't seem to be fashionable, he stated, whether that's down to high profile people not having horses or welfare issues or other reasons. If children have a good experience it will stick with them for years and hopefully lead them onto being involved with horses in future years in whatever form that might be.

David too thought the week a brilliant idea but just couldn't work out how it was Richard who had come up with it. He explained he had gotten into racing because of the competition but then realised how wonderful it was to be working with horses. He also explained that welfare issues were being dealt with referring to the Grand National and how he had stopped and talked to a bunch of 'anti's' outside Newton Abbot whose view seemed to be that bad practices and corruption occurred because of the links to gambling. Cornelius thought that attracting blue chip sponsors would help with this rather than all the betting company sponsorship and all panellists agreed bookies had too much power Richards view was racing needed a proper leader who could bring all the different factions together to promote the sport instead of everyone looking after their own interests. A question from the floor about whether there was a different public perception between flat and jumps provoked much debate especially on the whip issue. Richards view was that the public will never accept jockeys hitting horses, David's was that he was open to further

changes but felt the whip was needed for control and Cornelius thought there wasn't a public feeling to get rid of the whip. To the question of why don't trainers talk to people David's reply was he knows a trainer who you can't stop talking!

After the half time break talk turned to the weighing room culture. David explained about what he would like to change, the first being the mental well being of all concerned. The 'put up and shut up' culture needed to change and he would also like to provide help with nutrition. He has himself been using a plant based diet and thinks others could benefit from changes to their current methods of taking on calories. Bullying then reared it's head, as a subject for debate that is, and not amongst the panel and all three guests agreed that the BHA have handled the current bullying allegations disastrously although Cornelius caveated that social media has been revving up feelings and the media shouldn't have a go at people who are trying to change things for the better. David commented he personally had seen no bullying but did suggest that courses needed to provide

better facilities for all jockeys, females in particular and one course being a labelled a shambles. More questions followed before the last round which was on favourite horses. Richard thought that favourite current horses may be a way to get the public involved more in national racehorse week and put Lescargot forward as his all time favourite. Cornelius went with Denman due to his bravery and jumping. David went with Sprinter Sacre who he had actually ridden. He was told by his normal rider not to fire him at his fences during the race and after schooling on the Monday thought "well even I can't xxxx this up". Although he did indeed fire Sprinter at the last in the actual race his thoughts on the Monday thankfully proved to be correct.

All in all then a cracking night to get the regular club meetings back into action and many thanks to the panellists for all the entertainment and thought provoking discussion.

Write up by Mike Lawrence.  
Photo by Antonia Lord

## Richard Phillips Write Up

It was a pleasure to join Cornelius Lysaght and David Bass at the recent meeting of the Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club. During which we discussed National Racehorse Week and it's future development. I put to the members present that it would be a good idea to ensure future financing of the week through partial funding from racing fans. I've muted the idea on several occasions that I am sure there are thousands of followers of the sport who have a favourite horse or two, that has either inspired them or they simply love. If these supporters were to donate £10 in the name of their favourite horse, knowing that the monies would go towards financing National Racehorse Week, I am sure a fair amount of money could be raised.

Where people's favourite horses could be shown is up for debate. Possibly on walls on racecourses, in the racing press or perhaps a website. All is up for discussion however I think it would be a positive for the sport that the fans of racing including owners, trainers, jockeys etc were seen

to show some 'self help' in the promotion of their beloved sport.

Perhaps the idea could be launched on an evening where racing fans were invited to listen to connections of great horses of the past. Whether it be Red Rum, Desert Orchid, Frankel or Mill Reef. Listening to the connections talk about the horses life and career would I am sure be an engaging way to spend an evening. The proceeds of which once again, could go towards the promotion of National Racehorse Week.

Food for thought I know. I believe there are many racing supporters who are eager to help racing's cause when in this world of social media negative stories can be so prevalent. The Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club are an example of how enthusiasts of racing can together make a difference and let us hope that National Racehorse Week continues for many years to do just that.



