

# Racin'



Issue 355

February/March 2019

## 2019 MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Don't forget that only members who receive the paper copy of the club magazine need to renew their membership this year! If you pay by bankers order please ensure that this is now set at £10pa. For all other payments please use the form enclosed with this issue of Racin'

For those taking the magazine 'on line' please ensure that any standing orders are cancelled. If not we shall assume that the printed copy of the magazine is now required instead.

For joint memberships the cost is now reduced from £12 to £10 pa. If anyone sends £12 still, the club will donate the extra £2 to a racing charity on behalf of the members concerned.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2** Competition News and Results
- 3** Cheltenham Preview Night 2019
- 4** Alex Bird Competition 2019
- 5/6** Racing Spotlight with Brian Goodwill
- 6/10** Racing Diary by Gordon Armistead
- 10/11** Where Are They Now? By Harold Heys
- 11** Oliver Greenall stable visit
- 12** Racing in the UAE by Tommy Buckley
- 13** Go Pointing by Rory Alkin
- 14/15** Overbury Stud by Kate Austin
- 16** Quiz answers + Cheltenham Guides
- 17/18** AGM Report + Tant Pis remembered



Above: **Dave Fitzgerald** is 'Under The Spotlight' with Brian Goodwill see page 5/6 for the fuller details.

Below: **Prince Monalulu** is mentioned in Harold Heys latest article. For further details please see page 10. Monolulu cropped up everywhere. Here he is on a colourful card for Churchill's cigarettes.



RASS PRINCE MONOLULU

# 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.

**December 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 ~ 57 ~ Andy White** from Rochdale.

**January 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 ~ 06 ~ Tony Jarvis** from Durham.

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 4-52-56-58 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!

## SATURDAY NAPS COMPETITION 2018-19

Round 1 of this winter's challenge finished on 22<sup>nd</sup> December and the winner is now confirmed as **Mary Claydon** from Carlisle (£100 prize) with the runner up being **Paul Walker** from Worcester (wins a pair of tickets for Ludlow).

The leader's scores in Round 1 were as follows:

Tot	Name & Entry No.
15	Mary Claydon 05
13.62	Paul Walker 95
13	Mark Banks 96
13	Dave Edge 32

Round 2 of the competition finished on 26<sup>th</sup> January and the winner is now confirmed as **Elizabeth O'Donoghue** from Holmfirth (£100 prize) with the runner up being **Eunice Flynn** from Sale (Pair of tickets).

The leader's scores in Round 2 were as follows:

Tot	Name & Entry No.
17	Elizabeth O'Donoghue 92
15.5	Eunice Flynn 21
13	Floss Howes 36
13	Harold Woodward 50

Our leader overall after 10 weeks is **Mark Banks** from Hazel Grove, who wins a bonus prize of two tickets for Thursday of the Aintree Festival.

The leader's scores in the seasonal competition are as below:

Tot	Name & Entry No.
19	Mark Banks 96
18.5	Eunice Flynn 21
18.25	Mary Claydon 05
17	Floss Howes 36
16.74	Paul Walker 95
16.6	Ted Halewood 02
16	Dave Edge 32
15.88	Elizabeth O'Donoghue 92
9.33	Tony Coleman 75
8	Harold Woodward 50
7.5	Alan Hill 14

Thanks to all our sponsors including **Betfred**, who have again provided £100 of betting vouchers, with tickets also provided by the following courses: **Aintree, Bangor On Dee, Cartmel, Catterick, Haydock, Hexham, Kelso, Ludlow, Sedgefield & Worcester.**

# CHELTENHAM PREVIEW NIGHT

Monday March 4<sup>th</sup> – 7.30pm  
Haydock Park Racecourse

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PANEL GUESTS INCLUDE:

**CARL LLEWELLYN (ASSISTANT TRAINER)**  
**GARY WILTSHIRE (EX-BOOKMAKER, BBC etc.)**  
**ANDY GIBSON (CHELTENHAM TRAIL)**  
**MARTIN CHAPMAN (STAR SPORTS)**  
**& COMPERE GARETH LEONARD (SIS)**

TICKETS £10\* ~ IJF RAFFLE  
CASH BAR & FOOD AVAILABLE

Copies of both the Racing Post & Weatherbys festival guides can be pre-ordered at £7

Books can also be ordered by members unable to attend by adding £1.50 to cover p&p.

Postal requests for tickets/books can be sent to NRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB. If you prefer to send a bank payment, please e mail [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com)

## SPECIAL PREVIEW TICKET OFFERS

Buy 4 tickets and receive a free Racing Post/Weatherbys Guide.

\*If you attended last year's event you will qualify for a £2 per ticket discount – max discount applies to number of tickets purchased in 2018 with any additional ones at standard price of £10pp.



STAR SPORTS SPONSOR THIS EVENT

# ALEX BIRD TIPPING CHALLENGE 2019

The Alex Bird Trophy, the competition to find the Northern Racing Club Champion Tipster for 2019 gets underway with the Cheltenham Festival.

The format of the Competition again covers **all** races on each day of the meetings covered with just the first four days at Royal Ascot.

1. The days covered at the meetings will be as follows:

Cheltenham - All 4 days; Aintree - All 3 days; Ascot - First 4 days; York - All 4 days.

2. The points scored will be based the winner and placed horses (2nd/3rd/4th depending on number of runners) with potential bonus points added based on the starting price of the winning horse. Precise scoring details are set out in the full rules (available from John Boswell or online at <https://the-nrc.weebly.com/club-competitions.html> ).

3. The overall winner and therefore the Champion Tipster will be decided on the total for all 4 rounds and receives the coveted Alex Bird trophy for a period of 12 months.

4. Entry Fees in 2019 are the same as last year, namely £10 for all 4 rounds, or £5 for the first/last 2 rounds.

5. Cash prizes will now be awarded to the overall winner and the winner of the four rounds. The overall winner's prize is guaranteed as a minimum of £100 with the four round prizes guaranteed as a minimum of £50 with the actual prizes confirmed once the number of entries is confirmed.

