

# Racin'



Issue 350

April/May 2018

## 2018 MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thanks to all who have renewed their subs for 2018. If you take your magazine 'electronically' then you will now be allocated a further £5 'e-voucher' to use at many club events/competitions (valid until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019).

If you receive this magazine in the post, then the address label will have a red dot on it if your subs are still outstanding.

Membership forms are also enclosed with the postal version of Racin' ~ please feel free to pass onto a friend if you do not need to use it!

Sadly, if renewals are not received by 1<sup>st</sup> May we shall be removing you from our future mailing lists.



Above, **Bob Champion** ~ Grand National legend ~ who will be NRC's special guest at our Aintree Grand National preview night in Warrington on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April. Bob will be joined by our form experts to guide us through the three day festival. Fuller details on page 3.

NRC is also running a Grand National sweepstake again this year with full details on page 7.

Harold Heys has also penned an excellent piece about the lady jockeys that have ridden in the Grand National on pages 5-6.

Below, **Hugh Nugent** is under Brian Goodwill's spotlight in this issue of Racin'



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## NRC FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup> – AINTREE PREVIEW AT TETLEY CLUB, W'TON

We are moving this year's event to the Tetley Club in Warrington.

**Bob Champion MBE** will be our special guest this year with our full panel of pundits now confirmed (see page 3 for details).

Entry to this event will be £5 (including sandwiches) ~ 2018 e-vouchers can be used for this event. 2 for 1 vouchers issued to those who attended the Cheltenham Preview will also be valid on the night.

## COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

### 59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

The latest '59's' winners are as follows – winners receive the monthly £50 prize unless we have a 'roll over'!

The winners are based on the bonus ball drawn on the first Saturday UK Lotto draw each month.

**Feb 3rd ~ 38 ~ Carol Evans from Sale.**

**Mar 3rd ~ 36 ~ Guy Weaver from Cranage.**

If anyone else wants to join in we currently have numbers 5-54-58 available!

Please contact Phil Evans (see contacts list on last page) if you wish enter – it costs £12 for 12 monthly draws!

### ALEX BIRD CHALLENGE

### CHELTENHAM ROUND SCORES

At the time of going to press the provisional winner of Round 1 is Tim Cogan.

Tim has gone on record as saying he would gladly swap his win in this competition for Stoke City surviving in the Premiership – good luck with

that wish! No doubt Tim will also be following Southampton's FA cup run with interest now!

Anyway, back to the competition ~ here is the leader board.

TIM COGAN 198  
KEN UNSWORTH 196  
FRANK TURLEY 191  
DAVID EVANS 189  
COLIN MALONE 188  
MIKE ASHWOOD 178  
JOHN BOSWELL 1 178  
MIKE CAMPBELL 2 176  
DAVID BATES 176  
TED HALEWOOD 171  
ROB MCDERMOTT 171  
ALAN SPENCER 169  
ALAN PRESTON 168  
JOHN BOSWELL 2 167  
JEANETTE LAIRD 164  
JASON SANDLAND 158.5  
HELEN GOODWILL 155  
LINDA BOSWELL 155

### SATURDAY NAPS NH TIPPING COMP

Round 2 was won by **Phil Evans** from Sale with **Charles Rear** also from Sale the runner up.

Round 3 result is still provisional with **Steve Cawley** from Didsbury just beating **Jim Flanagan** from Prestwich.

The overall leaders after 16 of the 20 weeks are as follows:

Tot	Name & Entry No.
26.25	Alan Spencer 30
22	Charles Rear 62
21.63	Simon Clark 48
20.5	Harold Woodward 50
20.39	Jon Barry 49
19.75	Steve Cawley 70
17.9	Jim Flanagan 79
17.88	Diane Bates 68
16.88	Gordon Armistead 17
14.88	Peter Flynn 20
14.75	Guy Weaver 38
14	Floss Howes 36

# AINTREE 'GRAND NATIONAL' PREVIEW NIGHT

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm start

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We are delighted to have another great Grand National legend as our guest this year, with **Bob Champion MBE** taking over the reins from Neale Doughty this time.

Here is a brief biopic from Wikipedia of Bob for those who are not fully aware of his 'history'.

**Robert Champion** MBE (born 4 June 1948) is an English former jump jockey who won the 1981 Grand National on Aldaniti. His triumph was made into a film *Champions*, with John Hurt portraying Champion. The film is based on Champion's book *Champions Story*, which he wrote with close friend and racing journalist and broadcaster Jonathan Powell.

Bob Champion was born in Guisborough, Yorkshire, England. At the height of his career as a jockey, he was diagnosed with testicular cancer in July 1979. His victory on Aldaniti was viewed by many as a great triumph, following his previous adversity. Their victory earned them that year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year Team Award and was chosen as one of the 100 Greatest Sporting Moments by Channel 4 viewers in 2002.

Other major races that Champion won during his career include the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup and the Whitbread Trial Chase. He was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 1982 Queen's Birthday Honours. In 1983 he formed the Bob Champion Cancer Trust, which has raised millions of pounds for cancer research. He retired from training horses in 1999.

He was the subject of *This Is Your Life* in 1981 when he was surprised, on his wedding day, by Eamonn Andrews.

On 22 December 2011, Bob Champion received the Helen Rollason award as part of the 2011 BBC Sports Personality of the Year competition.

Bob has agreed to do a Q&A session with our members and join the main panel for the Grand National discussions.

We are delighted to invite back our Racin' Diary supremo **Gordon Armistead** and racing journalist **Keith McHugh**. Also on the panel is another racing journalist **Jan Green** who some may know as 'Beverley Dee' from the Chester Chronicle.

**Admission will be £5** (payable on the night) and includes sandwiches. However to assist with seating and catering it will help us if you can advise if you plan to attend (please contact Phil Evans ~ details on last page of Racin').

If you attended the Cheltenham Preview in March you may use the '2 for 1 vouchers' issued on the night. For those that have already renewed their subs for 2018, you may also use your e-vouchers if you take the magazine electronically.

