



NMRC CLUB AGM

The club's AGM will again be held online on **Monday evening 16th January 2023.**

We *welcome* all members getting involved in this event so if you would like to attend the online meeting please register via e mail at info@northernracingclub.com by Sunday evening, the day before. Joining instructions will then be sent out via e mail on Monday morning to those who have registered.

If you cannot attend or do not have internet access we would still like to hear from you if you would like to share any thoughts on how the club is being run.

Please send any written communications to NMRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB.

CHELTENHAM PREVIEW EVENT 2023

Thanks to all who filled in the recent 'club events' survey which included a question about whether or not members wanted NMRC to arrange an event in the North West.

I am pleased to say that there were sufficient positive responses to make this viable, as long as unlike last year we are not faced with another batch of covid restrictions!

The next decision we shall have to make will be the size of the venue we need to book.

So, to help us plan ahead can you help us by dropping an e mail or text to tell us how many places you are likely to require (without any commitment at this stage)?

Please let us know before the AGM is held on Jan 16th next year. E mails can be sent to info@northernracingclub.com whilst texts can be sent to 07858 034694.

For members living outside the North West we hope to share details of more local events that may be of interest or on-line events. All suggestions will be welcomed.

Bobby Beevers is under the spotlight with Brian Goodwill this month – see page 8

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COMPETITION NEWS

59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

The latest '59's' winner is as follows:

October 1st – 21 – Not allocated
November 5th – 34 – Jennifer Burgess

Your £100* prize will be sent out shortly. *Prize doubled as October not won!

The winning number is determined by the 'bonus ball' drawn in the UK Lottery on the first Saturday of the month.

Thanks to all who continue to support the draw.

All numbers are currently allocated.

HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION 2022

Congratulations to this year's winners who were

1st Dave Byrne £150

2nd John Boswell £75

3rd Ted Halewood £45

In the supplementary 'exactas league' the winner was:

1st Helen Goodwill £80

ALEX BIRD COMPETITION – 2022

As entrants will already be aware the final round of this year's challenge was suspended after Day 2 of the Doncaster meeting out of respect to the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

There were instead two replacement days at the Newmarket 'Future Champions' meeting on October 7th/8th.

So, it's congratulations to **Maureen Dawson** who was the Alex Bird 2022 Champion and received £120 prizemoney. The runner-up was **Ted Halewood** who received £60. And, in third place

was **Sam Doyle Jr.** who received £30.

It's also congratulations to **Alan Hill** who was the winner of the final round from Doncaster & Newmarket and received £70. And also, **Gary Mellor** who was the runner-up and received £30.

AUTUMN BOOK COMPETITION

Thanks to all who entered the 'Charlie Hall Chase' competition.

Even though it was a small field, no one found the 1-2-3 so it was down to the back up rule and the tie break to determine the winner who was **Mike Campbell** from Stockport.

A copy of the Paul Fergusson jumps annual should be with you soon!

SATURDAY NAPS+ COMPETITION 2022/23

This winter, entrants are asked to pick their nap in any jumps race and also a selection in the big jumps handicap race of the day.

The early leaders after 4 weeks are as follows:

<u>Tot</u>	<u>Name & Entry No.</u>
36.1	Jim Aitkenhead 29
35.28	Maureen Dawson 03
30.7	Brendan O'Meara 56
27.8	Craig McConnachie 110
27	Phil Evans 24
25	Patrick O'Donoghue 77

The provisional Round 2 'feature' races will be:

Jan 7th – Sandown – Veterans Chase Final
Jan 14th – Warwick – 'Classic' Handicap Chase
Jan 21st – Haydock – Peter Marsh Chase
Jan 28th – Doncaster – Skybet Chase
Feb 4th - Sandown – Heroes Handicap Hurdle
Feb 11th – Newbury – 'Betfair' Handicap Hurdle
Feb 18th – Haydock – Grand National Trial

If there are any changes to these 'feature races' entrants will be informed in due course.

The Red Rose blooms for 'Sprint King' Eric

By HAROLD HEYS

IT WAS back in the summer when Eric Alston, chatting to reporters at Haydock Park where he had a couple of runners, mentioned that he was thinking of calling it a day at the end of the season. He'd been sending out winners from his small stable at Longton on the outskirts of Preston for over 40 years. "It doesn't get any easier," he said. "We've fewer horses than we used to have."

Not sure where I read that exchange. But what was left of my brain after more than 65 years of cramming it with racing form, immediately clicked into gear. Eric Alston. Retiring. Start saving NOW to lump on his last runner. The old boy – he's a bit younger than me – will be determined to go out with a bang.

The "end of the season" used to be clearly defined. I first went racing – on the bus – to Manchester for the last day of the 1956 season, Manchester November Handicap Day – Cock-of the North Willie Nevett rode the last race winner – and retired. Flat racing was in full swing right up till then.

These days, the end of October is the fag-end of the Flat before it limps on to the November Handicap. So Eric Alston wasn't going to have many late opportunities to strike.

