

Racin'



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KEEP SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE CLUB!

We have had a great response so far regarding the new 'Free Online' membership of North & Midlands Racing Club with a 25% increase in membership seen since October! Welcome to all our new/returning members!

However the aim is still to double our membership within 12 months so we still need your help in spreading the good news to any friends and family who would like to join!

All new 'online' members need to do is to register via e mail and provide their name and contact details. Please send to new requests to info@northernracingclub.com



Above: **Gordon Armistead** has been to Down Royal and other courses over the last two months. For fuller details of his Racing Diary see page 5.

Below: **Nick Carlisle** is under Brian Goodwill's spotlight. For further details please see page 3.

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COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

The latest '59's' winners are as follows – these winners will receive the usual monthly £50 prize shortly.

October 6th ~ 05 ~ Terry Slocombe from Southport.

November 3rd ~ 53 ~ Craig McConnachie from Salford.

However, we do still have a few available numbers at present, so if you want to join the draw now is your chance! We currently have numbers 52-56-58 available.

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

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

HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION

Congratulations to **Cieran Cassidy** from Chorlton who won both the main competition and also the Exacta/Trifecta competition receiving a total prize of £200.

Next best was runner up **Ray Squire** from Bury who receives a £70 prize with 3rd place going to **Peter Flynn** from Sale who receives a £40 prize.

Well done to all concerned and a big thank you to **Helen Goodwill** for running the competition this summer.

SATURDAY NAPS COMPETITION 2018-19

Thanks to all who have entered again this winter including at least 10 members who are either new to the competition or did not enter last winter. Always good to shake things up a bit with some new faces!

Whilst the competition started on November 24th and runs for 20 consecutive Saturdays members can still enter until week 3 of the competition has been run so get your skates on if you still want to take part. Extra points can be used if you missed either of the first two Saturdays.

There are four rounds of 5 weeks each and also a seasonal competition. In the past our prize fund has always exceeded £1000 in total.

Besides the £10 entry fees received we also have great sponsors prizes including **Betfred** who have again provided £100 of betting vouchers with tickets also provided by the following courses so far: **Aintree, Bangor On Dee, Catterick, Hexham, Kelso, Ludlow & Worcester.**

For late entries please send your name/address and entry fee of £10 (payable to NRC still) to North & Midlands Racing Club, 53 Dalebrook Rd, Brooklands, Sale M33 3LB.

Alternatively please e mail info@northernracingclub.com for details of how to send the entry fee via direct bank transfer.

Scores are updated weekly via e mail and included in the club magazine.

Full rules are also available on the club website

RACING SPOTLIGHT – NICK CARLISLE

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR FIRST RACE-RIDE

My first race ride was for my trainer Mr Reg Hollingshead at Wolverhampton on a horse he owned called Tina's Gold in a 5f apprentice race. I think we finished about mid field, all I really remember that it was over very quickly and having to pull up fairly quickly after the race so you didn't end up running into the brick wall under the railway viaduct where you pulled up in those days. Tina's Gold did provide my first winner at the same course a year or so later.

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR LAST RACE-RIDE

My last ride was also for Reg Hollingshead at Southwell on the Fibresand on a horse called Facile Tigre. I had been off with a knee injury for several months during that time I had secured my current job as an Inspector of Courses for the Jockey Club, but I was determined to have one last ride before finally hanging my boots up. Like my first ride I finished well down the field and was covered from head to foot in Fibresand some of which continued to appear several days later even though I had showered directly after the race.

YOU ARE BRIGHTER THAN THE AVERAGE SPORTSMAN, DID YOU EVER CONSIDER A PROPER JOB

My parents were both Doctors and had made sure that I had a proper education before I left school. I knew very early on I didn't want to be a doctor and as I had been badly affected with Dyslexia I didn't fancy university but did consider going to Cirencester Agricultural College to study farming with a view of becoming a farm manager.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR BEST DAY ON COURSE

My best day on a racecourse whilst riding would probably be riding So Careful to win the Ayr Gold Cup for Jack Berry. It was a great day and I'm really pleased it was for Jack as the race meant so much to him as it was his life's ambition to win it. Other notable days would include Rodeo Star winning the Chester Cup, and Go South winning the Cesarewitch.

WHAT WAS YOUR WORST DAY ON COURSE

My worst day was when Joey Blanks (an apprentice) had a terrible fall at Brighton which resulting in him dying several days later.

NOW YOU ARE A RACECOURSE INSPECTOR, WHAT IS YOUR REGION

The region I cover in my role as a BHA Inspector of Courses goes from Chester and Bangor in the west to Pontefract and Beverley in the north and Yarmouth and Chelmsford in the south and virtually all the courses in between.

DO YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ANY OF YOUR CONTEMPORARIES

I do see quite a few of the lads who were apprenticed to Reg Hollingshead as many of them are still involved in racing. I actually saw Kevin Darley only yesterday at the Northern Racing College where I had gone to give the latest batch of apprentices a talk on what I and the rest of my colleagues do on and around racecourses.

ANY PRINTABLE FUNNY STORIES FROM YOUR TIME IN THE SADDLE

A tale I can relate from my time in the saddle was after I had won the Cesarewitch, for Mr John Jenkins, I had said something to the effect that I was really sorry that he and his wife weren't there as I would have liked to have given his wife a kiss as she is a very attractive lady. Any way some time later I had a ride for John at Goodwood and as I entered the paddock John's owners all stood in a group and as I approached they parted to reveal Mrs Jenkins who beckoned me forward to give me a very big kiss in front of everybody.

WHAT WAS THE LOWEST WEIGHT YOU RODE AT. WAS WEIGHT EVER A PROBLEM

For most of my career I could do the bottom weight of 7st 7lb although it did get a bit harder towards the end even though the weights went up a bit and some days I did need to sweat off 2 to 4 lbs to make the weight.

Exeter's Seasonal Opener by Michael Wheeler

Jumps racing returned to Exeter on October 23rd which was later than usual due to the abandonment of their scheduled opener a couple of weeks previously. That fixture was called off because the ground was hard in places and unsafe to race on.

There is no artificial watering at Exeter so with minimal rainfall in the area, it had left the clerk of the course little option but to abandon. In the intervening fortnight Storm Callum brought much-needed rain to produce a raceable going description of good to firm.

It was my first visit to the Devon track which is one of fifteen racecourses owned by the Jockey Club; a bonus as it meant I could buy my ticket using hard-won Rewards4Racing points (York also accepts R4R points).