**Our venue this year is the Tetley Club in Warrington  
On Long Lane, Orford WA2 8PU. See map below:**



# RACING SPOTLIGHT – HUGH NUGENT

Compiled by Brian Goodwill

Hugh Nugent is under Brian's spotlight this time. He is currently an amateur rider with Venetia Williams. He is in his early twenties and his family home is in Cheshire.

## WHAT IS THE BEST HORSE YOU HAVE RIDDEN ON COURSE

Pearlysteps and Shotavodka. Two decent hunter chasers I've ridden as they were coming towards the end of their careers but both very good horses on their day.

## WHAT ARE THE BEST HORSES YOU HAVE RIDDEN AT HOME

When I left school I did a bit of time at Colin Tizzard's and sat on Oiseau de Nuit a few times. Later on while at Twiston-Davies's I rode horses like Ballyandy, Flying Angel and Wholestone who have all won races at top level.

## HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT JESSICA HARRINGTON'S

Very brief. I was supposed to do a summer there but only did two weeks as a job came up at Nigel Twiston-Davies. Good experience though, just wish it had been for a bit longer.

## ANY TARGETS FOR 2018 AND BEYOND

Never really set myself any targets except just ride more winners!

## HOW ARE YOU ENJOYING LIFE AT VENETIA'S

Really enjoying it. It's a great place to work and she has been very good to me since I started here last November.

## YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT ON COURSE

Definitely Boxing Day 2016 Wincanton. Was riding for Nigel Twiston-Davies on Hollow Blue Sky and early on in the race everything either fell or was brought down so I was on my own! Tried to complete anyway but once my horse lost company he started to lose interest. Got him to within half a circuit of completing but he refused to jump anymore! Everything I did would not have made him jump! The race was voided and there were no finishers!

## CAN YOU RELATE YOUR FIRST DAY AS A JOCKEY

First ride I ever had was on a family owned horse at Tabley point to point. I pulled up with a circuit to go but hadn't a clue what I was doing. Seems a very long time ago now!

## ANY PLANS OR HOPES OF TURNING PRO

Yes, have always thought about it. It would be nice if I could finish off this season well as an amateur before I think about turning though.

## HOBBIES OUTSIDE RACING

I used to do a lot of running while at school so still enjoy doing that. I like doing all sports but in the winter is hard to get into much else when the racing is on. Am also an Everton fan and love going to games when times allow.

# 100 years since women got the vote

THE GIRLS are closing in on the greatest prize in jump racing. And this could be the year that one of them finally steps up to snatch victory in the gruelling Grand National. After all, Katie Walsh and Lizzie Kelly both won at the Cheltenham Festival this time round.

Bryony Frost must have a chance but Katie and Nina Carberry will certainly be in the Aintree mix if all goes well in the run-up to the race on the evening of April 14.

Riding plans can suddenly alter and anything can happen between copy deadline for *Racin' Magazine* and the early evening start.

So I thought I would be safer looking back on the girls who have added sparkle to the National. I'm sorry, if anyone is offended at the term *girls*; actually no I'm not. At my great age any female under the age of, say, 50 is a "girl" in my book.

The first female rider? Well anyone with an interest in racing can surely come up with Charlotte Brew. The horse? Barony Fort. And the year? 1977. The partnership made it as far as the third to last fence before a refusal took her out of the race which was won by the legendary Red Rum.

After all the publicity surrounding Charlotte before the race it was no doubt something of a blessing that the Press pack were hot on the heels of the story of Rummy's hat-trick and she was able to get her breath back and slip away, avoiding all the hoopla.

Katie Walsh and Nina Carberry have grabbed the headlines in recent years. Nina made her debut on Forest Gunner and finished ninth and last at 33-1 in 2005.

Five years later she was back to ride Character Building to finish seventh at 16-1 and she rode the same horse the following year, 2011. Again, she completed and cantered past the post at 25-1 in 15th.

The next year, riding Organisedconfusion she was unseated at the eighth. In 2015 Nina rode First Lieutenant, well-fancied at 14-1, to finish 16th and the following year she took a tumble from Sir Des Champs who started at 20-1.

Ruby's sister Katie had a superb ride round Aintree on her National debut in 2012 when she finished a close third on Seabass and the partnership were in action 12 months later at the remarkably short price of 11-2. They didn't figure in the shake-up and finished 13th. Katie's 2014 National mount, Vesper Bell (40-1) was also 13th.

She was back for the 2016 running on Ballycasey who

wasn't fancied and started at 50-1. The pairing were making a bit of headway on the second circuit before fading and the lass was unseated two out. Last year Katie was the only female rider in the race and didn't make any impression. Her mount Wonderful Charm (Paul Nicholls) was well behind from soon after the start and was a tailed-off last of the 19 who got round.

A dozen or so other girls have also had a crack at the big race. Lancashire lass Geraldine Rees will always be remembered for being the first female to get round the daunting fences, a milestone she completed in 1982 on Cheers.

Reg Green in one of his books on the National, *A Race Apart*, said that Geraldine "received a great ovation" as she brought the horse home. Perhaps – for a few seconds, before the crowd hushed as Cheers bravely dragged his weary body over the line. I was there and had as good a view as anyone. Not a pretty sight. Geraldine was back the following year on Midday Welcome but the 500-1 shot took a tumble at the first.

Charlotte Brew returned in 1982 on Martinstown but she was unseated. Jenny Hembrow had a couple of early cracks at the race but for most of the courageous young ladies once was quite enough. I'd forgotten that Venetia Williams had had a go – 30 years back on a no-hoper called Marcolo. She came down at first Becher's.

Carrie Ford created quite a stir in 2005 when she rode the well-fancied – at 8-1 – Forrest Gunner into fifth place just a few weeks after giving birth. But since then it's all been down to Nina and Katie.

Perhaps Bryony – whose dad Jimmy won the race in 1989 on Little Polveir – can bring a new perspective to the race this year. She rides for Paul Nicholls but his National plans have still to be finalised.