We hope that this will appeal to loyal members of previous years and to new contestants alike. In due course, your feedback will be welcome. In the meantime, we look forward to your entries and wish everyone the best of good tipping fortune.

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## ALEX BIRD COMPETITION 2019 – ENTRY FORM

Name.....Address.....

.....

.....

Phone/E Mail.....

Please return to John Boswell at 15 Barford Close, Ainsdale, Southport, PR8 2RS.  
Please also enclose your entry fee of £5/10 per entry (cheques still payable to NRC please).  
To make an online banking payment of your entry fee please  
Email [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com) for further details.

# RACING SPOTLIGHT – DAVID FITZGERALD

## **What can you tell us about your first day's on course commentary?**

My first on-course commentary was at Kempton Park in October 2010 and I did just the one race. Kieren Fallon won it on a filly named Wallis. I did my first full card at the beginning of January 2011, again at Kempton Park. As for the day itself, I remember wearing an overcoat that was at least a size too big, being a bundle of nerves generally and also being interviewed by Lydia Hislop on Racing UK beforehand. I doubt I made much sense.

## **Any particular funny moments to recall?**

I remember my microphone failing at the start of a race at Wincanton one day and having to make my way to the judge's box to call the rest of it. I was out of breath by the time I'd sprinted up there and it's fair to say it wasn't one of my best. That was a lesson learned. I also recall doing a race at Lingfield with the course absolutely shrouded in fog, so much so that the judge on duty was unable to decipher the placings beyond the first two home. Neither was particularly funny at the time!

## **Before racing did you ever have a proper job?**

That depends on your definition! My first job was as an on-site Cleaner at Chessington World of Adventures, I'd have been 16 going on 17 at the time. Like most young people at some stage, I had a supermarket job – that lasted about 18 months, followed by a couple of short-term office roles, an even shorter-term behind a bar and then a three-month stint in a Town Planning Department. I joined Racing UK a day after my 20th Birthday as an "Editorial Trainee".

## **Explain your fondness for Cartmel?**

I think part of what makes racing in Britain so special is the unique variety of the courses – Cartmel is the epitomé of that. I've done most of the meetings there for seven years now. It is always a pleasure as it's such an enchanting place and there is nowhere else quite like it. The quality of the racing continues to improve and the ground staff do a sensational job in preparing the racing surface as well as they do.

## **Your happiest day on a racecourse?**

Calling home Mister Fizz at Newton Abbot for my friend Bundle Pickard earlier this year was a big thrill and is right up there, but it would have to be the day that Crafty Roberto won at Market Rasen in December 2016. I missed out the first time he won there as I was working at Ffos Las and couldn't go, so it was lovely to actually be there to witness him being led in as a winner! Crafty is retired now but I still have him and he is very dear to me.

## **You are involved with the Alex Hales yard on a very much hands on basis. Explain your involvement**

I suspect I just get in the way most of the time! I've had shares in horses with Alex since around 2007 and live nearby to the yard. I ride out regularly although I'm on the heavier side and a long way from being one of his better riders. If I'm not working I'll usually go and help out during evening stables too and sometimes go racing if needed. Just being around horses is very therapeutic and can do wonders for your mental health. I can't imagine life without them.

## **You have had the privilege of calling at Santa Anita. Describe that experience**

That came out of the blue really. I'd heard that Trevor Denman was retiring but hadn't given it much thought until I got a phone call from Nick Luck one morning, encouraging me to get in touch with them. I did and they offered me a trial soon afterwards. I had never been to the USA before and it was an incredible experience,

everybody made me feel very welcome. I called there for a weekend and I was just happy not to make a fool of myself. Plenty of people seemed to think that I did well and would be offered the job, but I never did as they already had an excellent caller in Michael Wrona.

### **If you had the power to make a sweeping change in racing what would it be?**

No prizes for originality, but we need to find a way of better funding the middle and lower levels of racing. Horses are important at all levels and I genuinely think the game is in for a shock a few years down the line if smaller owners and breeders are not looked after and given encouragement to continue to be involved. It bothers me to see horses running for such comparatively dismal prize money midweek and yet figures at the top level (particularly on the flat) seem to keep going up and up, sometimes to obscene levels. Most of the time you could cut the money in half and still get the same horses running for it.

### **Apart from the travelling what is the worst aspect of your working life?**

I am very lucky to do what I do for a living and don't have too much to complain about on that score. I don't enjoy staying in hotels or being away from home for very long generally. Aside from that, I guess that the peril of this job is that you are only ever one race away from disaster, such as calling the wrong horse home as the winner. During my first couple of years, if I had made a real blunder then I think it would have affected me very badly, but I've been around long enough now and you just have to deal with it and get on with the next race. We are all human beings and we all make mistakes - just hopefully not too many!

# **GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY**

## **Saturday November 24th Haydock**

For once all those that said they would turn up did for an excellent renewal of the Betfair Chase. I didn't really like either Might Bite or Native River in the parade ring. Might Bite was edgy and looked like he would come on for the run while Native River while looking pretty fit was dull in his coat. Both Thistlecrack and Clan Des Obeaux looked in super nick while Bristol De Mai looked as good as ever and the course specialist did the business again.

On to the King George and most of these will probably be there plus maybe Politologue and Waiting Patiently. Might Bite was immediately put in as favourite for that but he will need to show a lot more than he did here.

It's a shame that the Fixed Brush Hurdle has gone as it was something different and in the second year of its replacement only seven turned up. Dual Cheltenham winner First Assignment was niggled early on and this came too quick after his last run but he battled on well for third. Paisley Park needed all of the trip and his reported step up to Grade 1 level next time looks ambitious.

The Paul Nicholls French import Magic Saint was the standout in the parade ring before the two mile six Graduation Chase and after travelling well appeared not to stay. Only four his best form in France was over about two miles. Winner Activial was a dodge when at Harry Fry's so how much he would have found if River Wylde had stood up at the last we will never know.

Vintage Clouds looked like he would come on lots for his run in the three mile handicap chase and after winning he will no doubt be headed to Chepstow and Aintree.