The track has a wonderful setting on top of the Haldon Hills and enjoys the distinction of being Britain's highest racecourse. It is known locally as the Haldon course while officially it was called Devon and Exeter until 1992 when the first two words were removed.

Because of its proximity to Dartmoor there is always a risk of fog descending on the track but there was no danger on this occasion as it was a glorious, sunny afternoon with clear blue skies. However it still paid to wrap up warm as the wind created quite a chill.

It's a right handed track, nearly two miles round with severe undulations and the half-mile home straight rises all the way to the winning line. Ideally it suits a well-balanced horse to cope with the undulations who is resolute at the finish.

The course layout is very compact with a large paddock flanked by a pre-parade ring on one side and bookmakers on the other. There is a collection of bars and eateries named after National Hunt icons such as Desert Orchid, Best Mate, Denman and AP McCoy.

There's a memorial to the late great Best Mate who died here of a heart attack after pulling up during the 2005 Haldon Gold Cup, which is the flagship fixture in early November. Jim Lewis, Best Mate's owner had been expected to lay a wreath on the memorial stone but wasn't well enough to attend.

'Matey' made a winning chase debut at the equivalent meeting back in 2000 and today's card is now named in his honour as Best Mate beginner's chase day, with the tag line 'where future stars are born'.

That seemed unlikely this afternoon as the dry ground had reduced the feature to a match race, but at least it included a familiar face in Sternrubin who did show some star potential when dead heating in Ascot's 2015 Ladbroke Hurdle.

Sternrubin was runner-up to Yanworth in the Best Mate beginner's chase last year, but like the winner hadn't convinced as a natural chaser and quickly returned to hurdling. This was his third chase start and he had a sizeable class edge over his rival, Cotton Jenny. Accordingly he was sent off a long odds-on favourite with only his jumping seemingly standing in the way of a first chase win.

The race distance was 2m1f and there was a scare at the very first fence when Sternrubin made a bad mistake and nearly unseated Richard Johnson who calmly regained control of a lost stirrup. There was a marked tendency to jump right throughout the race but he grew in confidence and became much more fluent at his fences.

By halfway Cotton Jenny was trailing by a distance so it effectively became a schooling session for Sternrubin. He cantered to the winning post in splendid isolation, notching up a quick treble at the meeting for the champion jockey and his trainer Philip Hobbs.

It will be interesting to see where Sternrubin goes from here with novice chases the likely route as he won't be easy to place in handicap hurdles. His trainer has stated that he needs to go right handed over fences which restricts his options.

On a side note it has been good to see Hobbs, the 'Minehead maestro', return to form this season after such a miserable time last year when the stable was out of sorts. He's had a long and successful partnership with the champion jockey who is a perfect ambassador for the sport.

The best tip I had was to make a pre-race detour to the Nobody Inn at Doddiscombsleigh, a few miles west of the course. Dating back to the seventeenth century, it's possibly one of the finest pubs in England, with a beautiful thatched roof, low black roof beams and a magnificent open fire. It really did feel like taking a step back in time and the toilets were appropriately titled milord and milady!



GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

Saturday September 29th Haydock

Sparkle Roll is a half sister to a Derby winner and easily landed the two year old filly's mile novice race. She may not be totally straightforward flashing her tail a couple of times but she has some size about her and should be better at three.

The colt's equivalent also had an easy winner in Cap Francais and he too looks like he could improve at three. Runner up Prefontaine kept catching the eye in the parade ring and has improved with each run. Third home Red Centre and fifth Fabriano both looked like the run would bring them on and neither was given anything like a hard time of it.

Thursday October 4th Clonmel

The fast ground forced the chases off the card so it was just hurdles and a bumper. No stars on display. Knock on Steel who took the two miles one maiden hurdle on his eighth attempt has a rating of 102 which looks about right. The mares two miles four maiden went to the Willie Mullins runner Shush but the opposition was moderate. The third maiden was for four year olds over two miles four and saw a nice effort from Sole Performer who evidently will be put away till next summer.

Friday October 5th Gowran Park

The retirement of Dessie Scarhill as chief Irish commentator was good news and while his replacement Jerry Hannon is no great improvement it has given chances to some fresh voices. Today we had Richard Pugh who was excellent and should certainly get more days work.

Hyperdrive stepped up on his three placed efforts to take the two mile four year old maiden hurdle from the evens money favourite of Willie Mullins Panther Soul who will need to improve his jumping. Third home Challow is 0 for 30 (29 on the flat) so the form is nothing special. Dual bumper winner The Red Menace will be better over fences and three miles but dropped away a bit tamely nevertheless.

Vocarium took the older horse's two mile maiden hurdle outstaying a disappointing sort in Jack Dillinger. Fourth home Generalisation on his rules debut ran a decent race and like all Gigginstown horses looks more a chaser.

Saturday October 6th Gowran Park

The fast ground led to plenty of no shows especially in the chases including Ryanair winner Balko Des Flos. The first three home in the two mile four Grade 2 Chase had all had runs over the summer with Woodland Opera turning in a career best making all. Second Jury Duty can find a handicap over a short three miles while third Peregrine Run had it all in his favour here. Favourite A Toi Phil needed this run.

Non runners meant there were only four in the two mile two Novice Chase while the only two finishers were those forecast at 100/1 in the Racing Post.

Sunday October 7th Tipperary

Willie Mullins has plenty of flat winners but Micro Manager is the first two year winner in a least the last five years and he scooted home in the nine furlong maiden. What he beat is open to question as runner up South Pacific for Aiden O'Brien looked a total dodge and the rest looked a moderate bunch but it will be interesting to see how he goes next season.

Rachel Blackmore rode that winner and doubled up in the Grade 3 Hurdle with Scottish challenger Bedrock. I have waited since Aintree for a race he could win so getting him here at 12/1 was nice and he had this won from two out. Age looks like it has caught up with Wicklow Brave and Arctic Fire.

Willie Mullins had three in the two mile Grade 3 Novice Hurdle winning with Quick Grabim in the colours of Gold Cup winner Mr Mulligan. He is an improver. I was disappointed with Dorrells Pierji but he probably needs a lot further.

Le Richebourg is probably the beat novice chaser seen out so far this season and he took the Grade 3 two mile four Novice readily from multiple winner Robin Des Foret. He looks useful.