She grew up on Dartmoor and wanted to ride when she was just five. "Perhaps when you are nine," said her Dad, hoping she'd forget. At about 5.30am on her ninth birthday she was up and about and ready for Jimmy to fulfil that promise, she told *The Sun*. "Dad put me on a lovely old horse called Arden Hills. He was massive. We went for a little hack in the woods – it was the best birthday present I've ever had."

The personable 22-year-old has been enjoying a great season and if she gets her chance she'd be certain to attract a lot of support, especially as this year marks the centenary of women – well some of 'em – getting the vote.

**HAROLD HEYS**

It could be  
Bubbly  
Bryony's  
turn to star

# ... and now for the Grand National!

## BRAVE GIRLS WHO HAVE TACKLED THOSE FENCES

1977	Charlotte Brew	Barony Fort	200/1	Refused, 26th fence
1979	Jenny Hembrow	Sandwilan	100/1	Fell, 1st fence
1980	Jenny Hembrow	Sandwilan	100/1	Pulled up, 19th fence
1981	Linda Sheedy	Deiopea	100/1	Refused, 19th fence
1982	Geraldine Rees	Cheers	66/1	Completed, 8th & last
1982	Charlotte Brew	Martinstown	100/1	Unseated, 3rd fence
1983	Geraldine Rees	Midday Welcome	500/1	Fell, 1st fence
1983	Joy Carrier	King Spruce	28/1	Unseated, 6th fence
1984	Valerie Alder	Bush Guide	33/1	Fell, 8th fence
1987	Jacqui Oliver	Eamons Owen	200/1	Unseated, 15th fence
1988	Gee Armytage	Gee-A	33/1	Pulled up, 26th fence
1988	Venetia Williams	Marcolo	200/1	Fell, 6th fence
1988	Penny Ffitch-Heyes	Hettinger	100/1	Fell, 1st fence
1989	Tarnya Davis	Numerate	100/1	Pulled up, 21st fence
1994	Rosemary Henderson	Fiddlers Pike	100/1	Completed, 5th place
2005	Carrie Ford	Forest Gunner	8/1	Completed, 5th place
2006	Nina Carberry	Forest Gunner	33/1	Completed, 9th & last
2010	Nina Carberry	Character Building	16/1	Completed, 7th place
2011	Nina Carberry	Character Building	25/1	Completed, 15th place
2012	Nina Carberry	Organisedconfusion	20/1	Unseated, 8th fence
2012	Katie Walsh	Seabass	8/1	Completed, 3rd place
2013	Katie Walsh	Seabass	11/2	Completed, 13th place
2014	Katie Walsh	Vesper Bell	40/1	Completed, 13th place
2015	Nina Carberry	First Lieutenant	14/1	Completed, 16th place
2016	Katie Walsh	Ballycasey	50/1	Unseated, 28th fence
2016	Nina Carberry	Sir Des Champs	20-1	Fell...
2017	Katie Walsh	Wonderful Charm	28/1	Completed, 19th & last



Katie Walsh



Nina Carberry



Gee Armytage

## Grand National quiz

Compiled by Harold Heys (who says nobody will get 10 out of 10...)

1. At which fence in a recent National did Katy Walsh and Sir Des Champs crash out.
2. Which horse gave Nina Carberry her first win over the Aintree fences.
3. By how far, officially, was Katie Walsh beaten in the 2012 Grand National.
4. Which Grand National lady rider retired after breaking her neck in two places.
5. At which racecourse did Jenny Pitman smack Jamie Osborne in the mouth for allegedly "tightening up" one of her runners in a hurdle race.
6. How old was Charlotte Brew when she made her National debut.
7. Why did Gee Armytage pull up her mount in the 1988 Grand National with just four fences left to jump and a long way from being tailed off.
8. Which Grand National lady jockey appeared in Horse and Hound as Posh Spice in a joke cartoon.
9. Which woman Grand National jockey hadn't seen Aintree before arriving from Somerse on race day and thought that the fences "weren't very intimidating."
10. What colours were carried by Charlotte Brew in the 1977 Grand National.

Email your answers to Harold at [h@anyharduns.co.uk](mailto:h@anyharduns.co.uk), or post to :

Racin' 350 Competition, 10 Derby Close, Darwen BB3 2EJ by the end of April. Book prize for the winner.

# NRC's GRAND NATIONAL SWEEPSTAKE

NRC will be repeating its Grand National sweepstake for 2018.

It will cost £5 per entry (2018 e-vouchers accepted) with max 40 tickets sold – equating to the race card numbers used on the day of the race.

The prize fund is expected to total £200 and be allocated as follows:

- 1st place - £100
- 2nd place - £50
- 3rd place - £30
- 4th place – 12m entry to NRC's 59's Draw.

In the unlikely event that not all 40 tickets are sold the prize money will remain the same but the unallocated horses will be running in the name of NRC!

If anyone is unlucky enough to be allocated a horse that does not start on the Saturday, the entrant(s) affected will be awarded a £5 'e-voucher' to use towards another club competition (valid until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019).

## HOW TO ENTER

There will be three ways to enter as below:

1. Postal entries can be made until April 10<sup>th</sup>. Please send to NRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB together with cheque payable to NRC for number of entries required. Please include name/address/email/phone details.
2. E Mail entries can be made until April 10<sup>th</sup> also with direct bank payments accepted (contact Phil Evans for bank details to remit to).
3. Entries will also be accepted at the Aintree Preview night on 11th April.

## HOW THE DRAW IS MADE

1. At the Aintree preview night on 11th April a raffle type draw will take place (drawn by a guest speaker) and the race card numbers 1-40 allocated to those who have purchased tickets
2. Those who are not present at the draw will be advised by e mail/phone as regards the race card number they have been allocated.

## OTHER DETAILS

Prizes will be forwarded to the winners as soon as possible after the date of the race.



# GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

## Saturday February 3rd Leopardstown

The new Dublin Festival of two great days racing with every race worth at least €75K in prize money and seven Grade 1's. Good crowds without being packed and all at a reasonable price of €45 for a two days ticket. A fair proportion of those on the flight out from Liverpool were bound for the races including champion jockey Richard Johnson.