## **Wednesday December 5th Haydock**

Short priced winners in all the conditions events. Newtide in the two seven maiden hurdle found the bends tight enough but just kept galloping and won't be going down in trip. The race was probably nothing special but runner up Modern Warfair will find a race and I liked fourth placed Browndodd who will be better in time,

The Big Bite ran away with the two mile introductory hurdle and he is now four from five under rules and he will be competitive in graded class next time. As the rain got in the ground they were spread all over the straight in the bumper.

Mr Grey Sky took till the last half furlong to get the better of Irish raider Ebony Jewel but looked useful. The runner up will no doubt be in the sales soon while paddock pick Big Nasty stayed on for third and will need a trip over jumps.

### **Saturday December 8th Aintree**

Having finally got some soft ground still only six runners in the novice hurdle. Favourite Eldorado Allen looked a really nice sort but got no further than the first where he was knocked over in what became a bizarre race.

Plenty of reasons for opposing the shorter priced ones in the Becher Chase. Blaklion has still to prove he has got over his hard race in the National Trial and looked in need on the run. Don Poli was even more in need of the outing while Ballyoptic's jumping is always suspect. At the prices the two that appealed were Crosshue Boy at 12/1 and West in the Mill at 16/1 with the latter running out a good winner. He has improved as he has gone up in trip and the win here should get his rating up so that he will make the big race field in April. He will surely not be good enough then while runner up Vieux Lion Rouge who was never competitive here doesn't get the National trip and Ultragold didn't really get home here. Blaklion was never in the race and now has lots to prove.

The Grand Sefton was wide open but Warriors Tale had to be backed after his run in the Old Roan run. He gets an easy three miles but the National on heavy was too far last season and a return for the Topham would seem the wiser option.

### **Friday December 14th Cheltenham**

Elixir De Nutz made all to give away his penalty in the two mile novice hurdle. He will head towards the big novice races in the spring but will probably find some too good for him and he looks more a chaser for next season.

A change in tactics for The Worlds End as he forced the pace in the three one novice chase and his jumping was greatly improved. We won't see much more of him before the spring festivals where maybe his lack of pace will be against him.

Handicap hurdles shouldn't be won as easily as Al Dancer won the two miler and he is going to go up a good stone for this into the mid 140's and be amongst the best British novice hurdlers.

There was money again for Singlefarmpayment in the staying handicap chase and he again snatched defeat from victory in the last fifty yards. He has run nine of his last eleven at this course and surely they should try somewhere else. Winner Cogry also runs a lot here and while his jumping has improved he still nudges a few and he won't be on my short list for Aintree which is his reported target. Theatre Territory was well handicapped from her run in a novice chase but she was again placed while Rock the Kasbah was on one of his non going days.

### **Saturday December 15th Cheltenham**

The Triumph Hurdle Trial winner would usually be amongst the favourites for March but Nelson River was still a 33/1 shot and that looks about right as this did not look a strong race and the runner up Fanfan Du Seuil did not look too keen on the battle.

The two four novice chases also looked moderate for the course but it was hard not to be impressed by winner Drovers Lane who made it three from four over fences. He might not be up to taking on the best but could be back here next autumn for the big handicaps at this trip.

The New One would have seen off the rest of the field in the International Hurdle at his best. He went off to retirement and Brain Power returned from fences to take the race. He wasn't good enough to beat the best when tried in the Championship races two years ago so there is no reason to think he will be good enough now. Last season's Grade 1 novice winners We Have a Dream and especially Summerville Boy were disappointing and the latter's connections will be hoping that some heavy ground like he won on last season will bring an improvement.

### **Saturday December 22nd Haydock**

Cornerstone Lad hasn't won since his good run in the Victor Ludorum but with useful claimer Billy Garritty taking ten pounds off he looked to have every chance in an ordinary looking two mile handicap hurdle. No star he can pay his way when things are in his favour.

When I saw Daklondike win off 114 at Wetherby about a year ago he did not strike me as a 140+ horse but he will be after a battling win in the Tommy Whittle. His one step up in class was poor but he will have to try again. Runner up Ballyarthur didn't get home and his wins have been at two and a half. Testify is now becoming very disappointing.

Better Getalong never looked like winning the two mile four handicap hurdle but ran well enough and a win might come along soon.

### **Sunday December 30th Haydock**

Cloudy Glen had the conditionals two three handicap hurdle won leaving the back straight and the winning margin could have been much bigger. He looked far from straightforward last season but is going to be well above his present 115 mark by the end of the season. His trainer Venetia Williams doubled up with Didero Vallis in the two four handicap chase and there is every chance he too will follow up.

Mr Grey Sky defied his penalty in the bumper and again looked a stayer who will need much further than two miles over hurdles.

### **Tuesday January 1st Cheltenham**

Going up to two and a half miles certainly suited Jarveys Plate as he ran away with the listed novice hurdle. It probably looked better than it was as the odds on runner up I Can't Explain never travelled and third home Anemoi didn't appear to stay the trip. The latter is a really decent looking sort who will be better in another years' time.

Beware the Bear made all under twelve stone one in the three two handicap chase and will be heading for Aintree. His form is in and out and he tends to launch himself at his fences but he may do better than the same owners Big Brown Bear did thirty odd years ago.

The Grade 2 Dipper Novice Chase had four really promising runners and all had turns being favourite. On The Blind Side ran like he had never seen a fence before and was very disappointing while Black Op hit half the fences (he didn't jump hurdles very well) and did well to stay close to the front two. Defi Du Seuil jumped better as the race went on without really convincing me he is a natural chaser and after going on before the last he was worn down again by Lostintranslation who had made most. The winner will stay three miles and be a contender in the festival Grade 1's.

With the stable in top form Aso was simply too good for the opposition in the two four handicap chase. He will be back into Graded company and may well be placed again but will struggle against the very best around.

The course and distance looked ideal for Wholestone in the Relkeel Hurdle but he was well seen off by Midnight Shadow. Going up to two and a half has suited him and he will be worth a try at three miles with the betting for the stayers hurdle full of horses that have better alternatives. Another stayers hurdle candidate emerged from the three mile handicap hurdle in Aux Ptits Soins but his history is full of soundness problems so him turning up can certainly not be guaranteed.