Three entries stood out; there were none after Tuesday, October 25. OneforSue (Redcar 1.30) and Grant Wood there in the 4.15 were lined up for the Monday; Redrosezorro for the 5.0 at Catterick on the Tuesday.

OneforSue, named after his lovely wife, who isn't in the best of health, was beaten a nose and Grant Wood was a close-up fourth. But I was concentrating well over 60 years of racing experience on "Zorro." It had everything going for it, I realised. There was no way it could lose. A cert.

First of all, it would be vastly experienced "shrewdie" and sprint king Eric Alston's last runner. That was quite enough. But, for the first time in over four years – since April 2018 as a four-year-old – Zorro's OR figure was down to a miserable 60. It was a Class 6 sprint and the gelding had knocked up over 50 races without once being asked to stoop so low. Soft going. *Tick*. A top jock in Kevin Stott. *Tick*. The opposition? Well, let's just say that it wasn't the strongest field of sprinters ever assembled. I've ridden sharper ponies over the Accrington moors as a rather younger chap than several of them.

I glanced at the SP forecast in the morning's Daily Mail. 16-1 Redrosezorro. Ha! I almost spilled my Weetabix. By mid-morning *Oddschecker* showed a best price of 9-2. As they were going down, the eight-year-old had taken over as 11-4 favourite.

The bright red colours of the Red Rose Partnership burst out of the stalls and were always very handy. When Kevin gave it the word it raced clear to win by a couple of lengths.

He gave his own warm tribute on Racing TV: "All the lads are a bit emotional. It's his last runner, so it means a lot for everyone. I'm privileged to have had the ride. He's just a gentleman to deal with."

Said Eric: "I've had a fantastic career, it's been great, really."

So, after saving up for months to splash out on Eric Alston's last runner, how much did I scoop? Er, actually I didn't back it. Perhaps a handful of readers will follow my rather twisted logic here. Perhaps not. I've always thought of gambling as being a contest between "us and them." Zorro was so nailed on it wasn't a contest. It would have been a bit like stealing...

Eric will be 80 in late November next year. "I didn't really want to retire, but Sue isn't well. She's looked after me for 57 years and now it's my turn to look after her," he told me.

Have a long and happy retirement, Eric. And good luck with the cooking.

Due Reverence to Alston's best

ERIC ALSTON has done really well over a long training career from his modest Edges Farm on leafy Chapel Lane off the Liverpool Road out of Preston. The best of them? Certainly Garry & Lesley Middlebrook's *Reverence*, champion European sprinter of the 2006 season.

It's hard for any trainer to come up with a season's best whatever their specialist distance. But to land a crown from such a modest enterprise of not very many horses is almost beyond belief.

Reverence won both the Nunthorpe at York and the Haydock Sprint and was unlucky not to make it a hat trick of Group 1s when second in the Prix de l'Abbaye on Arc weekend. Just a neck separated him from winner Desert Lord after a slow start and on firm ground that didn't suit. (Photos below show *Reverence's* wins at York, Haydock and post-race at Haydock)



Had he won he would have received an invitation to the Breeders' Cup sprint where he would have attempted to have gone one better than *Dayjur* in 1990 when probably the best British sprinter of the past 40 years or so inexplicably tried to jump a shadow in front of the stands with the race at his mercy. He finished second.

Eric rightly puts *Reverence* at the top of his list but he has had a lot of top-class horses, mainly sprinters. Abbaye runner-up *Stack Rock* was one of his first good 'uns. *Acclaim the Nation*, *Maid in India*, *Ridge Rider*, *Jabbarockie* and, of course, the wonderful *Tedburrow* who won a lot of very good races for the stable between 1997 and 2003. The useful *Boudica Bay* has landed him a couple of races this season.

But *Reverence* takes the crown. *Timeform* was full of praise for the chestnut gelding in their 2006 "Racehorses" annual, concluding: "*Reverence's* imposing appearance is an eye-opener. He is a typical sprinter, strong and heavily bodied, and invariably takes the eye in the preliminaries. *Reverence* is also as game, genuine and consistent as they come, a thoroughly admirable individual in every respect and a credit to his owners and his trainer."

Quite a compliment to a horse that twice broke its pelvis as a youngster. **HH**

Editor's Note: Older members of the club will recall that back in the day we also ran ownership groups and that Eric trained a few for us. The most notable being *Hawwam* who, as a veteran 10yo, won a couple of flat races for us as at Ayr and Redcar.

In an interview with the Lancashire Evening Post earlier this year, Eric indicated that *Tedburrow* was still 'at home' now aged 30.

Many readers will not know that Eric started his racing career as a jockey, originally with Walter Wharton, and in total notched up 11 wins 'in the saddle'. There is some uncertainty regarding his first winner as a trainer although *Samanza* at Cartmel in 1978 seems the most likely according to press reports!

Although Eric has yet to decide what he intends to do in retirement, he has been quoted as saying 'May even go to Deepdale' having yet to attend his first football match!



SHOULD WE BACK PAST WINNERS OF RACES?