### **2 Miles 6 Furlongs Grade 1 Novice Hurdle**

This turned out to be the weakest of the Grade 1's over the two days. Winner Tower Bridge was a maiden over hurdles and the first under pressure here but stayed on to lead close home. This looked a minimum trip and as he not in the Albert Bartlett (subsequently supplemented) it would seem logical to wait for either the Sefton at Aintree or for Punchestown. Second and third Jetz and Carter McKay have both looked a bit paceless and that was the case again today. Best long term may be Dortmund Park who had won twice already this year on very heavy ground and that may have taken a toll today. Fabulous Saga who was backed in late from 9/2 to 7/4 had looked a dour stayer in the mud. The drop back in trip would not have been in his favour and after being a clear leader for a long way he dropped away very tamely.

### **2 Miles 1 Furlong Grade 2 Dublin Chase**

This was as good as any Grade 1's and run at a tremendous pace with Special Tiara tearing off in his usual manor. Min closed steadily on him and led at the last before pulling well clear. Ordinary World would have chased him home but for a mistake at the last and while he doesn't win he usually runs his race. He would probably have been beaten two or three lengths which would make Min a contender for the Champion Chase but not good enough to beat an on form Altior. Simply Ned loves it here and again ran his race while Special Tiara is better on faster ground and will ensure they again go a good pace at Cheltenham. The enigmatic Yorkhill never went a stride here and while his two best runs have been over two five at Cheltenham it would be a leap of faith to back him if he turns up for the Ryanair.

### **2 Miles 1 Furlong Grade 1 Arkle Novice Chase**

Footpad made it three from three over fences making all and his jumping was excellent. The runner up Petit Mouchoir may give him more to do in the future as after making mistakes at the first two fences he ran well and was not knocked about from the turn in. He was a better horse over hurdles and after an enforced break he should improve a fair bit for this. It was a long way back to Any Second Now who surely needs a trip.

### **2 Mile 1 Furlong Handicap Chase 0-149**

From winning at 0-115 at Ffos Las two runs ago to winning a €75K handicap is a big leap but Patricks Park took this readily on his second start for Willie Mullins. He was only off 123 so will need a decent hike to get into the Grand Annual which I imagine will be his target. Way down the field Conrad Hastings found things happening too quickly on his return from a winter break and a handicap in the spring over about three miles should suit him

### **Irish Champion Hurdle**

Only two winners of the Champion Hurdle have been ten year olds and it looks doubtful if Faugheen will be adding his name to that list. He looked in good nick before the race but apart from one brief moment before the second last he never looked to be travelling like a winner and was well below his best. Supasundae will be in the mix for the stayers hurdle along with many others but he hasn't won his two efforts at three miles so I wouldn't take too short a price. Third and fourth Mick Jazz and Jezki ran their races but Melon was poor and Defi Du Seuil was very poor.

### **2 miles Handicap Hurdle 0-147**

Off You Go has sprung into life after getting a handicap mark of 105 winning at Limerick and followed up here off 123. He will be into the 130's next time and while it would be hard to rule him out of following this up even then it is probably job done. Runner up Deal D'Estreval on only his second run in Ireland is built like a chaser and will have a future.

### **Grade 2 Bumper**

A good looking bunch and eight of the nine had already won but the standout in the parade ring was Blackbow and he soon had the race won after going on entering the straight. He is built like a chaser but will win more races before doing that job. Runner up Rhinestone is a smaller model but was the only one to make a race of it. Third and fourth home Brace Yourself and Minella Encore look like stayers.

## Sunday February 4th Leopardstown

### **2 Miles 2 Furlongs Mares Handicap 0-139**

Some seemingly well handicapped mares in this race and Alletrix off a mark of 118 earned before she chased home top mare Laurina in a Grade 3 proved the best of them and took it very easily. I have liked English challenger Lady Buttons since I saw her win her bumper and she was more exposed than most of these. She ran a super race but in good races she is best at two miles.

## **2 Miles Group 1 Juvenile Hurdle**

Espoir D'Allen had carried all before him before this but he pulled hard from an early stage here and dropped away tamely in the straight. The other two main contenders Mr Adjudicator and Farclas produced a great finish with the former just prevailing. Both will play a part in the festival races with Farclas having the scope to make a chaser in a couple of years.

## **2 Miles Group 1 Novice Hurdle**

I first saw Samcro when he made £335K at the Aintree sales in 2016 and at the moment he looks like a much better buy than many of the big money point winners. This was a very easy win from plenty of decent winners. He sauntered up the run in apparently without much effort but moving clear of his hard ridden rivals. He looks a horse you just want to stay sound for several years and it will a disappointment if he is not as good as he looks.

Behind him Duc Des Genievres who was second best in the parade ring ran out a clear second and will win more races and make a chaser. The two Henry de Bromhead runners Paloma Blue and Trainwreck were both big chasing sorts.

## **3 Miles Handicap Hurdle 0-145**

This all revolved around Total Recall who was 31 pounds well in on his chase form and while he tried hard to lose the race by pulling his way to the front very early on he still had plenty in hand at the end. The National is the target and he isn't the biggest if he ends up with much over eleven stone. Flawless Escape was paddock pick and on only his third hurdle run ran a super race and would have been second if he hadn't tried to make a race of it with the winner. Delta Work also has a future but after the first four they were spread all over County Dublin.

## **2 Miles 5 Furlongs Grade 1 Novice Chase**

This was a super race with five in a line at the last which probably means there was no superstar but plenty of very good horses. Monalee made all and thoughts that his dreadful fall at Christmas would have damaged his confidence were soon put to rest. He stays three miles and will be in the mix for the RSA. Runner up Al Boum Photo is another stayer but third home Next Invitation will be best at two and a half. He looked to be travelling like the winner from four out but was just found out from the last. Dounikos in fourth could be an Irish National sort.