Monday October 8th Tipperary

Joseph O'Brien hasn't had great success with the horses he has for Gigginstown but he fired in a double here with Choungaya in the two mile maiden hurdle and Young Turk in the two mile seven Novice Chase. Neither looks a star but they are guaranteed to be well placed. From the Maiden Hurdle runner up Pike County can win a moderate maiden while the Gordon Elliot trained favourite Monbeg Worldwide will surely be over fences soon and over at least three miles. From the novice chase that horse's stable companion Burren Life will come on for this outing and jumped really well.

Friday October 26th Cheltenham

Four hours to drive down with the road works even worse than in the spring made me yearn for the traffic free motorways in Ireland.

Much better ground than at most tracks this autumn so the usual big fields in the handicaps and while there were winter horses out the opening novice hurdle was mostly for those that had been running over the summer. Canardier's form looked the best and he duly trotted up and he looks the sort for a good handicap come the spring.

Diakali isn't the full shilling but has taken well to fences and made it three from three in the two mile novice chase but he will surely find it harder in the future.

First Assignment looked the one in the competitive two mile four handicap hurdle and I was glad to a decent price as he was backed into 9/2. He only won by a short head but I think there is more improvement over hurdles before he goes chasing. Back in fourth Lungarno Palace looked like he can find a handicap soon.

Lil Rockefeller outclassed his rivals in the staying novice chase after jumping moderately. Treacle Tart will win races at her level but third home Shannon Bridge is not a horse I have much time for.

The two mile novice hurdle looked a decent race and winner Thomas Darby produced a good turn of foot from the last and it is to be hoped that his high head carriage was greenness and not a sign of bad things to come. There should be plenty of winners amongst the beaten horses notably Elixir De Nutz, Bang on Frankie, Sebastopol and longer tern Seven De Baune

Saturday October 27th Cheltenham

7/1 co favourites of four in the three one staying handicap chase told the story and they were all beaten by 16/1 shot Relentless Dancer. The winner battled well and will need another win to get into his reported target of the Grand National. Rebecca Curtis had an awful season last time around before Joe Farrell won the Scottish National and while still well down on numbers she can obviously still do the business.

An amazing gamble on Gumball in the four year old conditions hurdle as the horse looked distinctly tubby. A complete change of tactics holding the horse up and he faded when it got serious in the straight. I had seen winner Pearl of the West at Tipperary and this was a big step up on that run but she got an excellent ride from Sean Bowen who has to keep his form just to be the best rider in the family. Redicean giving weight away ran O K without looking like he will make up into a championship horse.

Sunday October 28th Aintree

Some decent sorts in the two four novice hurdle and at 1/2 Aye Aye Charlie even with his official rating of 145 looked one to take on. The lay bet was only successful by a neck with Aye Aye Charlie looking like some headgear would not go amiss. Winner Stoney Mountain kept on well and will stay a bit further. The third home Present Ranger a full brother to Ballabriggs looks all over a staying chaser but will win his novice hurdle over three miles.

Although the two four handicap hurdle was unsatisfactory (with the hurdles in the straight omitted) it looks like Paisley Park has improved over the summer as he won well under top weight.

Half of the runners in the Old Roan were pretty untrustworthy and two of the others just weren't good enough. That left the two that finished first and second but the wrong way around for me. Frodon is a super horse and except at the end of the season always runs his race. He will need to step up into graded company to win again but is still only six so might be able too. Javert tried like mad but was beaten by the better horse. He might be better up in trip. Changing stables was hardly likely to make Cloudy Dream any braver and he duly didn't want to fight again.

Friday November 2nd Down Royal

Down Royal is of course not a place but refers to the Down Royal Corporation of Horse Breeders Races. As the race card says they were "Incorporated by Royal Charter granted by James II King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland on 22nd December 1685 for the improvement of horse breeding in the County of Down Ireland".

In 1685 the corporation started at a course in Downpatrick moving to the present site on the Maze near Lurgan in about 1750 to a course which was laid out by the Hill family of Hillsborough Castle whose head was later created an Earl, Viscount, Marquess, and Baron of various places.

Whether racing will continue here beyond the end of 2018 is open to question as the lease on the course held by the Down Royal Corporation runs out on December 31st. They announced in October that the course would close and they would look for an alternative site for a new course. The courses owners the Dublin based Merrion property group quickly stated they intended for racing to continue under their management.

A simple hand over would seem the answer but the two sides have been at loggerheads for some time and while Merrion own the course the Down Royal Corporation own everything else including the name of the course. If they intend to set up a new course which you would imagine would take some years they will take everything off site that isn't nailed down.

Another problem for both sides is that the Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Statutory Order 1990 which governs racing in Northern Ireland specifies the Corporation and the site at the Maze as the recipients of grants. For the Corporation to receive grants for a new track or Merrion at the Maze would require new legislation and with the Northern Ireland Assembly showing no signs of ever meeting again that is not going to happen soon.

It will be up to The Irish Horse Racing Board to try and sort out some sort of compromise but it all looks a mess as the sides have had thirteen years since Merrion purchased the course to prepare for these events and they haven't.

From the early 1970's the Maze was famous not for its racecourse but for its prison in which detainees and then convicted members of para-military groups were held. The prison eventually closed in 2000 but while lots of plans have been made for the site, apart from some partial demolition, the various political parties cannot agree what to do with the land.

In 1999 the Down Royal management decided to upgrade the fixtures by launching the JN Wine Champion Chase weekend with the main race sponsored by the racecourse chairman's company. The big race has been won by three Cheltenham Gold Cup winners with Kauto Star taking the prize twice. There are now has four graded races over the two days. The other main fixture at the course is Ulster Derby and Oaks day. Both races are handicaps nowadays and the Derby has been won by horses that have gone on to win over jumps and winners of multiple Group 1's in the USA but its most famous winner of recent times is Melbourne Cup winner Media Puzzle.

Amongst the other sponsors at the track is the Queen who supports Her Majesty's Plate a Listed 1 mile 5 contest first run in 1750.

This year there will be twelve fixtures spread right through the year with two being flat, one mixed and the rest jumping.

The course is one of the biggest being nearly two miles around and slightly undulating. The flat track is on the inner but is also used for some hurdles races and there is a separate hurdles track on the outside of the chase track. There is a chute for five furlong races which is also used for two mile three chases.

Viewing is poor with more than half of the course hidden behind the trees and bushes of the golf course and the golf club clubhouse. It is not helped by the main stand having a platform for the cameras in the centre of it that also blocks half the view from the rear of the stand.