### **Saturday 12th January Warwick**

It was hard to see Beakstown winning the Grade 2 Leamington Novice Hurdle on the form of his previous run at Newcastle but he was an impressive individual in the parade ring being a big chasing type. Just behind the leader before going on three out he was never really challenged after. Probably not the sort for Cheltenham but should have a good future. The next three home Stoney Mountain, Finawn Bawn, and Rockpoint would probably be more suited by three miles with the latter already a winner at that trip.

The Classic Chase has supplied the winner and the first British finisher for the Grand National in the last two years but the novice Impulsive Star would be unlikely to make the cut at Aintree even if he was aimed for the race. Runner up Callet Mad evidently will head to Aintree. He had looked like he didn't get the four miles at Kelso when he appeared to have the beating of Harry the Viking until after the last but another weak finish here having come to take it up two out didn't look good. None of the other Aintree candidates showed any great promise.

The listed staying novice chase had four decent contenders with Rockys Treasure looking a vulnerable favourite with his wins coming against mainly modest sorts. OK Corral on trial for the four miler at Cheltenham took the race well and will be a leading contender there. Runner up Secret Investor ran well but will be more of a handicapper for the spring. White Moon upped in trip by a mile made mistakes and after looking very promising he is becoming disappointing but we have seen Tizzard horses suddenly come good in the spring before.

The Pertemps qualifier was not run at a fast pace and winner Keeper Hill was always prominent. Third home First Assignment ran a decent trial for the final when he will be on my short list. I fancied Lungarno Palace but he was held up in the last two for most of the race and never had a chance from there. The trainer's partner and assistant Sally Randell seemed to think the same as she discussed the race on the phone (very loudly) presumably with trainer Fergal O'Brien.

## Saturday January 19th Haydock

The New One turned up as usual for the Champion Hurdle Trial but only to parade. Its twenty five years since Flakey Dove went on to win at Cheltenham and that record is not going to improve this year. Global Citizen pulled his way to the front after the second flight after an early crawl and after Silver Streak made a mistake three out he was never challenged. There aren't too many you could fancy in the Champion Hurdle and Global Citizen's 33/1 looks about right. Silver Streak was going well enough until his mistake and kept on well and he is probably better suited with a stronger gallop.

The Grade 2 Supreme Trail had some decent looking sorts in it and Mister Fisher came by long-time leader Bright Forecast at the second last to take it. He didn't pull away like you would like to see if he was anything special but at the moment there are not any outstanding two mile novices around. Bright Forecast kept on well once headed and while he doesn't look a graded hurdler he should have a future.

Wakanda has been a super horse over the years and has done me some good turns. He usually needs a couple of runs to get going in a season and took advantage of others making mistakes to take the Peter Marsh and take his winnings to nearly £300K. A rise into the 150's would stop him but the Smiths look after him well and you could see him winning again round this time next year. The next three home Robinsfirth, Ballydine, and Ballyarthur all made mistakes in the straight and are all weighted to win a similar race (the latter at a shorter trip) if things go their way. National winner One For Arthur looked less fit than at Aintree a month ago and a mistake at the first was followed by many more and even a return to Aintree would be a long shot on this run.

The Grade 2 Novice Chase over two and a half probably took little winning with two of the five breaking blood vessels and favourite Jerrysback making lots of minor mistakes. Saying that winner Castafiore jumped well and that will hold her in good stead but if the handicapper takes this literally she will struggle.

I fancy Highland Hunter third in the three mile handicap hurdle will be better than a 128 performer in time.

## Saturday January 26th Cheltenham

Festival trials day and the obvious one to go on and win at the festival is Paisley Park who routed his rivals in the Cleeve Hurdle. He has improved no end from his Haydock win in November and is certainly the right favourite with doubts about a lot of the others priced up in the ante post markets. Black Op back over hurdles ran a decent enough race but again made an odd mistake and it is difficult to know where they go with him. Aux Petit Soins never looked like getting involved in the finish while Midnight Shadow showed he doesn't get the trip.

The other possible festival winner from today is Fakir D'oudairies who had the Triumph Hurdle trial won well before the straight. You would imagine he came here because trainer Joseph O'Brien has ones he thinks are better for the Grade 1 at the Dublin Festival but they now have to prove it. This was easily the best form for the juveniles in Britain this season so the Triumph looks one race for the Irish unless there is an unraced one waiting in the wings.

I had only two possible winners of the two mile four novice handicap chase in Kildisart and Highway One O One with preference given to the latter as he looked over priced at 9/1. He ran a super race making it until the last when Kildisart went by. The winner is not one to catch the eye in the paddock as he is a round bellied animal. He is an improver but his rating will probably be raised above the ceiling of the novice handicap at the festival. Highway One O One jumps so well he will find races while third home Spiritofthegames who I was surprised to see start favourite will be better over three miles.

The open handicap over the same distance produced a super display of jumping from Siruh Du Lac who disputed the lead all the way before going about a neck down on the run in and then battling back close home for my winner on the day. He has come up from a rating of 112 and will be up to 140 after this. I thought he looked a natural for the Topham but his trainer is evidently not enthusiastic this year as he is only six. Runner up Janika did nothing wrong under top weight but he is going to go up again for getting beaten.

The Grade 2 novice hurdle over two mile four was the least satisfactory race of the day with Brewin'Upastorm falling at the last when just in front of Birchdale. I fancy he would have held on but we will never know. Brewin'Upastorm was beaten by The Champ at Newbury so I doubt if either of these will be winning the Ballymore. Eventual second Buster Valentine was outpaced but stayed on. He will no doubt be brought along slowly by Ruth Jefferson to be a staying novice chaser next season. She has had a good first full season and the horses that departed the yard over the summer have shown nothing in their new trainers. I had doubts about the form of Jarveys Plate's win on New Year's Day but even so he was poor today.

An amazing run from Benny's Bridge in the two mile handicap hurdle coming from last and still many lengths behind turning in to win very cosily. It probably wasn't a great race but he was value for more than the bare winning distance.