## **Irish Gold Cup**

When I saw Edwulf win a novice handicap chase last February he looked like he had finally got his jumping together but I didn't think he was a Grade 1 performer and after what happened to him at Cheltenham it was amazing to see him win this. I think he would only been second if Killultagh Vic had stood up at the last and how this fits into the Gold Cup and Grand National picture is a real puzzle. The winner and second Outlander aren't good enough to win at Cheltenham and neither appeal for the National. Killultagh Vic surely can't win at Cheltenham after only three chase starts and stable mate Djakadam (third here) doesn't stay. Our Duke stayed on after a bad mistake two out and will come on for this but needs to. Minella Rocco again ran poorly and his jumping again failed him so you couldn't fancy him for anything at the moment. My old favourite Valseur Lido ran well for a long way and if Phil Smith could just drop his mark five or six pounds he could be a National contender.

## **2 Miles 5 Furlongs Handicap Chase 0-152**

My one bet of the day was on Gwencily Berbas going back up to a more suitable trip but he made too many minor mistakes after being prominent for much of the race. In the end Last Goodbye bolted in for trainer Liz Doyle who has been having a quieter season than normal. Last Goodbye is going to take a big hike as is second placed Vieux Morvan with the pair along way clear. Cause of Causes started his warm up for Cheltenham and Aintree and trailed the field for the whole race.

## **Grade 2 Mare's Bumper**

Willie Mullins had the odds on favourite but it was stable second string Relegate who took this nicely. She can follow up in similar grade and should stay well over hurdles next season. The placed horse Getaway Katie Mai and the favourite Colreevy were well clear of the pack and are well above average.

## **Saturday February 17th Haydock**

No Triumph Hurdle horses in the Victor Ludorum. The two that fought out the finish Turning Gold and Cornerstone Lad are both bred for flat racing (by Pivotal and Delegator respectively) but both are big lumps. Cornerstone Lad was giving away eight pounds and I fancy there will be more races in him on the flat off his rating of 67 as well as over hurdles. Agrapart never looked happy in the Rendlesham Hurdle and since he won the Betfair the only place he seems to run up to his best is at Cheltenham. Winner Donna's Diamond is at the top of his form but it is hard to see where he can go from here as his rating takes another hike and this was a soft Grade 2.

The winning time was almost a minute slower for the National Trial than last season and the sticky holding ground certainly didn't seem to suit Blaklion. The eleven stone six he has at Aintree could easily go up three or four pounds and he will have a big task. He will also need all of the two months till then to get over this race. I had given up on Yala Enki as he had been jumping poorly all season but he just kept up a steady gallop here and it was good enough.

Chef Des Obeaux is a real stayer and a big chasing sort who you could imagine lining up at Aintree in two or three years time. In the shorter term he will no doubt go for the Albert Bartlett after easily landing the Grade 2 stayers novice hurdle here and the Bartlett can sometimes turn into a real slog. Golan Fortune as probably second best on merit but paid for trying to go with the winner. I liked fourth home Just the Type in the parade ring. He is still a maiden under rules so it

might be a good idea to keep him that way till next season. Noble Robin was being upped in trip for the Pertemps qualifier and was backed into favouritism but he was beaten before stamina came into play. He is a super looking sort and hopefully whatever went wrong is only minor.

### **Saturday February 24th Chepstow**

Champagne Champ helped force the pace in the two and a half mile novice maiden hurdle and in spite of a less than attractive head carriage he came back after being passed to take the race. He will stay three miles. Favourite Blu Cavalier had ground to make up on his main market rival Mount Rushmore on their run at Exeter two weeks previously but failed to do so and the distance between them was much the same as they finished second and fourth. Both look future chasers. Garran City off since winning his point two years ago ran well in third and has a future if he stays sound Saturdays this winter have been Bryony days and Ms Frost and Moabit paid the expenses on the day taking the two mile handicap hurdle easily at 7/1. This was a qualifier for the challenger series and the final at Haydock on Easter Saturday looks a good target.

Even Bryony could not get the bone idle Connetable to show any enthusiasm in the Pertemps qualifier. Three pulled clear and Carnspindle found the three miles on a galloping track to her liking. Runner up Saint Ladylime forced the pace and stayed on well and her attitude will find her more races. Third home Poker Play cost plenty from France and appears to try his best but he looks paceless. Former French Champion Hurdler Ptit Zig has shown little inclination to exert himself since that win and is surely heading into retirement.

A real mixed lot in the bumper and Supremely Lucky (runner up to Mount Rushmore in his point) won with a bit in hand. He will be a stayer and chaser in time. Short priced favourite Denfirth pulled far too hard to get home.

## **Gordon Armistead's Cheltenham Festival Review**

### **Tuesday**

#### **Supreme Novice**

Summerville Boy started the outsider of five here in November and then ran in the Western Ryder race in December which was run at a farcical pace. He was placed but outpaced in both but deeper ground and a stronger pace have improved him no end. As with many in this race he looks like he will be better over slightly further. Runner up Kalashnikov has impressed all season, jumps hurdles really well and looks a chaser. Favourite Getabird was never going to get home after pulling too hard and also jumped out to his right. He is surely better than he showed here. My own place only bet on Mengli Khan was landed easily enough in third while Paloma Blue boosted the Samcro form by being beaten only three lengths here. Claimantakinforan in fifth needs to go up in trip while Western Ryder and Lostintranslation need much better ground.

#### **Arkle**

I thought Saint Calvados had plenty to prove and it looked a match between Footpad and Petite Mouchoir with the latter looking well overpriced at 5/1. I don't think this was Davy Russell's best ride going far too fast but Footpad was probably best anyway. The winner will stay further but his one try at three miles wasn't promising about him getting that trip. Saint Calvados is going to struggle on this evidence off his mark of 160. Brain Power picked up the pieces in second place but his jumping again looked moderate.

#### **Ultima**

Going up to three miles has certainly improved Coo Star Sivola and he travelled like the winner for most of the race in what was not the greatest renewal. Runner up Shantou Flyer has always looked best at shorter distances while Vintage Clouds was again placed but has still only won a chase where they missed out all the fences in the straight. National candidate Gold Present pulled up having burst a blood vessel which is not promising for Aintree.