I am sure all racing fans/punters will have different views on this aspect. For top class races we often see a number of horses winning 'big races' several times and it often seems a good idea to 'support them' the following year when they have won before. However, from a betting perspective the odds will often be very short for the following year(s).

When looking at handicaps, even if a horse doesn't win again before the next race renewal comes around, most handicap race winners will still be substantially worse off at the weights the following year so will they be worth following again?

Anyone who uses the 'racing systems' web pages on the club website will be aware that this is just one area where statistics are maintained for all UK & Irish tracks. The good news is that for the last three years, apart from the all-weather tracks, it has generally been profitable to follow 'past winners' on the flat and over jumps.

For NH races, those carrying higher weights than their last win have fared best at Ascot, Fontwell & Worcester. Those carrying the same or lower weights than their last win in the race have fared best at Sedgefield, Taunton & Cheltenham.

For flat races, those carrying higher weights than when last winning have fared best at Cork, The Curragh & Newmarket (Rowley)

For past winners on the same or lower weights, Chester & Newmarket (Rowley) have fared the best.

ALL CHANGE AT BANGOR ON DEE BY PHIL EVANS

I bumped into Jeannie Chantler (General Manager at Bangor on Dee) at the Stockton Hall open day in September where Jeannie was 'helping out' (as she lives locally near Malpas). It was over a brief chat there that Jeannie told me that she was retiring as General Manager at Bangor on Dee after the December fixture in 2022. This is after nearly 19 years as General Manager and a further 6 years at the track in other roles.

As Jeannie has been very supportive of our racing club over the years, with a variety of 'sponsored race day' opportunities as well as numerous racing club prizes, I thought that we should mark the occasion by giving her a big thank you for her past support as well as wishing her a happy retirement (see later comments!).

As a youngster, Jeannie loved looking after ponies and horses and when she left school she wanted to go and work in a local permit-holder's yard but her parents persuaded her to attend a secretarial course instead. After the course finished Jeannie got her way and went off to work for the permit holder (Tony Brassey) in 1973, which was her first job in the horse racing industry.

Jeannie then moved off to a variety of other jobs for a number of years before finding an opportunity at Bangor on Dee in 1996 as an office assistant when the track was managed by Major R M O Webster. Gradually she moved from 2 days a week to 4 days a week 'learning on the hoof' how to run a racecourse.

In 2002 the course was bought by Chester Racecourse (albeit like the parent track, parts of the course are held under leases still). It was not long afterwards (in February 2004) that Jeannie was offered the role of General Manager, even though she had not applied for the position!

Whilst Jeannie described the team at Chester as 'very supportive' she indicated that in most aspects the team at Bangor were allowed to manage the course without being micro-managed from above! I did touch upon the Bangor-Bet concept that was also introduced at Chester, although Jeannie rather ducked that question and instead pointed out that Tote betting on course was again available albeit Bangor-Bet still runs the onsite betting shop.

Unlike many big racecourse groups, where staff frequently move around, Jeannie has held that position for the best part of 19 years and has recently won several prestigious racing awards including a Welsh Racing award and a Race Course Association award. Jeannie said she was most humbled to receive such awards and was at pains to say that all her achievements over the years are down to having a loyal and hard-working team behind her, many of whom have worked at the track for a very long time as well.

I then asked what were the best and worse bits of the job were during her two decades.

As regards the best bits Jeannie felt that seeing so many future champions running at the course was very fulfilling and mentioned the likes of Denman, Comply Or Die, Amberleigh House, Ballabriggs, Silviniaco Conti and Mr Mulligan as some of the top horses that came through the ranks at Bangor. In terms of non-equine stars, Jeannie said how much she enjoyed watching jockeys such as A P McCoy and 'Dickie' Johnson starting their careers at the likes of Bangor and rising to the top of their profession. I then invited Jeannie to 'name drop' a few 'celebrities' she had met over the years. Princess Anne was the first name mentioned as she regularly attended the early November fixture which includes a charity fundraiser run in the name of the late Duchess of Westminster (owner of Arkle). Next was snooker player John Parrott.....

The worst bits of managing at Bangor all involved the River Dee bursting its banks, usually in February, with 2021 being the worst she can recall with '18 inches of cr**' deposited on the track being mainly silt/mud from the river. Whilst this has led to some loss of fixtures in recent times, incredibly the ground staff managed to get the track raceable again in just over two weeks. Jeannie did also acknowledge that the river has been a godsend in recent summers when a large amount of watering was required. The worst of the Covid restrictions were also very challenging times and Jeannie was quick to praise the BHA for getting racing back as quickly as they did in 2020 – which also featured a very rare two-day fixture at the track. Whilst the covid-19 rules in

Wales were much more stringent for race goers than in England, Jeannie was complimentary about the Welsh Government's support when racing was either stopped or run behind closed doors as the Welsh tracks were given grants rather than loans (as in England) by way of support. It's easy to forget that racing behind closed doors again took place in Wales last winter with no spectators allowed at the Welsh Grand National whilst Kempton had a 10,000 attendance on the same week in December. Bangor's January fixture also had to be run behind closed doors earlier this year.