Anyway no doubt about the star attraction of the day with Samcro returning to action. I am surprised they are going down the Champion Hurdle route as to me he looked beaten when falling at Punchestown in their Champion Hurdle and he certainly looks a chaser. He was carrying plenty of condition here against a couple of race fit and decent opponents and my old friend Bedrock was not going unbacked at 20/1. Samcro ran like he needed it badly and we will know more after his next run when he will have to step up considerably. Bedrock has evidently been sold to go to the U.S.A. for races next summer.

Another winner I backed at Tipperary First Approach also followed up here in the two six maiden hurdle where it was 40/1 bar two. He will eventually be a staying chaser while runner up Diamond Turf will come on a lot for the run.

Last year's Pertemps final winner Delta Work made his chasing debut over two miles three beginners chase and jumped well to just take the race. Like the other Elliot winter horses he will improve for the run and also for a step up in trip.

The mare's Grade 3 novice two mile hurdle was a fairly modest contest for the grade. Winner Sancta Simona will be better for a longer trip and has the size to jump a fence one day.

Back in July Serious Ego caught my eye in a maiden hurdle at Roscommon. A couple of moderate efforts followed and he got into the three mile handicap hurdle off just 102. Two out he looked the winner but simply didn't get home but he will probably be no price for a poor handicap over two four.

Saturday November 3rd Down Royal

Road to Respect is a favourite of mine and bolted up in the Grade 1 JN wine.com Chase. He was fourth in the Gold Cup last season when he travelled well for a long way. On better ground he would be in the mix come March. Woodland Opera followed up his Gowran run with another super effort in second and he goes off for his winter break with the Melling Chase maybe a good target in the spring. The other Gigginstown horses were well beaten. Outlander is just not up to this class nowadays but Balko Des Flos turned in a shocker as did his stable mate Sub Lieutenant who at least does not look a

complete nut case in the preliminaries anymore. The final runner Sandymount Duke fell but is being aimed at the Grand National and his owner /breeder will attract plenty of attention come April.

Three Grade 1 novice chase winners in the two mile three Grade 2 chase with all three looking like they would come on for the outing and it was race fit Snow Falcon who beat them all. He was getting seven pounds and will have to step up quite a bit to take on the top horses at levels. Runner up Shattered Love is a big mare and will improve plenty for this run. She looks like she will be best at three miles and will be an interesting contender for the Grade 1 at Leopardstown at Christmas. Monalee started favourite and ran a good race while we are still in the dark about his best trip. The third Grade 1 winner The Storyteller was a lucky winner at Punchestown and was never a factor here. He will probably be short of top class but there are races for him in Ireland.

It's early for the juvenile hurdlers but Coeur Sublime cost £260K to go jumping and ran out a nice winner of their maiden from a horse that had already chased home some fair sorts. It was interesting to see Brian Cooper riding this one and he needs a good horse to get him going again. There were some good sorts in the two mile maiden hurdle and the first two home should be well above average. Brace Yourself was fitter than Defi Bleu and I would hope both are up to running in graded hurdles probably over two and a half and both are chasing sorts. Third home Batts Rock is an ex flat runner who will win his maiden but his flat form is on good to firm so he maybe more one for the spring. They were clear of 125 rated The Holy One. Pike County who I liked at Tipperary was not up to this better maiden and I imagine connections will be looking to get him handicapped now at something near 120.

Malone Road made £325K at the sales after his Irish point win and won the bumper here but it told up little as the race was run at a crawl and the placed horses have already had plenty of chances.

Saturday November 10th Aintree

Quoi De Neuf the winner of the two mile four novice hurdle looked like he had no idea what was going on both before and in the race and being at Even Williams will no doubt have a low profile season. He could be decent. Nicest horse in the race was the Trevor Hemmings runner Invisible Clouds but as in his bumpers he showed absolutely nothing in terms of ability.

Wholestone ground out a win in the two four conditions hurdle. He will be running in all the three mile graded races where he invariably finds something to beat him. Vision Des Flos also finds one too good for him most times while Unowhatimeanharry needs all of three miles and is not getting any younger.

With the stable in much better form this season a lot of the Philip Hobbs handicappers could be well weighted and War Sound looked one to take a chance with and he had the feature two four handicap chase rapped up some way out. Runner up King's Odyssey was again placed and a go at the Grand Sefton could suit him. Top weight Warriors Tale was in need of the run and his fourth place without being knocked around was a good effort.

Thursday November 15th Ludlow

Samarguand the winner of the two five introductory hurdle is still gangly and unfurnished and can only improve with experience and probably won't be highly tried this season. Venetia Williams is not one to run her horses on fastish ground and she withdrew her runner here Geordie B.A bumper winner he looked a really nice sort in the pre-parade and I shall be watching for him when he runs. She did run Royal Tara in the staying handicap chase and he will improve for his third placed effort.

Friday November 16th Cheltenham

A good competitive two four novice chase and Count Meribel overcame a bad mistake two out to gamely get back up. He has improved for fencing as has runner up Le Breuil and while I doubt they are top class they jump and try so should do well. Although not beaten far the third and fourth did not appear to try as hard. Mr Whipped did not impress me when winning at Warwick in January and certainly hung fire here while fourth home Jenkins has improved as an individual but was off and on the bridle. It was a shame White Moon fell as the last as he too would have been involved in the finish.

Useful bumper horse Coolanly ran out a good winner of the Grade 2 two mile five novice hurdle from the well talked up Pym. Third home Percy Veer had been well beaten in a novice at Cork so holds the form down a bit. Fourth home Darlac looked a nice sort and will want three miles.

Saturday November 17th Cheltenham

The French breeds takeover of the juvenile hurdlers continues with six of the seven in the Triumph Hurdle trial being imports. The first two home Quel Destin and Cracker Factory had already had eleven runs between them and their experience showed. I would think there will be better juveniles to come out before long. The Henderson runner Never Adapt bolted to the start and in the race yet somehow stayed on for third. She has ability but will need plenty of work to get her to settle.

Unusually the three mile novice chase could have been a trail for the National with the front two already having plenty of chasing experience. Ibis Du Rheu is a third season novice with a rating of 139 and Theatre Territory ran in last year's Topham and will be nine come April and neither look up to being RSA contenders. The Worlds End was a bit hesitant at some of his fences but looked a bit one paced under his penalty.

More obvious National candidates in the 3m 3f handicap chase with Rock the Kasbah turning in a career best. He is a bit in and out and has the occasional slow jump which would put me off him for Aintree. Runner up Royal Vacation ran appallingly all last season and this was obviously much better while the same comment would apply to Coneygree. Amazingly Singlefarmpayment was favourite again and again found nothing when it got hard work.