#### **Champion Hurdle**

I thought Buveur D'Air was a lay down with no meaningful opposition and it was the betting without the favourite market that was much more interesting with Faugheen easily opposable. I had to forgive Melon his poor Leopardstown run but 6/1 was too big and the money was in the bank from the turn in as he gave the favourite a real fright. Just now it is hard to find any other runners for next seasons Champion Hurdle apart from the first these two.

#### **Mares Hurdle**

With Apple's Jade a stone off her best it was not the best renewal and Benie Des Dieux is a long way off being an Annie Power. She is evidently going back chasing and there are a couple of mares graded races before the end of the season in Ireland for her.

## **National Hunt Chase**

This looked the best betting race of the day to me. Gordon Elliot had the two morning favourites in Jury Duty and Mossback and both had looked like they had found three miles far enough over fences. That left Rathvinden and Ms Parfois both on offer at 7/1 so I backed the pair and let them fight out the finish. The winner is still in the National which would be interesting while Ms Parfois will be a contender for slogs like the Welsh National next season. As expected Jury Duty didn't get home but his trainer will find a good handicap for him over an easy three miles.

## **Close Brothers**

The two supposed plot horses De Potting Shed and Any Second Now both ran poorly and it was the one who just scraped in Mister Whitaker who took the race. I didn't think his win here in January was up to much but he is evidently a rapid improver. Testify found this a different proposition to small field races at Haydock but will probably be suited by three miles in time.

## **Wednesday**

### **Ballymore Novice**

Samcro always travelled like the winner, never looked in danger and will surely follow up at Punchestown before going chasing. He just looks a class act. Runner up Black Op got closer to him than anything else this season and looks a certain high class staying novice chaser next season. Of the three Mullin's runners who followed then home Next Destination found this trip too short Scarpeta should do well in handicap hurdles and Duc De Genievres looks a chaser.

### **RSA Chase**

Another easy winner in Presenting Percy and he will certainly be in the Gold Cup mix next season. Monalee in second ran his race and he and Al Boum Photo would have finished as close together as at Leopardstown if the latter hadn't fallen two out. Third home Elegant Escape looks a Welsh National sort. Dounikos was very disappointing.

### **Coral Handicap**

I really fancied Topofthegame for this and he ran a stormer just going down to Bleu Berry close home. Hopefully his second attempt at chasing next season will be better than his one start this time around. I would have backed The Organist in the Pertemps final but this trip is no good for her and she was nearest at the finish in fifth. The three mile handicap hurdle at Aintree seems the logical target.

### **Champion Chase**

Altior used to take a really keen hold wanting to get on with things but this season he has seemed to just wake up two fences out and put the race to bed in a few strides. He looks like he will get two and a half easily but probably he won't be asked too. Min ran his race and it was a great shame that Douvan came down as he was travelling well and hopefully all three could turn up at Punchestown. Politologue should have been closer on his best form.

### **Cross Country**

After he just had a wander round here in December Tiger Roll was always going to run a better race today and he always travelled like a winner. He is in the National but he doesn't look the sort for that. Of the three National runners up in the field only The Last Samuri ran a race. Saint Are who needed to run in a chase to qualify for this year's race was soon tailed off while Cause of Causes was always behind and evidently pulled up lame.

### **Fred Winter**

This looked a lottery and you could make a good case for most but it was hard to fancy winner Veneer of Charm who looked regressive. Nothing looked unlucky apart from Mitcouka who was nearly brought down early in the race.

### **Bumper**

Five of the first seven were from the Mullins stable so he looks set to have some decent novice hurdlers next season. The winner Relegate obviously doesn't show much at home as she has been a big price for her last two wins. She will need a trip over hurdles. Runner up Carefully Selected got a soft lead with Danny Mullins who is a good front running jockey and nearly lasted home. Maybe some of the Mullins contingent will come to Aintree rather than all take each other on again at Punchestown. I liked Acey Milan when I saw him here on New Year's Day and got some money out of him at Newbury. He proved easily best of the home contingent and ran right to the line.

## **Thursday**

### **JLT**

Not a great field for this and the mare Shattered Love landed it easily. The only time I have seen her in the flesh she was paddock pick for the 2016 Aintree mares' bumper (finished third) and she has slowly progressed from there. She stays three miles well and I imagine she will be contesting the Grade 1 staying chases next season. Terefort was the only one to give her a race and the BetVictor would seem an obvious first target next season. Finian's Oscar again jumped moderately and you wonder where they go with him now.

### **Pertemps**

This was fought out by two relatively unexposed Elliot runners with Delta Work who ran well at the Dublin Festival just holding on. Where Connetable found this enthusiastic run from in third only he knows and I wouldn't trust him to repeat it. Having wanted to back The Organist I ended up with the horse that she beat at Newbury in Forza Milan but he pulled up

having both gone lame and burst a blood vessel. Louis' Vac Pouch had been saved for this since Aintree in November but most of the Hobbs horses are still well below form and he is better than he showed here.

### **Ryanair**

I thought this would be a cake walk for Un De Sceaux and backed Balko des Flos without the favourite. This looks the winner's trip as he has mostly been below form at three miles. Perhaps Un De Sceaux is starting to go backwards. Cloudy Dream has now picked up £200K in prize money over fences but you can't see a race he can win. Frodon was well below his form here in January.

### **Stayers Hurdle**

What a strange race. If you just looked at a still picture as they turned into the home straight you would think they had just started. The race was run at a crawl and became a three furlong sprint which would have suited Penhill after a year off in not testing his fitness fully. The merits of the staying hurdlers have been hard to work out all season and this hardly made things clearer.

### **Plate**

The Storyteller didn't exactly look chucked in for his handicap debut but was up to seeing off five Cheltenham handicap regulars. Way down the finishing order there were signs of life from an old favourite of mine in Shanahan's Turn. He faded in the straight on only his second start since the 2016 Galway Plate and he would have hated the ground.

### **Mares Novice Hurdle**

A real one horse race and let's hope the Mullin's team pitch Laurina in against the males next season in the Champion Hurdle.