## Jo O'Neill Article

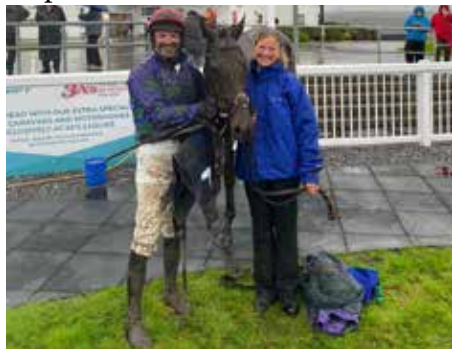
With Harrison Day off due to a broken ankle, my forays into being a head of travelling have been lots of peaks and a few troughs. Every travelling lad forgets items – it's very easy to do, we're only human and always very busy. After a cold, grey day at Doncaster on the 22nd of October, when Yulong Magicreef (Reefy) ran on the Flat, I was so preoccupied at having to get him scoped (he'd run really badly) that I left without the colour bag. (The small satchel which holds the folded silks and girths; the non-slip is rolled up and usually stuck through the loops at the back.) The sudden cold drench of realisation occurred when I was about thirty minutes from home...



On finishing up, I searched the Racing Post App to see who had runners there the following day – no one I knew as it was a

Flat meeting. There was only one runner from Ian Williams' yard in the first race, so I messaged the head of travelling from there, Fabrice Smeulders. He said he was at Cheltenham the next day (where I was too) but he'd get the lad going to Donny to pick it up. I felt initially relieved, but then got increasingly worried when I hadn't heard or got the colour bag back. After a couple of weeks, I was even losing sleep; the only consolation was that Reefy wasn't running again as he'd had veterinary treatment. I had to ask a 'mole', a friend, who rides out Ian Williams', if the colour bag was there. After a conversation that went like... 'It's blue with a bit of red and JJ O'Neill in purple embroidery', it was clear they hadn't got it. So, I immediately called Doncaster Racecourse (lots!) but it rang on and on all that afternoon but the next morning I got through and they couldn't have been more helpful. A lady found the lonesome colour bag on a table in the silent weighing room and I asked if she could send the colours from inside it to my work address. I said the rest of it could wait until we had runners up at Donny again. The next day, a parcel was waiting for me when I returned from

racing and to my relief, inside was the whole colour bag – the colours still mud-speckled, hinting of the damp from that day, and our non-slip gone but replaced by a rather smart lightweight Zilco one. I actually hugged everything to me, feeling warm and fuzzy with relief. At the next opportunity, I went online and sent the racecourse office a big box of Hotel Chocolat finest, and a note of thanks, in case it was thought to be from a creepy admirer. That's what I love about racing: that we are one big team – that we're there for each other and help one another.



'My' Monbeg Genius won first time out over hurdles at a very very wet Ffos Las on the 28th of October. I call him Minnie but had many deliberations over a nickname before I stopped at that one, including Gene, but nothing suited him. Until one of my colleagues called him a 'skinny mini' and I thought Minnie was

perfect because he is totally mini! He's very petite with tiny eyes, a pony-like and a slight body. He's probably not that tiny but compared to the big chasers living down at the pens, he's definitely small. He moved down there this autumn as he's such a picky eater that living in the field will help him eat. I now have to alternate his feed between Power cubes and racing mix because he's contrary, changing his preference at any whim! Minnie proved very gutsy under Richie McLernon, sticking his neck out. Richie was complimentary, saying he was genuine, which made me very proud. Richie then followed up on the second division on the late Trevor Hemmings' Iron Bridge, who won even better than my horse. Iron Bridge is a tall, chasing type and was a poignant victory as it was the first in those colours since Mr Hemmings had passed. This double proved our horses were in form, especially as Soaring Glory won well at Ascot and Papa Tango Charly bolted up under Nick Scholfield first time over fences at Carlisle. His groom is Nick Healy but Papa has loved life since moving to the pens. Since being there, he has

won over hurdles and followed up over fences. Papa is a sweet gentle horse, whose best friend is Clondaw Promise (Clondy). Being two skinnier types, they are left free in their field day and night. Each morning, after giving their riders the run-around, they always trot into their pen to be tacked up. Most of the horses trained from the pens are locked in at night in their little runs with sheds, or they share a run and bigger field shelter. It's only Minnie, Papa and Clondy who have access to their fields throughout the day and night. It must be working as Clondy also won on November 9th. He'd finished second first time out and then won by over six lengths at Lingfield.