The BetVictor looked wide open and it paid to be up with the pace as there was carnage in the pack with only six getting round. Baron Alco stretched them from a long way out and Frodon again ran a tremendous race under top weight. I don't back each way too often but Javert was over 40/1 and coming down the hill the place part looked nailed on but he stopped to nothing and I imagine there was some physical problem.

It was a shame for the Jefferson stable that Mega Yeats couldn't hold on in the listed mare's bumper but she should have a future as she was really nice sort and paddock pick. You wouldn't miss winner The Glancing Queen with her huge white face and she will improve for her first run and showed a good turn of foot.

Sunday November 18th Cheltenham

It was impossible not to be impressed with Lalor in the Grade 2 Arkle Trial beating two fit and decent rivals with ease. Runner up Dynamite Dollars looked in super nick before and while he was well beaten here he is a much better chaser than hurdler. Claimantakinforan will need a longer trip and is probably below top class. Defi Du Seuil on the comeback trail jumped very poorly and has plenty to prove.

Sceau Royal returned after missing the spring festivals as good as ever beating the ultra consistent Simply Ned. We will see if he can make the necessary progress to take on Altior in the Tingle Creek but he is straightforward honest performer.

Books I'd Like For Christmas

By HAROLD HEYS

RACEHORSE names have always interested me. Especially the ones that have probably been a try-on by a mischievous owner.

The racing authority that now carefully weeds out any rather risqué monickers is probably a bit more careful than in days gone by. However, dodgy names still get through – and clocking 'em can pass a quiet winter hour.

In Like Flynn, was a favourite of mine. The phrase certainly has a sexual connotation which we needn't concern ourselves with here. Back as far as the 60s there were several that raised an eyebrow and I remember having a bit of sympathy with racecourse and television commentators. I'll leave readers' imaginations to come up with a few of the more colourful names of yesteryear.

At the moment I'll just concern myself with giving David Ashworth's **Fifty Shades Of Hay** top billing in this feature I've titled Books I'd like for Christmas.

For many years my family have never wondered what to get me for Christmas. I always have a list ready by October and have seldom been disappointed. At the last count I had almost 900 racing books. I hope to edge past that figure this year.

Ashworth probably has little sympathy with horses lumbered with odd names. As the blurb for his book says: "A horse is not a Flamingo, a Polar Bear, a Tomato, a Teapot, a pair of Bootlaces, a Taxidermist, a Rat Catcher or a Flea." But they've all been carried by our equine friends.

I remember a horse called Bonkers winning at Southwell some years ago. It seems a safe bet that the owners didn't imagine it lining up with a chance of winning the Epsom Derby when they were thinking of a name.

In *Fifty Shades Of Hay*, Ashforth has picked out a selection to baffle, surprise and amuse in equal measure. I wonder if he's included any guaranteed to shock anyone of a delicate disposition?

No 2 on my list is **Churchill at the Gallop** by Brough Scott. Horses played an important part in the statesman's life. They were his escape in childhood, his challenge in youth, his transport in war, his triumph in sport and his diversion as he grew old.

Scott follows Churchill's life in the saddle from galloping his pony in Blenheim Park, to topping the riding class whilst army training at Sandhurst; taking part in a famous cavalry charge in Sudan, playing polo in India, hunting foxes in Leicestershire and breeding racehorses near his home in Kent – after a minor interlude out of the saddle to tend to the historic task of winning the Second World War.

Churchill's finest racehorse was the grey Colonist II who raced in the early 50s. After one rather disappointing appearance Churchill told the Press that he had promised the horse that a win would guarantee that he would "spend the rest of his life in agreeable female company." However, he explained: "Colonist could not keep his mind on the race." An unusual excuse for a defeat.

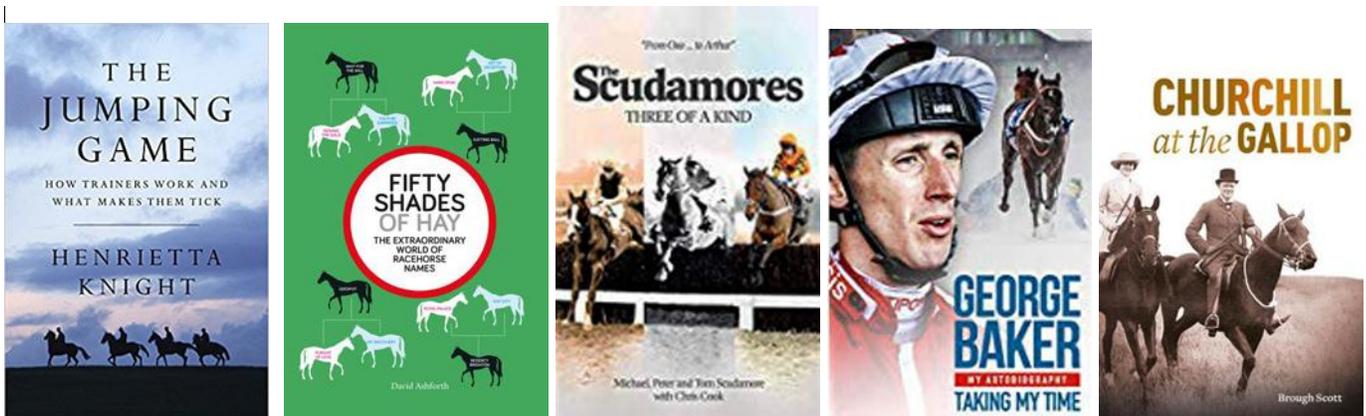
No 3 on my list is **World Racecourses** by Cornelius Lysaght. It looks classy and part of the fun is in ticking off courses that you've actually been to. Churchill Downs in Kentucky, tick; Pardubice in the Czech Republic, tick; Belmont Park, New York, tick; Deauville and the Paris tracks, tick; Capanannelle, Rome, tick; La Rinconada, Venezuela, tick; Borrowdale Park, Rhodesia as it then was, tick; Flemington, Melbourne ... ooh, er, um.

No 4 is **The Jumping Game** by Henrietta Knight: Everybody loves Hen and in this book she writes about a dazzling array of top trainers. I expect lots of insight and sparkle –and perhaps a few tears.

No 5 is **Taking My Time**, the tale of George Baker's life as a jockey and the story of a second life emerging from the aftermath of his horror fall on the White Turf at St Moritz in 2017. None but the brave could have come through it, and ...