That leaves the Cotswold Chase which as a Gold Cup trial has an appalling record but produced another super race. Frodon would probably be the horse of the season so far and again made all but this form was below his best at two and a half and I think his chances in the Gold Cup are slight. Most of his sire Nickname's progeny are best at shorter trips but Yala Enki has proved he can get stayers. Elegant Escape found this trip too short and the pace put his jumping under pressure and it will be faster come March. Terrefort appeared to run his race and was just not good enough while Minella Rocco showed little. Valtor so impressive at Ascot never travelled or jumped and it could be the improvement he found there was through going right handed.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW – THE GREAT CHARACTERS?

By HAROLD HEYS

Where have all the racecourse characters gone? Especially the tipsters and the wide-boys and the find-the-lady gangs and the elderly gents who forecast the end of the world to sinners such as me and you?

These days what passes for a bit of colour on a Saturday afternoon are half a dozen groups of bladdered youngsters on a last thrash before one of them ties the knot. And the young lads are nearly as bad.

By the fourth race most of 'em are too far gone to know or even care how they are going to get home by the time dark clouds begin to scurry across a damp sky and hypothermia becomes something of a problem. It was all so different in the old days "when ah were a lad," as the saying goes.

I haven't seen the old boy in the bowler hat on the road into Aintree for years. We always enjoyed a good shout over the heads of the bustling crowds. "Here he is," he'd shout as he shoved his "The World Will End Tomorrow!" board in my face. "Another sinner looking for the light!"

I used to tell him: "Not me pal. I'm just looking for a couple of winners." And then I'd wind him up about his message of doom. "Going to Chester?" I'd ask him. "Yes, I'll be there looking to point sinners like you towards salvation."

"Not if the world ends tomorrow, you won't," and so it went on.

I saw him on Newmarket High Street a few years ago. Nah, then, I thought and braced myself to have a go. In seconds, my wife had taken me by the arm, swung me round and we were several yards past him and in the front door of Woolworth's store. "I just felt you readying yourself for action," she told me as she dragged me into the shop. That poor chap."

The find-the-lady fleecers and the catch-the-monkey con men are long gone but as a youngster I used to enjoy their antics and marvel at their timing, alertness, patter and skill. Occasionally – very occasionally, and only if I'd had a winner or two – I'd lose a quid, just on the off chance that I could outwit them in the darkening coach parks. Ah, the folly of youth!

It's the tipsters I really miss. First one I came across was Mae Marsh who covered the cheap ring at Manchester in the late 50s. "Get yer Mae Marsh card," she'd shout over the beer fumes and the fag smoke and the rustling of Sporting Chrons. She looked like my old Gran and I bought a tip off her now and again. Of course, I never bothered to look at what she was tipping.

I bought another tip in the summer of '58 at Ripon. Dunno why, perhaps the bloke had a good line in patter. He tipped Kandy Sugar in the big sprint, the Great St Wilfred. I didn't fancy it off top weight and jumped on a springer. The tip scooted at 11/2.

A month later I was at Doncaster to see my first Classic, Alcide racing past me on the rails of the cheap ring and going clear for an impressive win in the Leger.

A little earlier, I had followed the noise and found that wonderful character Ras, Prince Monolulu in the middle of a laughing crowd regaling them with some of his daft stories and patter. Of course, I bought a tip off the great man – 3s 6d rings a bell. It didn't win, but so what. His gracious "Thank-you" made my day.

I had just left Darwen Grammar School and was about to start work as a junior reporter on the Blackburn evening newspaper. My ambition was to become a racing correspondent and I thought, as I stood, mesmerised at Monolulu's amusing patter and his outfit of red, silver, blue, white and gold silk pyjamas topped by a headdress of more colourful plumes, that one day I would write a piece about him.

It will have taken me just over 60 years, but I *will* finally get round to doing just that for the next edition of Racin' in a few weeks' time. Never mind all the wild stories about him – I'll tell you the real story of "Peter Mackay": Tipster, snake-oil salesman, market trader, police court regular, film extra ...

And one of the last great characters to grace the Sport of Kings.

## STABLE VISIT TO OLIVER GREENALL ON SATURDAY MARCH 23RD, 2019

We are very pleased to announce that the club has its first stable visit of the year on Saturday 23rd March 2019.

The arrival time will be fixed nearer to the date but we expect this to be mid-morning so that members can also attend racing at nearby Bangor On Dee in the afternoon.

If anyone is actively looking for an ownership opportunity this year, Oliver runs his own 'racing club' which costs £150+ vat (monthly) to join. The yard has both flat and jumps horses in training.

As usual we shall be collecting donations of £5 per adult (on the day) to pass onto the stable staff fund.

To ensure that we are not over-booked please reserve places with Dave Bates. This can be done by phone on 01925 574140 or via e mail to [bates270@btinternet.com](mailto:bates270@btinternet.com)





# RACING IN THE UAE BY Tommy Buckley of @WeLoveBettingUK

I'm again going to focus on Meydan and in this piece I'm looking at one of the Dubai World Cup races in particular, The Golden Shaheen, with the main focus on main contender and likely favourite/winner ROY H, hope you like it.

## Dubai World Cup Ante-post Focus - Roy H primed for Golden Shaheen glory

As I write this there are still over 2 months of fascinating, quality action to come from the delights of the dirt & turf tracks at Meydan with the culmination of course Dubai World Cup day on Saturday March 30th.

The very best horses, jockeys & trainers from around the world will be doing battle on Dubai World Cup day in 9 high class races with upwards of \$30 million of prize money on offer.

In amongst that high class 9 race card is the Group 1 **Golden Shaheen worth \$2 million+**, a 6 furlong contest held on the Meydan dirt track and it's a race that has produced many fascinating finishes and stories in recent years.