### **Kim Muir**

A wind op seems to have helped Missed Approach and he can push on from this very game effort. He beat a couple of serial plot horses in Mall Dini and Squouateur who just don't win anymore.

## **Friday**

### **Triumph Hurdle**

Only nine runners and juvenile hurdling really would be in trouble but for the French with over half the Fred Winter field and six of the runners here being imports. Probably a pretty ordinary renewal with Farclas turning the tables on Mr Adjudicator from Leopardstown. Apple's Shakira pulled far too hard to get home against better rivals than she had met before and it's hard to see any of these taking on their elders next season.

### **County Hurdle**

Whiskey Sour won two €50K flat handicaps at the Galway festival last summer and I think its good odds him being aimed at the Galway Hurdle after his third place here. There might be a good handicap in Le Richebourg who was travelling well till he hit the second last.

### **Albert Bartlett**

A real slog and I am not sure you would want to be backing any of those involved in the finish if they run again this season. It was an excellent ride from Harry Cobden on Kilbricken Storm being the first to go after long time leader Fabulous Saga and those coming from well off the pace never got to him. No doubt there will be plenty of staying chase winners coming out of this race but relying on this as to their respective merits might not be wise.

### **Gold Cup**

This was meant to be a wide open Gold Cup but only the two mattered for the whole race and the stouter stayer just prevailed. It will be interesting to see it either Native River or Might Bite race again this season as they have both had light seasons but this slog will have left a mark. Anibale Fly left his poor run at Leopardstown behind where he was well behind when falling two out. I backed Road to Respect without the first and second and he travelled really well till not getting home from two out. Not a great Aintree warm up for Total Recall with a heavy fall.

### **Foxhunter**

A great story and Pacha Du Polder just travelled so well in this race again. I always think he should be the ideal sort for Aintree but it never seems to happen for him there.

### **Martin Pipe**

Another race run at a crawl as Grade 1 Bumper winner Blow by Blow made all. He looked far from keen early in the season including getting turned over at odds on by today's runner up Discorama. Discorama was seemingly just having a run around that day before carting his jockey into the race at which time the pilot decided it was a win or have a very long holiday and he prevailed by a nose. He came from well off the pace again here and looks well handicapped. Third home Early Doors can also win handicaps.

### **Grand Annual**

You don't want too many races like this. Several horses killed, lots of other fallers, and loose horses getting in the way of the leaders for much of the race. Gino Trail made most but had nothing left as Le Prezien came with his run. He might come out second if he has to battle but he had the finish to himself today. There is a good handicap in Three Stars at one of the summer festival in Ireland.

## KEVIN FROST STABLE VISIT ~ SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL

Dave Bates has provisionally arranged the next NRC stable visit on the above date. However, the stable has asked us to be flexible on the date, if needs be, based upon where they have runners going that week.

The trainer looks after both flat and jumps horses from the yard which is visible from the M6 motorway near junction 15 (photo of gallops below). The full post code is ST5 4DZ. The trainer's website is <http://www.kevinfrostracing.co.uk/>

Visits usually commence mid morning, and the exact time will be advised in due course, together with directions etc. The nearest afternoon race meeting that day is at Bangor On Dee (LL13 0DA) where racing is scheduled to start at 2.10pm. From the stables to Bangor on Dee it is 35 miles and takes around an hour.

If you make a booking to join the visit, Dave will ensure that you are advised a week or so in advance if there are any changes. To reserve places please contact Dave on 01925 574140 or via e mail [bates270@btinternet.com](mailto:bates270@btinternet.com) As usual Dave will be collecting donations of £5 per adult on the day so the club can make a gift to the stable staff on duty when we visit. Non members are also welcome to attend as guests of existing NRC members. Wales Racing Club members are also welcome to attend.

## WALES RACING CLUB – JOINT EVENTS WITH NRC

The Wales Racing Club arrange regular stable visits to which all NRC members are usually invited.

This gives our members a great opportunity to visit stables outside our region so please support these events if you can.

The next Wales Racing Club stable visit arranged is to the yard of **James Evans on Saturday 7th April 2018 at 10.15**. The yard is based at Kinnersley, Worcs. Nearest racing this day is at Stratford & Uttoxeter. He shares the yard with John Spearing. More details to follow from Martin. All Northern Racing Club members are invited along.

[Look for further details on the NRC Facebook page or contact Martin Nott on 02920 764547 \(evenings\) or e mail \[walesracingclub@hotmail.com\]\(mailto:walesracingclub@hotmail.com\)](#)

## COLIN TURNER PHOTOGRAPHY – NRC MEMBERS OFFER

NRC member Colin Turner is also a well known racecourse photographer and to celebrate 35 years of equine photography he is offering NRC members the following special offer.

You can order a colour photograph (10" by 8") at half price ~ £10 instead of £20 ~ plus £2 p&p per photograph.

Colin has on file most well known horses that have run since 1984. So why not take up this offer and have the picture of your choice on your sideboard or wall for 2018!

For specific enquiries you can e mail Colin at [colinturner26@googlemail.com](mailto:colinturner26@googlemail.com) or phone him on 01704 894220.



# Point to Point News by Rory Alkin

The poor weather in February and March has badly affected the point to point season with several meetings having been abandoned or re-arranged. This should result in decent entries over the next month and with an early Easter some good competitive racing.

The North West area had only two meetings scheduled in the early part of the season and luckily both the February and March meetings took place at Bangor racecourse. The next two meetings are over the Easter weekend at Sandon near Stone in Staffordshire on Easter Saturday and Eyton-on-Severn near Shrewsbury on the Bank Holiday Monday.

The two Bangor meetings have thrown up some horses to follow in point to points or hunter chases for the rest of the season. The first is an eight-year-old Mahler gelding **Late Romantic** that has always been highly thought of and has started to really show his true potential. He ran six times over the 2015/6 season and was a heavily backed favourite five times but was only able to manage one win in a two-and-a-half-mile Maiden two years ago. A few times he had looked all over a winner only to fall or unseat with the race at his mercy. Trained at the time by Oliver Greenall he later showed promise in a few novice hurdles in 2016 earning a rating of 108.