No 6 is **The Scudamores: Three of a Kind**. Michael, Peter and Tom Scudamore. I must be getting old. I remember the first of the Scudamore clan – Michael snr. who won the Grand National in 1959 on Oxo. That was in the days when the National was really tough. Just four horses finished that race. Old Michael died a few years ago in his 80s. No doubt the lads pay him a warm tribute.

Roll on Christmas!





RACING IN THE UAE BY Tommy Buckley of @WeLoveBettingUK

Early Season Eye-catchers at Meydan

One of the real joys of racing is being able to witness a performance that catches your eye and makes you take note to look out for that horse again, there is always that next race to look forward to.

As I write this the new 2018/19 Meydan racing season is only two weeks old and only seen 14 races completed, up to and including the fixture on the 8th of November, and yet those 14 races have produced a number of eye-catching performances to enjoy.

Here are my views on a selection of early season eye-catchers in Meydan, horses I believe have already displayed that they've got plenty of talent and excitingly more to offer as the Meydan season progresses.

WALKING THUNDER - owned by Phoenix Ladies Syndicate & trained by Ahmad bin Harmash

The opening contest to this new Meydan racing season was a 7 furlong Maiden for 2 year olds and before the race takes place nobody really knows how those 2 year olds will go but what we all most definitely knew when the race had finished was that **WALKING THUNDER** had announced himself in some style onto the Meydan scene.

The newly formed Phoenix Ladies Syndicate have declared they want to have plenty of fun and to win races and **WALKING THUNDER** looks like one they can do both with, he immediately looked at home on the Meydan dirt, travelled very well through the race to take the lead at the half way point and finished the race off very well to win with plenty to spare.

Yes that was only a 2 year old maiden but he looked at ease on the surface, he looked professional and already looks one made to climb through the ranks at Meydan with plenty more to come in time.

PRESS ROOM - owned by Sh Rashid bin Dalmook Al Maktoum & trained by Satish Seemar

I'll admit that to nominate a horse who hasn't won since 2015 as an eye-catcher might appear strange at first but **PRESS ROOM** did catch my eye on the opening day of the Meydan season by finishing a very good 3rd after a really sluggish start.

The way **PRESS ROOM** stuck to his task and finished off the race that day suggests to me there is something to work on that an opportunity to win might come his way, he's won over different trips at Meydan and he's won when rated 85 in the past, now rated 60 on the Meydan dirt there is real scope for him to find a Handicap this season.

BIG BROWN BEAR - owned by Kildare Stud - Frankie O'Connor and trained by Doug Watson

Last season there was a lot expected of **BIG BROWN BEAR** but he never really shown anything in 3 runs at Meydan with two 4th places the best he could find, connections couldn't deny he'd been disappointing.

The good news is Doug Watson clearly kept faith in **BIG BROWN BEAR** and clearly has been able to develop the son Tiznow into one that looks ready made to crack on at Meydan, his fluent 5 length win in the 7 furlong maiden showing he had matured into a horse who can now begin to star in Meydan.

LITIGATION - owned by Ramadhan Stable and trained by Jaber Ramadhan

Having already had 6 runs in 2018 when trained in England then **LITIGATION** was a filly who had experience of racing to draw on but I don't think anybody expected her to produce what she did do on her debut in Meydan in the closing 10 furlong handicap on the opening day of the season.

LITIGATION literally blitzed the field by nearly 10 lengths, taking the lead early, travelled through the gears and kicked on to win easily, she was clearly seriously well handicapped and although she'll take a big rise in the ratings, she definitely

looks a potential Meydan star and could well be one who deserves her place in the Dubai Carnival once that starts in January.

TAAMOL - owned by Sh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum and trained by Ali Rashid Al Rayhi

There is definitely something exciting about seeing the Sh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum colours carried by smart horses at Meydan and in **TAAMOL** connections look to have one they can have plenty of fun with at Meydan this season, both on dirt and turf.

TAAMOL took his chance as a 90 rated horse in a solid looking 7 furlong handicap and he certainly made the most of that chance by travelling well and tracking the leaders, then kicking to take the lead inside the last 2 furlongs to ultimately win well.

That win will take him to a rating of 95 on dirt and he has a 100 rating on turf, his jockey Dane O'Neill expressed his belief he could well be a Dubai Carnival performer on either surface so it will be exciting to see his next step along the Meydan ladder.

WELFORD - owned by Touch Gold Racing and trained by Satish Seemar

Touch Gold Racing certainly are owners who put plenty into the Meydan racing scene and so it was fantastic to see **WELFORD** give them a performance that should give them excitement for the season ahead after winning a 1 mile Handicap in good, controlled style after an initial slow start.

To do what he did after a slow start probably suggests there could be much more to come and so there should still be a fair bit of fun to be had despite his new rating of 80, connections have high hopes he'll be ready to go and prove he's a Dubai Carnival horse after he's had a break.

They are the horses that have impressed me the most in the opening two Meydan meetings this season but others who definitely deserve a mention include **LAVA SPIN, TRIED AND TRUE, GRAND ARGENTIER, STUNNED, WHITE SKY and MIGHTILY.**

I've already massively enjoyed the new Meydan season and can't wait to take in all the action throughout the rest of the season.

PAUL'S TRIP TO THE VELKA PARDUBICKA OCTOBER 2018

I first came across the Velka Pardubicka in 1974 when I was beginning to get a real interest in jump racing during the run up to the Grand National. A preview of the Aintree race included the story of how one of the National entries called Stephen's Society and his amateur jockey Chris Collins had gallantly run in the Czech National and described it as the "most difficult race in the world". It showed some amazing footage of the Velka and told how this unlikely duo had crossed the Iron Curtain to be the first British raiders to run in the race since World War one. Not only did they compete in the race, they had actually managed to win it. I subsequently found out that their victory was somewhat tinged by the fact they could not take the money out of the country. In fact, they couldn't even find anything to spend it on in the then communist era before Prague had the shopping facilities it now boasts. Most of the winnings went unspent but they had their place in history and made a lasting impression on me. That spring they were to go on and run at Aintree but pulled up under the welter burden of 11-5 behind the great Red Rum and L'Escargot. At the time I never imagined being able to see the Velka for myself but that story stayed in my memory.

Below is a print we came across of Stephens Society, holding pride of place in a local Pardubice Restaurant called "The Derby" just outside the course

Earlier this year I decided it was time to rekindle that interest in the Velka. It was remarkably easy and pleasantly affordable to arrange the trip on the internet and I even came across a number of Czech Horseracing websites to help me get up to speed on local form with the help of Google translator. However, some terms seemed to convert to amusing phrases not generally seen in the racing post!