As regards the future of racing, Jeannie firmly believes that horse welfare needs to be kept at the top of the agenda. Climate change is also likely to impact on the way summer jumps racing is being run.

So what does retirement hold in store for Jeannie? Well, we shall still see her out and about at Chester and Bangor as in 2023 she will be acting as the Owners & Trainer's representative at both tracks. Hopefully this will be relatively stress free compared to running the track at Bangor, but it still requires a lot of hours with each day's racing requiring four days of work!

Outside of racing Jeannie has plans to go horse riding across Andalucia and also visit Africa again, on safari. She will also be acting as a volunteer at the Clwyd Special Riding Centre.

Bangor on Dee started racing in 1859 although I forgot to ask whether that was before or after the nearby Wrexham racecourse closed. That track is now the home of Wrexham football club (hence the name of the ground). Long time supporter of Bangor on Dee and local journalist Arthur Shone did write a book about Wrexham racecourse before his premature death in 2021 so if anyone has a copy, please let me know!

If anyone wants to learn more about the racecourse there is a very informative 'time line' on the track's website at <https://www.bangorondeeraces.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/BOD-Timeline-Boards.pdf>

This also includes a photo of a much younger Jeannie leading up one of Mr Brassey's horses at the track!

Paddy Chesters will take over the 'reins' at Bangor shortly after their last meeting of the year in December and as he has worked for the 'Chester' group for many years, Jeannie seemed confident that there are unlikely to be many major changes at the track which will continue to have its own special brand of racing, which for many racing fans is very different from the experience at nearby Chester!

For anyone who has not visited Bangor on Dee for a while, entry prices start at £7 (if pre booked) and generally speaking the size of fields is holding up better than many of the bigger tracks. During school holidays there are often 'fun days' put on for families with plenty of attractions to keep everyone happy, so well worth parents/grandparents checking out what's on in the next holiday season!



BOBBY BEEVERS 'UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT' WITH BRIAN GOODWILL

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTERESTED IN RACING?

When I was a little lad I used to go round to my nanna's house on a Saturday and we would watch the racing, flicking from BBC to Channel 4 so as not to miss any of the action. My parents took me racing from a very early age and I still have photos of me as a baby in my dad's arms at Ripon.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN THE SPORT?

I was quite lucky. I did some reporting from Doncaster for Hospital Radio. At that stage I was paying to go in, I would find a quiet spot with a mobile phone and just report back, including getting interviews. In 2014 Radio Yorkshire launched and advertised for sports reporters and I landed the position, which included covering meetings from Ayr to Goodwood. Unfortunately, the station folded in 2017 but had given me a great grounding.

WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

I am the regular raceday presenter at Doncaster. That means a lot to me. It is the closest course to my home and my late father, who passed away in 2008, has a bench dedicated to him in the weighing room. In the summer the bench gets moved outside and it gets used by ITV and Sky for when jockeys are being interviewed. I work as a broadcaster for SIS on their racing platforms. Also, I do occasional football reporting though that has taken a backseat to racing of late.

YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN STARTING AUTISM IN RACING. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?

I helped to put a cracking team together. We launched in May last year. The first official Autism Friendly day was at Doncaster, as part of The Racing League, in August later that year. Since then it has gone from strength to strength. We offer days when families can come racing in a safe and supportive environment. We provide a mobile sensory room, though Cheltenham have their own permanent facility. Also we engage in helping to find careers in racing for people with Autism. The organisation will help with the right support, catered for each individual's needs.

WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS FOR BOTH YOURSELF AND AUTISM IN RACING?

We are hoping to become a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) next year for phase three and in the future I would hope that we achieve full charitable status. I would hope that we can become a flag bearer across the sporting network. Ultimately helping many people to fulfil their potential. From a personal point of view I am very happy doing what I am doing. I have done the occasional feature for ITV, including one on The City of York which got very good feedback. I would like to do more pieces like that.

PLEASE GIVE US A COUPLE OF HORSES TO FOLLOW (ONE FLAT, ONE JUMPS)?

I think Goshen could show his real worth over fences. He was very good at Ascot. As for The Flat I would say it's a case of stick with Godolphin, Charlie Appleby and Will Buick. They have had a phenomenal season and I believe it will continue in 2023 and beyond. It is hard to pinpoint one particular horse.

WHO ARE/WERE YOUR RACING HEROES BOTH HUMAN AND EQUINE?

Cue Card was a firm favourite. I thought he was a great horse. Earlier than that Hedgehunter was my National favourite. AP, in my opinion, is the best NH jockey we have ever seen and I was very pleased when he won The Grand National. Also, he is such a nice guy who is very down to earth. I was fortunate to interview him a few times.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS MY FRIEND – BY JOHN MCDONALD

Thumbing through *Copes Diamond Jubilee Edition of 1955* I unearthed some interesting facts about the 1954 flat season which reflect the changes which have taken place in the last 68 years.