The horse then developed a leg and was not seen again until this season. He had a quiet pipe opener at Sheriff Hutton in January and then ran in the Members race at Bangor in February. The favourite **Lilbitluso** a prolific previous winner was understandably a very warm favourite. However, the connections of Late Romantic went fearlessly into the ring and backed the horse at all prices from 12/1 down to 5/2 and they never had any worries as the horse won by an impressive twelve lengths from Lilbitluso in a fast time. The horse is now trained at Stockton Hall by Dan Astbury who works for the Oliver Greenall national hunt yard.

The gelding then went on to the second Bangor meeting three weeks later and was equally impressive in trouncing a good field in the Intermediate by 20 lengths which qualified him for the Connolly's Red Mills Intermediate Final at the Cheltenham Hunter Chase meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May, where he should have an excellent chance. He is likely to have a run in a point before then.

Another horse who is likely to appear at the same Cheltenham meeting is **Barrel of Laughs** who ran at the first Bangor meeting winning the Mixed Open. This qualified him for the Timico Final a race he won last year and is likely to be his target again this year. Considering he is totally unsuited to soft and heavy ground, he ran a magnificent race in the Foxhunters at the Cheltenham Festival when dead-heating for third place. Expertly handled by Phil Rowley and ridden by the leading point jockey Alex Edwards, he is likely to be a banker for the May race.

Heidi Brookshaw runs a small stable in North Shropshire and her charges have been in great form in the early part of the season. One horse with excellent potential in this sphere is the ex-Nigel Twiston-Davies trained chaser **Ballyrath** who looked useful when winning a confined at the second Bangor meeting from a good field. Considering, he had only joined the trainer in the previous month and had been off for over a year, he is likely to improve and win more points and maybe a Hunter Chase this season.

There are two 17-year-old jockeys to watch who are each studying for their A levels. The first is **Harry Myddleton** who rode his father Guy's Open Hearted to win the Confined at the February Bangor meeting. The ex-Dan Skelton and Nicky Henderson prolific winner should give Harry and Guy plenty of fun for the remainder of the season and win more races.

**Henry Crow** was second to Jamie Bowen in the national Novice Riders award last season and won his first national hunt race on Mr Mercurial as we were going to press. He has ridden the five-year-old mare **Love Around** for his grandmother Sheila Crow to be placed a couple of times in bottomless ground which was unsuitable. However, as soon as the ground dries out this mare will improve leaps and bounds and should win at least a couple of races during the rest of the season.

One horse to look out for in Yorkshire is the Chris Pimlott trained **Streets of Milan**. The seven-year-old gelding won a Maiden in Tinahealy last October and put in a very promising performance when coming second in his first UK run in a Restricted at Sinnington in February. He certainly looks to have the scope to win races this season.



# KNUTSFORD RACES –MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 2018



Knutsford Races is a point to point steeplechase race meeting that is a great family day out in the Cheshire countryside. In addition to the steeplechases and pony racing there are plenty of other activities for all of the family including trade stands, amusements, funfair, licensed bar & food, bouncy castle, bookmakers.

If you like, you can bring your own picnic. Dogs are welcome but must be kept on a lead at all times.

A truly great day out for all the family from Grandparents to Grandchildren.

**Point to Point steeplechasing** takes place in the United Kingdom from November to June each year. It is an amateur sport that is the stepping stone for many with aspirations to be leading jump jockeys and trainers under British Horseracing Authority (BHA) rules. Many of the leading jump jockeys and national hunt trainers developed their skills and techniques in the Point to Point horse racing arena.

Point to Point steeplechase horse racing is an attractive sport to so many people because it combines a family day out in our beautiful countryside on land that is often private and closed to the public with the thrills and spills of steeplechasing over 18 fences and 3 miles.

**The 2018 meeting takes place at Tabley Hall, Knutsford, Cheshire on Sunday 20th May.** The racing starts at 1pm with two flat races for the up and coming sport of Pony Racing for children under 16 years. The first of the six steeplechase races is at 2pm.

**Standard entry costs £10pp with Premier Parking £50 per car (including occupants).**

For further information visit <http://www.knutsfordraces.co.uk/index.html> or contact Tinker Garton - Tel: 01625 584543

**How to get there:** Tabley House, which is situated one mile west of Knutsford, Cheshire on A5033, and one mile from M6 Junction 19. Postcode WA16 0HB

# HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION 2018

For those of you looking forward to summer and the flat season, the Heritage Handicap Competition will soon be returning for another season.

It will begin on June 2 at Epsom with the Investec Corporate Banking Dash and run all summer, ending on October 20th with the Balmoral Handicap at Ascot on Champions Day.

More details on the races and how to enter will be in the next newsletter and on the club website.

## TELEGRAPH FANTASY RACING – CHELTENHAM

Congratulations to Brian Goodwill who won the NRC 'mini league' from a total of 42 entries. Brian will receive a small prize for his efforts. The table below shows our top ten entries with Brian 161<sup>st</sup> of about 30,000 UK entrants. In the league of leagues table NRC finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the UK! Details of future racing competitions will be posted on the NRC website and Facebook page.

ENTRANTS	NAME	STABLE NAME	TOTAL	FRIDAY	UK POSITION
1	Brian Goodwill	Sleeg	1550.86	194.00	161
2	Robert McDermott	BOBBY DAZZLERS	1521.74	644.00	210
3	Tony Coleman	TopCat	1436.60	310.25	384
4	Stephen Cawley	ontheotherhand	1347.19	714.00	743
5	Adele Brown	Staying On	1326.25	285.00	889
6	Edward Halewood	Halewood's Heroes	1282.30	357.00	1232
7	Michael Campbell	sergios	1275.96	357.00	1279
8	Helen Goodwill	Ray Darmy	1226.29	340.00	1799
9	Philip Evans	Moss Lane Marvels	1215.79	420.00	1940
10	Stephen Cawley	SCWinnersallright	1184.96	220.00	2394

## NORTHERN RACING CLUB COMMITTEE/OFFICIALS 2018/19

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*Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May*