My early fancy for the race was Urgent De Gregaine who I had seen run a great prep race behind Tiger Roll in the Cheltenham Cross Country race and who had finished second in the Velka last year. Last year he appeared to be clearly the best horse in the race but having taken up the running far too early he was collared late on by the winner No Time To

Lose. No Time To Lose had started life as a 2 year old all-weather winner over 6 furlongs for Jamie Osborne but was now tackling something quite different being trained by local hero Josef Vana who has a long history with the great race.

However, injury meant Urgent De Gregaine has not been seen since Cheltenham and is reportedly still out of training. By this time, the group heading to Prague had now grown to a band of six and consisted of fellow N&MRC member Cieran Cassidy, my 3 sons who often join me at the races and one of their friends who has recently taken up ownership with a small syndicate. On hearing the news of my main fancy becoming a non-runner I sent the group a Facebook message that "I would have to move on to Plan B and just follow Jan Faltejsek". Winning the Velka had become routine for Jan having only been beaten once in the race in the previous six years with four winners; a non-runner (when favourite) and in 2015 he had disappointed his fans when he "only managed third place".

Unfortunately between that very shrewd post and the Velka I made the mistake of intensely studying the form/trends of the race and moved away from this profitable system. For racing fans who like trends this race appears to be an absolute gold mine. Horses often become multiple winners due to the race conditions being a level weights contest with no penalties, so they are not subsequently handicapped out of a repeat win and can run up a sequence. Also, in order to qualify for the race the local horses run in four specific qualifying trials through the year, all over the same course but shorter race distances and always omitting the famous Taxis Fence – which is only jumped once a year. Hence, the form of the horses is very exposed and winners consistently come from a confined and specific group of Czech races including a couple of Novice races that regularly produce future Velka winners and did so again this year. For foreign horses qualification seems very easy and I am surprised there aren't more French/Irish/UK runners. I am sure a decent long distance chaser would have every chance of running well in the Velka- providing it can jump!

Race day finally arrived and it was run on a glorious sunny mid-October afternoon in front of the largest crowd in the last 25 years. The meeting consists of 8 chases all over the cross country course over varying distances/age groups/sexes and includes handicaps as well. The last race of the day is the highlight – The Velka Pardubicka itself and known locally as "the race that makes the Czech Republic hold its breath". The going had been affected by a long hot summer but had been watered extensively and although it still looked on the firm side the jockeys reported the track was in remarkably good condition. The ploughed field section which accounts for a quarter of the race was still very dusty. Just before the race, there were a couple of jockey changes noted on the stewards' notice board. One outlined how much of a challenge the course holds as it read "Ján Mach took an awful fall on Smajlík in the 4th race. He was dragged along for a very long distance before being stopped by a tree. He suffered concussion and a couple of broken arms, and no doubt a lot of street rash. It could have been fatal. Ján Mach will thus miss the opportunity to ride in the Velka Pardubicka on Mileryt and Michal Kubík replaces him. It was indeed an awful fall and I am just glad the report was as positive as this. It once again reminds us all what both horses and jockeys go through to provide us with this great sport and incredible races that we all appreciate.

Last year's winner No Time To Lose started out as the Evens favourite (Betino is the only company offering on-course betting) and the other starting odds were 5/2 Ange Guardian 4/1 Tzigane Du Berlais 6/1 Hegnus 12/1 Vicody 14/1 Zarif 16/1 Nikas 25/1 Bridgeur and 50/1 bar for the field of 20. So perhaps the bookies at Aintree aren't that rogue after all! Luckily, a number of UK bookies price the race up and there is a Betfair exchange market. In fact the prices were so varied across the three options, I am sure you can make a profit on this somehow. Although most prices were bigger in the UK there were a few noticeably longer prices on course. Stretton who was trading at a best price of 20 in the UK was 120/1 on course and he was to go on and run a cracking race for a few members of our group cheering him on.



The most famous jump “The Taxis” is the 4th fence and comes very early in the race. Resembling Becher’s Brook but larger it is a daunting obstacle with a ditch on the landing side (above) but seeing a horse clear this fence almost “in flight” is one of the most amazing racing scenes I have ever seen. In the Velka, the horses spread out right along the fence but a group came together on the right side and probably interfered with each other as all three fell - Vicody (my final selection for the race), Templář and Universe of Gracie. On the left side Ter Mill slipped on landing and two runners that had been tracking him were brought down.

At the next (the Irish Bank) Leighton Aspell and Vajgaros parted company and then Delight My Fire and Kasim fell leaving only half the field going after 6 fences. The race then settled down and there were no further falls from this point. The remaining horses began to race in earnest from the 25th fence. Bridgeur had been leading from the start but just in behind were the main contenders Hegnus, Ange Guardian, Zarif and Stretton. No Time to Lose and Tzigane Du Berlais both seemed to have quite a lot to do at this late stage with a gap to the leading group. By the time they approached the last fence there were still 5 in with a chance leading to an exciting finish. It was the back marker of these Tzigane Du Berlais who came with a well-timed run to land the spoils under Jan Faltejsek once again – if only I had stuck with plan B! In the end he won comfortably enough by three lengths from Hegnus with a further neck to Stretton who paid a handsome return for his local place followers on course.

Jan Faltejsek has now ridden the winner of 5 of the last 7 runnings of the Velka Pardubicka. Can you ever imagine a jockey doing the same in the Aintree version? Only Josef Váňa has had more winning Velka rides with 8 and at this rate it won't be long before he is over taken! Statue of Josef Vana – Velka winner as jockey and trainer

It had been a fantastic day with tickets only £7: a reasonable view and a massive selection of food stalls to cater for the public at cheap prices that would make Cheltenham wince. Even a pint of Staropramen was just over a pound on course. All in all, I would highly recommend the experience to anyone and it is easily combined with the delights of a weekend in Prague.

After racing and as a final treat, the crowd are encouraged to walk the course and see the fearsome fences up close for themselves and you even get to tackle the Irish bank which just added to the day.

So for the biggest race in the Czech calendar, eight foreign jockeys had tried to emulate Chris Collins but once again the “local boy” came good and beat some recognisable names in the process including Felix de Giles, Leighton Aspell (who had 5 rides & 4 falls on the day), James Best and Thomas Garner. Post race, it appears Tzigane Du Berlais may head to Cheltenham. He has only run 3 times this year and his jockey knows his way round that course too, so they may be worth an outside shout if they turn up.