The Queen was the first reigning monarch to head the list of winning owners, amassing prize money of £40,933 from her 10 horses which won 19 races.

The top trainer was Cecil Boyd Rochfort who won £65,000 with 25 horses winning 39 races. In second place was J Lawson (whom I confess I had never heard of) but I discovered his position was attributable to him training *Never Say Die*, which was the first Derby winner for Lester Piggott.

The champion jockey was Douglas Smith with 129 winners. He rode at an astonishing 7st 7lbs. Amongst those in the 'chasing pack' were J Mercer, A Breasley and F Durr. *Copes* made reference to some young up and coming jockeys including E Hide, G Lewis and L Piggott. Not a bad trio to follow! All three rode at 8st or less.

The leading trainer at Chester for that season was merely listed as 'In Ireland'.

On the subject of riding weights, which were published in full, the lightest weighted apprentice I could find was one R W Roberts, who could ride at 5st.

An astonishing fact relating to the jockeys championship was that Gordon Richards won it every year from 1931 to 1953 except for 1941 when he broke his leg. The champion that year was.....Can you guess? This jockey went on to train Classic winners.

Editor's note: In the last issue of *Racin'* John gave us six horses to follow over the winter. Three ran on Dec 3rd with Romeo Brown winning at 50/1, Edwardstone winning at 5/1 whilst Fortescue was 4th in the Becher Chase at 33/1. If this whets the appetite, a reminder that the other three to follow were: Camprond, Nells Son and Cobblers Dream.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FROM YOUR NMRC COMMITTEE

If you are looking for last minute gifts for a racing fan here are a few ideas from your committee.

For a lower budget an IJF calendar is always a popular choice (available at many courses in December or online at <https://shop.ijf.org.uk/>). For a similar price you may also wish to consider a 'Birdie' racing calendar or mug available at <https://birdieracinggifts.co.uk/calendars.html>! The book 'Always Back Winners' by Stewart Payne (available online at around £10) is recommended. 'Method's still hold true'.

The Point-To-Point Recruits Annual 2022/23 by Jodie Standing is another suggestion. It can be ordered via Marten Julian's website www.martenjulian.com Also for PTP followers the 'Racing Premium' Service is recommended at <https://www.pointtopoint.co.uk/>

For a more substantial gift there are plenty of good syndicates around costing around £40pm. I can thoroughly recommend the Sam England racing club which has two horses in training at present. *Going Mobile* had an excellent summer with two wins and plenty of placed runs. Veteran *Manwell* was 3rd in last year's Sefton Chase and has just made his comeback for the winter season. The group is well run by Terry Davis with badges usually easy to arrange when the horses are running. <http://www.samenglandracing.com/racing-club/>

If you just want to 'follow' a horse and are not worried about getting a badge when it runs then there are plenty of bigger owners groups with thousands of members where micro shares cost around £50.

For those with plenty of time to watch racing on TV a 'Racing TV' subscription at around £150 is suggested.

Go Racing In Yorkshire NMRC Update

By Charlotte Russell

The jump season is underway at all three Yorkshire courses. Bravemansgame was a game winner of the bet365 Charlie Hall Chase at Wetherby for Paul Nicholls and Dan Skelton had three winners on the card, including the Grade 2 bet365 hurdle. Locally trained Ladronne took the bet365 Handicap Chase for Tjade Collier and Sean Quinlan and the pair followed up at Catterick's opening meeting on 18th November.

There is some great jumping action to look forward to in December, with eight Yorkshire fixtures in the month and some high-profile jump races into the New Year.



Ladronne in the green with black and white checked sleeves on his way to winning at Catterick. Picture credit: Meg Gadd.

Meanwhile across the pond, the Yorkshire contenders at the Breeders' Cup put up an excellent performance! There were five runners, The Platinum Queen trained by Richard Fahey and ridden by Hollie Doyle and Dramatised, trained by Karl Burke and ridden by Ryan Moore took part in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint with

Dramatised only going down by a length to the Charlie Appleby trained Mischief Magic.

On the same day, Richard Fahey's Midnight Mile, ridden by Wayne Lordan ran a very creditable fourth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf.

The next day, Emaraty Ana, trained by Kevin Ryan and ridden by Ryan Moore and Highfield Princess, trained by John Quinn and ridden by Jason Hart lined up in the Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint. Both horses were up there from the start and in the final furlong it looked like Emaraty Ana might just get up but in the end he went down by half a length. Highfield Princess was a length and three quarters back in fourth.

It was fantastic to see our Yorkshire horses really hold their own at the very top level and there is a lot to look forward to.

The Go Racing In Yorkshire season ticket will be on sale very soon, giving admission to 188 scheduled fixtures across Yorkshire's nine racecourses. It is the best value way to go racing but don't just take my word for it, here's what one of our season ticket holders had to say about it;

*"Just been an absolute step-change in my relationship with racing. Now I need to find an excuse *not* to go. One long odds-on fav or having to scoot after race 4 no longer puts me off going."*

There'll be more information in the next Racin' or keep an eye on our website, www.goracing.co.uk or our social media channels to find out more.