There are many sayings or mottos in racing that reappear over time, such as 'Ride long, live long, or 'Fresh as a daisy'. Throughout my few seasons working for Nigel Twiston-Davies, head lad Richard

'Sparky' Bevis frequently quote the saying 'It's all in the scoop' – in fact, he probably invented it! If we'd won a best turned out, he'd say it with a twinkle in his eye and palm outstretched, meaning that it was his feeding, often a head lad's principal task, that had caused the horse to look well and win the BTO. It was always a joke and he never really took a cut – it was all light-hearted and fun. Since I've been having a few more winners from out of the pens, I've adopted it as my own saying. Though not in relation to BTOs but their winning comes from the scoops of feed I give them – like fires burn from logs or coal, they are bouncing from all of the feed. The charity Racing Welfare organised a social in a local pub, the Hollow Bottom. Orange and black decorations had been draped everywhere, including Halloween bunting and there were lots of pumpkins. The local area was quite well represented with people attending from both Jonjo's and Nigel Twiston-Davies yards, the two biggest in the area. (There might have been more though if Ben Pauling's staff had not held a big Halloween party the night before.) There were also a family from a local stud and some

point-to-pointing staff too. We had free burgers and fries, quiz questions with a spooky theme, hoopla and (the best event!) a Halloween-themed dog fancy dress competition. A long list of prizes was generously given out to humans and canines alike.



My Daisy came third in her black and gold cape and witch's hat, of which she hated every second wearing. Spider-dog Mia, a cockerpoo with convincing and oversized tarantula legs, finished second for Fay Shulton and a Dino-dog, half stegosaurus and half terrier, Jack, won the big gold trophy and hamper full of treats for his owner Alice Campbell. It was a fun night, with good food and good company and not a dog fight anywhere! Around Halloween, owner Berys

Connop, arranged a scrumptious delivery. (She was still laid up after an accident, unable to visit the yard and her horse Phil The Thrill.) Oversized cookies arrived from our favourite bakery in Broadway, The Cotswold Larder, all decorated in caramel goo, and lots of spooky sweets, such as zombie eyes and mini pumpkins. They were delicious and very much appreciated. Sir and Lady Broughton, also generous owners, sent four huge sponge cakes to celebrate the start of the season, which were gorgeous flavours: coffee, apple crumble, lemon and a Victoria sponge. We love receiving these and it always feels like the first 'decent' meeting at Chepstow – that the proper racing is here!

We then received a lot of homemade bakes from the Top Speed syndicate, of which I love the flapjacks and brownies the best but it's a very hard choice. The universal aspect to horsey people is that we love our sweet treats and can justify eating every crumb due to all the mucking out!

Wishing all the club members a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and a Happy New Year xxx.

**The Committee of the Cheltenham and Three Counties Race Club** ( the 'Club') hereby give notice that the **2022 Annual General Meeting** will be held on Wednesday February 16th 2022 at The Victory Club, Burlington House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2SY. The meeting will start at 19.30 and will be followed by a Members evening with guest speakers (Unless Covid means it has to be held via Zoom). All current Club Members are invited to attend.

**Nominations are invited for the role of Chair Person, Vice Chair Person, Treasurer and Secretary (the Officers). These must be received by the Acting Secretary at least 14 days prior to the AGM.**

**Nominations to join the Committee (other than the Officers) or proposals to amend the Club Constitution should also be received by the Acting Secretary prior to the start of the AGM.**

A copy of the Club Constitution can be found of the Club's website at [www.ctcrc.co.uk](http://www.ctcrc.co.uk).

The Officers of the Club are presently:

Acting Chair - Helen Cameron

Vice Chair - Vacant

Acting Treasurer - John Reilly

Acting Secretary - David Miller

All have indicated a willingness to stand again if nominated and voted in by Members.

"The Cheltenham & Three Counties are pleased to enclose their cheque for £360 to the Injured Jockeys Fund, which represents the total winnings achieved from the overall winning entry of our Club member, Keith Appleton, a longtime contributor to our Annual NH Tipster Competition that concluded last May. We have been instructed by his family to send all his winning prize money to the IJF, in whose memory this donation is given. Keith's untimely and sudden death, in January 2021, sadly meant that he was to never experience the pleasure of his winning entry.





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### **Valued Committee Members:**

Rosemarie Davies, Antonia Lord, Gerald Kay.

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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.**