The 2019 Velka Pardubicka will be held on the second Sunday in October (13/10/19) and if anyone fancies a trip I would be glad to pass on any advice on getting there.

Paul Willoughby



1	Tzigane Du Berlais	Faltejsek J./Tuma P.	
2	Hegnus	Stromsky M./Holcak R.	3
3	Stretton	Garner T./Olehla C.	hd
4	Zarif	Romano R./Vana J. sr.	2½
5	No Time To Lose	Vana J./Vana J. sr.	2¼
6	Ange Guardian	Kousek J./Vana J. sr.	4

'SOUNDS LIKE' FESTIVE QUIZ 2018

Welcome to this year's festive racing quiz! Using the cryptic clues below your task is to work out the names of the ten trainers and the ten jockeys. Once you have done this please send in your answers to N&M Racing Club at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB or via email to info@northernracingclub.com The closing date will be January 21st 2019.

There will be at least two prizes for the best entries (maybe more depending upon how many entries are received). So please have a go even if you cannot identify all 20 names. Remember that the 'sounds like' may apply to the surname, the whole name or the surname plus initials. Some are easy and some less so!

TRAINERS

1. This trainer sounds like a coastal defence measure.
2. This trainer sounds like a dish often served on January 25th.
3. This trainer sounds like he owns a supermarket chain.
4. This Irish trainer sounds like he may have a round head.
5. This Irish trainer sounds like a Scottish bottle of stout.
6. This trainer sounds like he trains from stables in Qahog.
7. This trainer sounds like he used to train from a town in Durham but has since left there.
8. This trainer sounds like she trains from a yard in Jordan.
9. This trainer sounds like she may be handy with a vacuum cleaner!
10. This trainer sounds like he may like eating strufoli.

JOCKEYS

1. This jockey sounds like a make of car in the USA.
2. This jockey sounds like an iconic British motorbike.
3. This jockey sounds like he may have had one night in the tropics.
4. This jockey sounds like she should like spicy food.
5. This jockey sounds like he could carry on in the home straight.
6. This jockey sounds like he could become the Rolls Royce of flat jockeys.
7. This jumps jockey's initials sounds like a hospital term abbreviated for patients with little chance of recovery. Fans of Holby City & Casualty should be able to work this one out!
8. This jockey sounds like he may wear ermine clothing whilst watching Coronation Street.
9. This jumps jockey sound like he may be a cockney friend of Kris Kringle.
10. This jump jockey sounds like a former president of the U.S.A.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL N&M RACING CLUB MEMBERS

OTHER RACING CLUB NEWS

The **AGM of North & Midlands Racing Club** will take place on Monday 21st January 2019 at the Tetley Club in Warrington at 7.30pm. All members are welcome to attend and contribute towards the way the club is being run. For those that cannot attend please feel free to send any items for the agenda to any of the club officials. The club is looking to recruit some new Regional Representatives in 2019 to help foster local activities with local racecourses, trainers etc. This should not be an onerous task but will help the club expand its activities further into areas where our membership is lower. Initially we would like representatives in the following areas: Cumbria/Scotland, North East & Midlands. If you live in these areas and would like to chat about what the roles involve please contact Phil Evans (see committee panel) in the first instance.

David Kay has informed the club that **Nigel Hewertson** had passed away in November aged 91. Nigel was a founder member of the club and also served on the committee for a number of years undertaking a range of different tasks.

He and his wife Margaret attended many of the club functions before his ill health and were regulars on the racing trips both in this country and abroad. In the early days of the club they threw open their house and it was used as a venue for committee meetings and a base to produce the newsletter. Margaret would never fail to produce meals for everyone attending regardless of numbers.

Another longstanding member Brian Goodwill recalls 'I remember many committee meetings at his house 1984-87. Like David said, Margaret used to make sure everyone was fed. Like me he was trying to get to all the racecourses. He was ahead of me but I suppose he was 35 years older than me. We were both due to complete in 1984 but he had a health scare and chose not to go racing to complete the set until he was better.

The club sends its condolences to all family & friends of Nigel.

Jason Fildes was previously the General Manager at Haydock Park and helped the club run several Cheltenham Preview nights at the course, for which we were very grateful.

Since his departure in September this year, Jason has taken up the role of running the Northern Syndicates for Highclere Racing. Initially there will be three flat horse syndicates with two National Hunt syndicates planned for the New Year.

For further details please contact Jason directly, details as below:

Email: Jason@highclere.co.uk Web: www.highclereracing.co.uk

Point-To-Point Update from Jodie Standing

Delving into the point-to-point world in the hope of unearthing the stars of the future has become a deep interest of mine. When most racing fanatics are enjoying the build up to Royal Ascot, or the Coral Eclipse at Sandown, I am beavering away on my laptop watching replays of the mid-winter point-to-point races in England and Ireland. It's quite a strange thing to be doing, but National Hunt is such a passion of mine and I wouldn't have it any other way.

I have written the point-to-point feature in *Marten Julian's Dark Horses Jumps Guide* for the past few years, but this year I had my first book published, entitled *The Point-To-Point Recruits 2018/19*. It has already proved successful by finding the first and second of the Listed bumper at Cheltenham's November meeting, The Glancing Queen and Mega Yeats (who won on her first start). It has also found the current favourite for next

year's Cheltenham Festival Champion Bumper – Malone Road. On top of these, Down The Highway, Quoi De Neuf, Umbrigado and Seemingly So have also won.

I grew up on a farm, so have been surrounded by animals all my life. I believe spotting potential stems from years and years of watching behavioural traits and learning the different personalities of animals. For me there is nothing more satisfying than spotting potential in a horse in their early days and for them to realise that promise much further down the line.

These are very exciting times, and I am sure the best horses in the book are still to run.

We are pleased to offer readers of Racin' a £2.50 discount code which can be used against Jodie's book or another publication/service of interest. The code is valid to 31 December. Please quote RACMAG18NOV (valid over the phone, online or through the post).

To place an order, receive a free brochure on what we do or join our free newsletter list please call 01539 741 007, email rebecca@martenjulian.com or visit www.martenjulian.com

NORTHERN RACING CLUB COMMITTEE/OFFICIALS 2018/19

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Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 27th Jan.

The logo below (or similar) will be added to future editions of Racin' magazine. This follows a recent poll on the club's Facebook website where over 90% of respondents felt it was appropriate.

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