### **Golden Shaheen - results last 5 years:-**

**2014 Result:-1st = STERLING CITY at 9/4f**, 2nd = Rich Tapestry at 7/2, 3rd = United Color at 16/1

**2015 Result: - 1st = SECRET CIRCLE at 10/3**, 2nd = Super Jockey 20/1, 3rd = Rich Tapestry 5/1

**2016 Result: - 1st = MUARRAB at 6/1**, 2nd = X Y Jet at 7/4f, 3rd = Moraawij at 50/1

**2017 result: - 1st = MIND YOUR BISCUITS at 9/2jf**, 2nd COMICAS at 50/1, 3rd Moraawij at 8/1

**2018 result :- 1st = MIND YOUR BISCUITS at 6/1**, 2nd X Y JET at 4/1, 3rd = ROY H at 4/7f

Last year's renewal of the Golden Shaheen was won by the amazing MIND YOUR BISCUITS who produced the most remarkable finish to literally come from nowhere to storm home and take the honours for the 2nd year running.

To win it two years running was truly remarkable but as the results show the Golden Shaheen is a race where horses can return to produce big races, RICH TAPESTRY was placed in 2014 & 2015, MORAAWIJ was placed in 2016 & 2017, X Y JET was placed in 2016 & 2018, he'll clearly be an interesting each way option if he lines up again this year.

The results from last year show that the American superstar, Peter Miller trained **ROY H** was sent off a seriously well backed 4/7f but was only able to finish 3rd on the day.

For many, especially those that don't follow or understand Meydan, then seeing a horse beaten as a 4/7f will put them off for good but not me and **ROY H** has most definitely shown since then why he totally deserves to be the short priced, standout candidate for the 2019 Golden Shaheen.

As I write this **ROY H** is around 6/4f in the ante-post markets for the Golden Shaheen in 2 months' time and it's easy to see why based on his fantastic win at the Breeders Cup back in November when he dominated a high class field and then again just 2 weeks ago at Santa Anita when he absolutely cruised to victory.

Jockey Paco Lopez quoted this after the Santa Anita race "He loves to run, and I had a whole lotta horse the whole way. He definitely ran as good today as he did in the Breeders Cup. He was just incredible. He's a bullet that horse, he was flying today."

Connections, indeed everybody at the track that day, were blown away by **ROY H** and afterwards trainer Peter Miller did declare the Dubai Carnival was again the plan and that they'd hopefully get it right this time.

I'd say if **ROY H** turns up in that form then I think they will most definitely get it right and will secure Golden Shaheen glory, the general 6/4 on offer now could actually look massive come the big day in March.

# Go Pointing with Rory Alkin

Point to pointing has enjoyed an excellent start to the season. The mild weather and relatively dry ground conditions have resulted in decent fields, and only one lost Hunter Chase, due to frost. The season becomes much more active from February onwards, and there are plenty of races to look forward to including the Cheltenham Foxhunters.

I'm featuring below some horses that I'm looking forward to following and which should prove profitable throughout the season. The first is the Phil Rowley trained **Hazel Hill**, who has been a prolific winner for connections, since coming to the UK. The eleven-year-old has won eleven point to points, and three hunter chases over the past four years, losing only once in that time. His recent run in a hunter chase at Warwick was truly spectacular, going clear in the straight to win by eleven lengths from a competitive field. This performance has resulted in his price tumbling to second or third favourite for the Cheltenham Foxhunters, the race after the Gold Cup.

Another horse hoping to line up in the same race is **Haymount**, trained by Tom Ellis, who acquired the ten-year-old privately from the Willie Mullins stable in the autumn. The horse who came third in a handicap chase at Galway last August has proven festival form at Cheltenham, where he was a staying on three and three-quarter length third to Tiger Roll in the National Hunt Chase over four miles, in 2017. The horse easily won a Ladies Open at Sheriff Hutton in January, with the trainer's wife champion point to point rider Gina Andrews riding. Unfortunately, Gina broke a collar bone at Larkhill last Saturday and her brother Jack is likely to ride the gelding in a Men's Open over the next few weeks, in an attempt to get the horse qualified for Cheltenham. Either way, Haymount is likely to win his fair share of races.

Two up and coming young horses to follow for the season are the six-year-olds **Salvatore** and **Rob The Getaway**. They provided the best race of the day in the Intermediate at Thorpe Lodge last Sunday when Salvatore got the upper hand at the second last to take the spoils, in the fastest time of the day. The Phil Rowley trained Salvatore progressed through the ranks to win a Maiden, Members and Restricted last season and will win more points and novice hunter chases during the season.

Rob The Getaway was acquired by Sheila Crow from Irish trainer Shark Hanlon in 2017 and had failed to complete the course before he left Ireland. Last season he won a Maiden convincingly at Tabley, before winning a point to point bumper at Aintree. He then was impressive in his seasonal debut, when he won a Restricted at Sheriff Hutton, in the fastest time of the day. While he suffered defeat at the hands of Salvatore, the horse still has outstanding potential.

A young horse that is worth following is **Coniston Spa**, a four-year-old who made his debut at Sheriff Hutton in the young horse Maiden race. The Stephanie Easterby trained charge had a very quiet introduction in the fifteen runner contest and was held up at the back of the field on the first circuit. However, he made up significant ground on the second circuit to finish a never nearer thirty-one length third to Eden Collonges. It's likely there will be plenty of opportunities for him shortly.

For anybody interested in finding out more about the sport on a regular basis, there is a weekly newsletter called Go Pointing which is sent to subscribers by email. For more information, go to [www.pointtopoint.co.uk](http://www.pointtopoint.co.uk).

Some of the better meetings over the next couple of months in the North of England are at Bangor-on-Dee on 17<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March; the Brocklesby at Brocklesby Park on 16<sup>th</sup> February; The West of Yore at Askham Bryan College (near York) on 24<sup>th</sup> February; and the Middleton at Sheriff Hutton on 31<sup>st</sup> March.



# Overbury Stud — Producing Champion Stock From Champion Sires (Part 1) By Kate Austin

Overbury Stud is famed, rightly, for the quality of its stallions. Based in the undulating Tewkesbury countryside, its impressive Sire roster is led by the venerable and mighty Kayf Tara. As the National Hunt & Sales seasons approach, I asked Simon Sweeting, Manager of Overbury Stud, to take us behind the scenes to see why Overbury is so special. Most of what you read here are his words, for which - many thanks.