Here are some photos that Charlotte took at the Breeders Cup meeting of the Yorkshire contenders:



Emeraaty Anna



The Platinum Queen



Dramatised



Highfield Princess

GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

Friday October 21st Cheltenham

The winner of the two-mile novice chase usually gets an Arkle quote with last year's winner Third Time Lucky very nearly being made favourite. This year Straw Fan Jack only got 33/1 quotes for March which wouldn't have had anyone jumping in. He is a big solid looking animal and is certainly better over fences than hurdles. Runner up Ash Tree Meadow had had a busy summer including being placed in the Galway Plate. His official rating of 145 looks a bit high. Sole Pretender couldn't lead as he usually does but ran his race in third. Twinjets won a couple of ordinary bumpers in the spring but looked short enough at odds on in the two-mile maiden hurdle. He was slightly impeded three out but didn't find much after. The winner Fennor Cross was an improver on the flat and had chased home a Willie Mullins hotpot on debut. He will be in handicaps later in the season.

Saturday October 22nd Cheltenham

Three of the last six winners of the three-mile novice hurdle have gone on to be placed third later in the season in the Albert Bartlett. This year's winner Shearer won't follow that trend as he is only a novice till November. He looks a chaser.

The class race of the day was the rematch between Pied Piper and Knight Salute. No pace in the race and it turned into a sprint with Pied Piper showing too much speed for his old rival. Talk was of course of the Champion Hurdle but you would imagine there will have to be a couple of high profile absentees next March for him to be a contender.

Last October Dads Lad was on his way out of Willie Mullins yard entered in the Goff's Horses in Training Sale. He was withdrawn but changed owners and has since won two hurdle races, a flat maiden, and now three over fences. In a two-mile handicap with plenty of front runners he was held off the pace before coming through to lead after the last. He had to battle for it as the mare Effernock Fizz wouldn't go away. This was her seventy first run and she has just the one tactic of going off like the clappers whether it is on the flat, over hurdles or over fences. She even took on Kyprios last April. Edituer Du Gite looked a bit portly and did not force the pace as he usually does but ran on well for third.

When I saw Salvador Ziggy win his maiden hurdle at Punchestown in the summer I did not think he would be carrying top weight in a Cheltenham handicap this Autumn. He looked very light in condition but qualified for the Pertemps final and will no doubt have time off till then. Also bound for the final will be winner Shoot First who bolted in for Charles Byrnes and son Philip at 9/4. In his previous race he was eighth to Macgiloney and was just the three pounds better off. That horse was the 80/1 rag here but the each way fifth after Dads Lad made it a profitable day.

Also headed to the festival and the National Hunt Chase is Chemical Energy who won the three runner (All Irish) staying novice chase by sixty-one lengths. The other two could barely walk up the run in so what it is worth is anybody's guess. The race was run in memory of Little Owls rider Jim Wilson who trained just down the road from the farmhouse where I stayed for many years just outside Cheltenham. He was friends with the couple who owned it and he told a few good tales on the occasions he called in.

The Bumper was run at a farcically slow pace but there were some nice sorts. Winner Encanto Bruno won well showing a turn of pace while third Thecompanysergeant and fifth Gentle Slopes were chasing sorts.

Sunday October 23rd Aintree

Riders on the Storm had been out of form for a long time but came good to take the Old Roan Chase. It helped that Millers Bank was an early casualty and that Hitman having been given a perfect ride refused to win. Third home Ga Law had a nice comeback after a year off.

Mainly chasing sorts in the two-mile four maiden hurdle and I would take third home Mexico to improve for the run.

Credrojava was paddock pick for the mare's bumper and battled on well having led over half a mile out.

Saturday October 29th Wetherby

For Wetherby's big day of the season the £16.50 price for pre booked concession tickets was certainly reasonable. I would love to know why Jockey Club courses feel unable to offer concession prices before the day when here, York, and many others can.

The form of the Mildmay at Aintree looked suspect so it was a surprise to see Ahoy Senior in at close to evens for the Charlie Hall. Both he and Bravemansgame were fit enough and the two couldn't have run more different races. Bravemansgame travelled and jumped well all the way and certainly didn't need top gear. 9/4 for the King George when it is impossible to say what will turn up is hardly generous but he probably couldn't be much bigger. Ahoy Senior was beaten with a circuit to run and the excuse he pulled to hard seems a bit thin but we will see how he gets on in the Many Clouds at Aintree.

Some in and out performers and chasers having warm up runs in the West Yorkshire Hurdle. The odd one out was Proschema and this was a target for him. I had the trip as a doubt but while he took it easily he will struggle when the better staying hurdlers appear. Both Thomas Darby and Sporting John looked like they would come on for the run but neither is exactly reliable. Threeunderthrufive didn't jump the hurdles too well and will be better in extreme distance handicap chases. It could be near the end for Indefatigable as she looks like she has had enough.

Two improving handicap hurdlers in the two miler with Rocky Man and Findthetime looking set for good seasons even after the handicapper reassesses them.