Shortly before World War 2, the Holland Martin family, (who have owned the Overbury Estate since 1723), established Overbury Stud. Benefitting from free-draining sandy soil and the mild climate, so important to this fruit-growing area of the Vale of Evesham, not least because of the quality of its grazing!

It didn't take long before Overbury encountered success: the Coventry Stakes of 1952 was won by the Overbury-bred Whistler, who went on to be a Champion sire of two-year-olds.

Every quality stud needs a quality foundation mare. Whistler was a son of Farthing Damages, whose Overbury-bred descendants also included Cork & Orrery and Prix Maurice de Geest winner College Chapel. He became Europe's leading first season sire; his dam the speedy King George V Stakes winner Scarcely Blessed. His grandam, the exceptional Parsimony, who won the July Cup and the Cork & Orrery.

Overbury's reputation was growing through 'flagship' racehorses -and not just in Great Britain. Globetrotting German-trained multiple G1 winner Caitano and the Nunthorpe and Prix de l'Abbaye winner Tower Walk (2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2,000 Guineas) were international top-class racehorses bred at Overbury Stud. Overbury was also becoming famous for producing big-priced commercial yearlings at the Houghton Sales of the 1970s & '80s - enhancing its go-to reputation for breeders; bloodstock agents & pinhookers.

Ironically, Overbury's greatest ever son, unusually, was sold for the relatively modest sum of 27,000 Gns. Grundy! - Horse of the Year in 1975 and winner of the Derby (by 3 lengths) and the Dewhurst (by 6 lengths). Who can forget that legendary King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes, when he defeated Bustino in course record time? Many a poll has cited that epic duel as THE greatest finish ever - me included!

Simon Sweeting leased the stud in 2000. He started the 2001 covering season with Kayf Tara as Overbury's sole stallion. In 2002 Bertolini joined the roster, going on to be leading European 1st season Sire. Today Overbury has 6 stallions, a mixture between flat: Ardad; Cityscape; Dunaden; and national hunt: Kayf Tara; Schiaparelli & exciting newbie, Jack Hobbs!

Also, Overbury has its own broodmares, some owned wholly, some in partnership. There are 30 in all, living either at Overbury or with partner owners. Overbury tries to sell all the offspring as foals, needing the space for visiting mares during the following breeding season. It's a policy which works well & Simon intends to continue that pattern.

**KAYF TARA:** When Kayf Tara was racing, his stable companions at Godolphin included Swain, Daylami and Singspiel – all G1 mile and a half horses. There was clearly little point in running them all against each other if one of the group could be winning other G1 races. Simon Crisford said that Kayf Tara wasn't a stayer, he was really a 1 ½ miler but he had the guts to get home in the Cup races, so that's where he raced!

As a stallion he seems to successfully transmit this braveness and desire to win - such an important attribute for any racehorse. Also, he comes from one of the best families in the stud book (he's a half-brother to Zee Zee Top & full brother to Opera House). Reprocolour, his dam, is half-sister to Cezane & Bella Colora His stock don't have a recognisable 'look', which the offspring of some stallions have. However, they all share a noticeably athletic walk, so whilst you might not pick out a Kayf Tara youngster when standing in a paddock, they are easy to pick out when they are moving! Broadwell Stud, Ascot, have just sold a colt foal ex Leçon Benifique - a stunner, standing or walking! It made €80,000 in the recent Tatts Ireland foal sale. A massive result for a stud with 4 broodmares.

At 24 years young, this NINE times NH Champion Sire still covers quality mares. His offspring make big money at the sales. Indeed four out of the top ten foals at 2017 Tatts Ireland Sales were by this Sire of Thistlecrack; Tea For Two & Special Tiara.



**JACK HOBBS** has certainly scored with broodmare owners -yours truly included! Here's what Simon has to say about this new kid on the "mounting block!" Jack Hobbs has a very similar racing profile to Presenting and is as high class a racehorse as has retired straight to the NH ranks for as long as I can remember. Halling has already produced successful NH sires in Coastal Path and Norse Dancer & is an outcross for all the Saddlers Wells line mares that are coming through. He also has the WOW factor when you look at him. He is a very imposing horse, as well as being very kind natured so breeders don't take much (any!) persuading to use him when they have seen him in the flesh.

The proof of course will be when his first crop of foals are on the ground and then when they start racing, but with 135 mares in foal and over 30 of them being elite mares, he has every chance of success as a stallion."

I suspect that 'Jack' will be used by many broodmare owners to upgrade quality in their foals. I'm thrilled to say that our broodmare Centoria is in foal to this magnificent son of Halling. And how marvellous that he's remained here to enhance the quality of British NH breeding.



# 'SOUNDS LIKE' FESTIVE QUIZ 2018 - ANSWERS

Here are the scores of the best entries received, all of which will win a book prize:

**Mike Campbell 18/20; Andy White 16/20; Harold Heys 13/20.**

## TRAINERS

This trainer sounds like a coastal defence measure. (C Wall). This trainer sounds like a dish often served on January 25<sup>th</sup>. (Burns night – W Haggas). This trainer sounds like he owns a supermarket chain. (H Morrison). This Irish trainer sounds like he may have a round head. (G Cromwell). This Irish trainer sounds like a Scottish bottle of stout. (A McGuinness). This trainer sounds like he trains from stables in Qahog. (Adam West – also mayor of Qahog in 'Family Guy!'). This trainer sounds like he used to train from a town in Durham but has since left there. (R Whittaker – Roger Whittaker song). This trainer sounds like she trains from a yard in Jordan. (Katy Price). This trainer sounds like she may be handy with a vacuum cleaner! (C Dyson). This trainer sounds like he may like eating strufoli. (A Honeyball- Italian dish)

## JOCKEYS

This jockey sounds like a make of car in the USA. (W Buick). This jockey sounds like an iconic British motorbike. (F Norton). This jockey sounds like he may have had one night in the tropics. (D Costello – name of an Abbot & Costello film). This jockey sounds like she should like spicy food. (N Currie). This jockey sounds like he could carry on in the home straight. (S James – Sid James was in most Carry On films). This jockey sounds like he could become the Rolls Royce of flat jockeys. (Harry Bentley). 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! (D N Russell – DNR stands for do not resuscitate!). This jockey sounds like he may wear ermine clothing whilst watching Coronation Street. (R Kingscote). This jumps jockey sound like he may be a cockney friend of Kris Kringle. (Rex Dingle). This jump jockey sounds like a former president of the U.S.A. (Jack Kennedy)

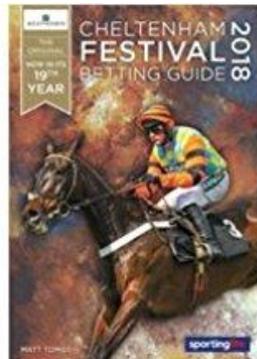
# CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL ANNUALS 2019

The club will again be ordering both Racing Post & Weatherbys guides to the Cheltenham Festival.