Tuesday November 1st Warwick

Four well above average horses in the two-mile four novice chase and Stage Star returned from two poor efforts in the spring to win pretty impressively. His jumping was excellent standing off some but also very quick and clean when he was in close. West Cork was a good handicap hurdler at two miles and might not have just got home and he will need to jump a bit straighter to progress. Interne de Sivola pulled early in the race and will come on as many of the Jane Williams runners have needed the outing. Skytastic broke the open ditch with a dreadful mistake early on and it is to be hoped he didn't do damage to himself. He has grown into a super looking beast and really should make a chaser.

Some decent sorts in the mare's bumper. The Henderson runner Spring Note was well backed and when sent for home half a mile out it was all over. She is a big sort who should improve and looked very useful. Behind her Hard as Nails and Great Snow will be better for the run.

From the handicaps Big Boy Bobby went onto the tracker after his fourth in the two mile handicap hurdle.

Saturday November 5th Aintree

Al Dancer started joint favourite for the Supreme Novice Hurdle of his year and was an early fancy for the Arkle after winning his novice chase. He never lived up to that and appeared to have lost his way. Two years after his last win he came good in the Grand Sefton always racing prominently and just holding the late challenge of Gesskille. I am not sure where he can go from here. The runner up could be back for the Becher but that will be a better race. Favourite Lifetime Ambition faded away tamely seeing he gets three miles and has the National as his seasons target. Picked out of the paddock where I thought he stood out I had a bit each way on Percussion at 40/1 who ran well for third from out of the weights.

On perfect ground the field for the two-mile four Novice handicap chase was disappointing. Just the four turned out but all four will probably be better over fences than hurdles. I would fancy that winner Doctor Ken and runner up Ree Okka will be up in the 140's by seasons end rather than the 123 and 128 they ran off here. Chasing sorts in the two mile four novice hurdle and the first two Man at Work and Grey Dawning should have good careers.

Friday November 11th Cheltenham

Amarillo Sky cost plenty after his pointing career and after ending up rated just 115 over hurdles he is an improving sort. He made all in the two-mile handicap chase but runner up Fugitif had not set the world on fire previously in handicaps and third home Grey Sovereign didn't want to know on the run in.

Willie Mullins and Gordon Elliot sent over lesser lights for the two-mile five novice hurdle. Both were seen off in good style by the Nicholls runner Hermes Allen who turned in a very impressive display making all. Still early in the season to get carried away but he looked good. Third home Weveallbeencaught is a huge beast who will eventually need a fence and a trip to be seen at his best.

Saturday November 12th Cheltenham

The ex Coolmore Scriptwriter saw off the ex-Godolphin Perseus Way in the Triumph Hurdle Trial. Horses rated 103 off the flat are making silly money so the £62K the winner cost looks a bargain. He was dual Guineas winner Churchill's first jumps winner when he won at Sedgefield. Both should hold their own in juvenile races for the time being.

It was impossible not to be impressed by Banbridge in the Arkle Trial as his jumping was excellent and he went away from decent hurdler Tommy's Oscar from the last. He is a better chaser than hurdler and stays two and a half.

I had fancied French Dynamite for the Paddy Power from when the weights came out. For ninety percent of the race everything looked perfect but the slight mistake at the last just knocked his stride and Ga Law who looked beaten with a circuit to go just pegged him back. The winner will probably be better at three miles in time. Third home Midnight River came from off the pace and also looked like a step up in trip would suit while the opposite is true of fourth Il Ridoto who didn't stay and needs to go back to two miles.

Queens Gamble was impressive here in April and easily saw off a better field in the listed mare's bumper. The Festival Bumper is evidently the aim which of course will be much harder.

Sunday November 13th Cheltenham

Scheduling the Greatwood Hurdle for the time when the sun would cause problems was just lunacy especially as it has happened before. Cheltenham moved the start time of the Paddy Power to avoid the same thing happening a few years ago so why they haven't done the same with the hurdle only they know.

With the Shloer being a virtual walkover it was a disappointing days racing.

Saturday November 19th Haydock

A Plus Tard looked fit and well before the Betfair Chase but was in trouble with a circuit left. Hopefully they will find something to explain his run and that it is not just a case of he doesn't want to do it anymore. Protektorat ran out a very good winner and he was right in amongst the placed horses at Cheltenham last season.

The same owners also won with Hitman in the two-mile five Graduation Chase. He just outclassed his rivals making all but still has to show he will fight when he gets in a battle. He evidently goes for the King George but his price looks very short.

The staying handicap hurdle was as competitive as usual with winner Botox Has getting an excellent ride from seven-pound claimer Caoilin Quinn. I am sure Gary Moore will use him to the stables advantage.

Tahmuras evidently goes to the Grade 1 Tolworth after his win in the listed two-mile novice hurdle. The bare form looks nothing special but we will see. Findthetime turned in a desperate effort in the two-mile three handicap hurdle where the Skelton runner L'Eau Du Sud might well be better than he showed here.