These will cost £7 (if collected at the Cheltenham Preview Night) or £8.50 (including p&p) if posted out. Photos below are of the 2018 guides, for illustrative purposes only.

These prices are well below the retail selling prices and to secure your copies please order as soon as possible as we shall only have a limited supply available.

Orders can be paid for by direct bank transfer (e mail [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com) for details) or by post to N&M Racing Club, 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB. If sending cheques can these still be made payable to Northern Racing Club or NRC.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

Thanks to all who turned out for this year's AGM – never easy in the middle of winter! The main points from the AGM are summarised below:

The club's change of name to North & Midlands Racing Club on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 was ratified. The club's website, Facebook & Twitter pages now reflect this change. However, in the short term we will not change the website domain name although will look into a new domain name later this year. As such [www.northernracingclub.com](http://www.northernracingclub.com) will still work! We are still using up the old supply of business cards in the name of Northern Racing Club and the event banner at Haydock still shows the old name! For those sending payments to the club as cheques we are asking that they still be made out to Northern Racing Club or NRC. Paperwork to change the bank account name has been sent in but confirmation that the change has been effected is currently awaited.

The club Treasurer confirmed that we made a surplus of £240 last year and as we do not aim to make a surplus this good news has been used to reduce all postal memberships to £10pa (previously £12 joint memberships) and make online memberships free (but without the old e-voucher scheme). As printing/postage costs rise in the future the club may ask those who still prefer the printed magazine to pay a slightly higher subscription.

Whilst the new membership arrangements only came into force on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, it has already led to a 33% rise in memberships. Our aim is to double memberships by the end of 2019 so please share the good news with all your racing friends!

The club is actively seeking regional representatives in the following areas to help the committee try and expand our activities in all areas we cover – Cumbria, North East & Midlands. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Phil Evans (see committee panel) to discuss what it may entail.

The events already in hand for 2019 are the Cheltenham Preview and the Oliver Greenall stable visit, both in March and fuller details are in this edition of Racin' magazine.

After that we are planning an Aintree Festival Preview, a Royal Ascot Preview and an evening with a BHA Handicapper. Later in the year we hope to arrange a joint stable visit with Hereford racecourse on Tuesday Oct 12<sup>th</sup>, albeit this is still in the early stages of planning. As always details of these events will be communicated by way of the club website, Facebook, Twitter and of course in Racin' magazine!

The three usual competitions will continue in 2019, namely Alex Bird Challenge, Heritage Handicaps Competition, Saturday Naps Challenge. Also, we shall also arrange a Grand National sweepstake again this year.

The club is aware that there are more events held in the North West still as that remains where our core membership lives and our committee members are from this area. We remain committed to expanding our activities in other parts of the country that we cover. In 2018 we held stable visits jointly with members at Carlisle and Hexham and plans are already in place to do something similar with Hereford in the autumn. We do of course also link up with Wales Racing Club for stable visits in the South West & South Wales.

Whilst many members are happy being members and getting the magazine and using the website data etc. we would like to consider other events in Cumbria, the North East and the Midlands. To help the club look at what other events we could arrange we would really like to appoint a Regional Representative in these three regions. If you would like to get involved in this way please contact Phil Evans (see committee panel) to discuss further.

The 2018/19 committee was re-elected 'en bloc' as there were no new volunteers to join the committee this year. The roles vary from being quite 'hands on' to being more of an occasional nature. On behalf of all members I would like to thank the committee for all their contributions in the last 12 months. Without this 'team' we couldn't function as we do at present! A big thank you also to all of our regular contributors whose articles make our magazine what it is. Thanks to Gordon, Harold, Rory and more recently Tommy. Running competitions is also a big task so again we are grateful to John, Helen & Phil for taking on these roles in 2019.

## TANT PIS REMEMBERED AT HEXHAM by Phil Evans

Whilst many horses have had races named after them they are usually the unforgettable champions such as Arkle, Red Rum or Desert Orchid. One horse I followed in my youth was called Tant Pis (French for never mind) and was a great hunter chaser in the North East as well as running in a Grand National. Not the sort that usually gets a race name so why is the horse still remembered 50 years later?

Chris Pitt was also a big fan of the horse and he wrote the following piece for Jockeypedia, where you will find the full story under the name of John Alder: <https://sites.google.com/site/jockeypedia/>

Tant Pis had been discovered at the back of a hen house in South Shields. John's mother bought him for 150 guineas as a twenty-first birthday present for her daughter-in-law. He was small and looked like a ladies' horse, so he was bought as a hunter. He turned out to be somewhat better than a ladies' hunter.

In 1962 and ridden by John, Tant Pis opened his account in point-to-points by winning the Morpeth Hunt race, followed by the Haydon Adjacent. Although unplaced in the Heart of All England on his rules debut, he managed to finish second in Hexham's Adam Scott Memorial Cup Hunters' Chase.

Tant Pis was 14 years old but still spritely and competitive. Tragically, five months after that Hexham victory, on October 22, 1969, ridden that day by Pat Buckley, he lost his life in a match race with Red Alligator at Newcastle. It was firm ground and they'd watered the take-offs and landings of the fences. Tant Pis slipped as he took off, lost his hind legs and broke his femur on the guard rail. He is commemorated annually at Hexham by the Tant Pis Handicap Chase.



## N & M RACING CLUB COMMITTEE/OFFICIALS 2019/20

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*Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March.*

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