Sunday November 27th Navan

Navan's big meeting of the year and not a dud race in sight. The difference between this and my last Sunday's racing at Cheltenham was striking. Less than half the price to get in at €15 and food at the usual reasonable Irish prices. Having had breakfast well before the sun came up to catch the 7.45 flight the roast beef lunch from the Kilberry Restaurant was excellent for under €15. Just the half an hour between races as well which should be the norm.

Just the twenty-two in the Juvenile Maiden Hurdle. Odds on was the Willie Mullins J P McManus ex French Tekao winner of a flat maiden last April on his only run. He looked like he would be better for the run. The one from the paddock was J P's other runner Comfort Zone fit from a third place in a Leopardstown mile and a half Premier Handicap. Takeo ran like he looked having every chance two out but fading from the last while Comfort Zone swept to the front at the last and won going away. I doubt if Churchill was lined up to be a jumps sire but his three-year-olds have set off well. J J Slevin has been around for a few years now but has improved

quite a bit over the last twelve months. Gordon Elliot ran the five of which paddock pick was Delta Work's half-brother Jazzy Matty. Well beaten on his sole French hurdle run he pulled like mad over the first three hurdles before settling and did well to run on after the way he started to take second place. Fourth home Poets Cottage on his fifth start gives the race some context. Down the field Thetys might be interesting in a handicap later on in the season.

Half a dozen really nice chasing sorts in the two four maiden hurdle. Many of the Cheveley Park jumpers are big sorts and Grangeclare West is another. Having missed last season he was always going easily just behind the leaders. Taking it up just before the last he strode well clear and will stay further later in the season. Runner up Firm Footings caught my eye at the Punchestown festival last April when third on his bumper debut. He won his next start and did nothing wrong here. Third home was the filly Kudasheva who cost £370K after her point win. She was a bit of a handful before the race but settled in the lead before keeping on well. My favourite from the paddock was My Trump Card who had not run in a point or bumper. Settled off the pace he didn't jump well but ran on from the last to be beaten only a neck for third place. It will be interesting to see if they go down the handicap route with The Flying Spur who ran well for a long way and has now qualified for a mark.

Only four in the Grade 3 two mile four Monksfield Hurdle with American Mike who was a much-hyped bumper horse last season 2/7 to follow up an ordinary enough maiden hurdle win. He and Affordale Fury went at it head-to-head from a long way out and both were tired when Affordale Fury came down at the last. Dawn Rising who earned a flat rating of 102 in 2020 came from at least a dozen lengths down to easily pick up American Mike on the run in. He would probably have won anyway even if Affordale Fury had stood up and it's a hard race to weigh up. American Mike however has plenty to prove now.

Jungle Prose has been the story of the season in handicap hurdles. 0 from 12 for Nick Gifford over hurdles she arrived at Gordon Elliot's with a rating of 85. She won the two-mile six handicap here off 125 with a bit in hand and will get another good hike. I backed her stable mate Bodhisattva each way at 20/1 and as that shrank to 9/1 I was hopeful. He ran his race for third and should win soon but not at 20/1. I liked Lady Rita last season and she ran well here in seventh as she looked to be carrying plenty of condition.

Only two mattered in the Troytown Chase from a long way out. Lifetime Ambition after his underwhelming display at Aintree set off to make all under Conor Smithers who had just the one career win. He very nearly made it but the true stayer The Big Dog just got to him from the last. Trainer Peter Fahey has done me some good turns over the last few seasons (this term with Sit Down Lucy and Skippin Court) and always seems to find some high-class animals for not much money. Whatever the reason for Keith Donoghue's fall out with Gordon Elliot it has done his career the power of good. The Big Dog could well head to Aintree. That is also Lifetime Ambition's aim but his stamina could well be a question. My strong fancy for the race Velvet Elvis jumped really poorly and dropped away well before the race got serious.

Two Grade 1 hurdlers in the two-mile beginners chase and they went at it from a fair way out with Fil Dor making use of the four-year-old allowance to see off Saint Roi. Saint Roi could just be better for the run as well. I fancy there will be better two-mile novices come the spring but they are both useful recruits. Third home Gallant John Joe has chased home some good sorts in chases like Melon, Notebook, and Ferny Hollow and deserves to win a chase. He goes best at Leopardstown so a handicap there might fall his way. There are chases to be won with fourth home Slip of the Tongue.

Finally a listed mare's bumper and a bad favourite in the Mullins runner Williamstowndancer who was about the least impressive individual in the parade ring and never got involved in the race. Paddock picks were Dublin Festival winner Lily Du Berlais who has come on a ton physically over the summer and the Elliot second string Mollys Mango. The latter and Jetara went clear from halfway and Lily Du Berlais who came from last at Leopardstown just had too much to do here. Jetara who comes from a really good family of owner Gerry McGraths (Jezki, Jett, etc) stayed on well to win.

It's not as cheap to get to Ireland as it was pre covid especially the cost of car hire but meetings like this are worth the effort. Roll on Leopardstown at Christmas.



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