



NMRC WEBSITES

NEW PASSWORD

A little later than usual this year we shall be changing the password on the members only website pages as follows:

HUGHES2020

In between club magazines please stay in touch via the club Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/northernrc/>

Also, we would love more members to follow our new UK twitter page @nmrc1980 with the @NorthRacingClub covering UAE racing mainly.

COME ZOOM WITH US THIS AUTUMN!

With the Goodwood trial for racing crowds cancelled on 1st August it is looking increasingly difficult to see when we may next be able to hold a club event either outdoors or inside at a racing venue.

At least racing is continuing and ITV coverage has been even better this year with Sunday meetings and some Irish racing covered.

We have trialled a zoom meeting already and plan to roll this out for some big race meeting previews this autumn (hopefully York & Doncaster then a Jumps 10 to Follow preview). In addition, we will hold some racing quizzes (linked to Kahoot).

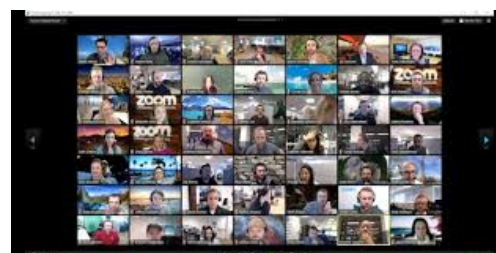
If you have a desktop, laptop, tablet or smart phone you should be able to join in if you download the zoom programme. Initially the sessions will be free although if they continue into next year a small charge may be required.

If you are interested in joining in any of these zoom meetings or quizzes please register your interest via e mail to info@northernracingclub.com

You will then be advised in advance when the zoom sessions are being held and sent an invitation to join (with a link) in which you can either accept or reject.

Details of upcoming sessions will also be listed on the club website, club Facebook and club Twitter pages.

If this method of bringing together members is well supported, we shall be looking to extend into 2021 in addition to any other 'outside' meetings that we may be able to hold.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2** Competition News and Results
- 3** Ripon's Great St Wilfred Handicap by GRIY
- 4/9** Gordon Armistead's Racing Diary
- 9/10** Hughes & Johnson renew rivalry by H Heys
- 11-12** Racing Club Syndicates (Part 2) by G Armistead.
- 13** 'Virtual Commentator by Stewart Machin
- 14/16** A Lifetime in Racing by Fred Shawcross
- 15/16** 40 Years On – by Paul Clarkson
- 17** Racing Books Fundraiser for the IJF
- 18** Catterick News
- 18** Committee Details

COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

The latest '59's' winners are as follows:

June 6th - 33 – Bridget Jarvis (Durham)

July 4th – 13 – Richard Claydon (Carlisle)

August 1st – 22 - Paul Lang (Blackburn)

All win the usual £50pm prize. The winning number is determined by the 'bonus ball' drawn in the UK Lottery on the first Saturday of the month.

Thanks to all who continue to support the draw. All numbers are currently allocated.

ALEX BIRD CHALLENGE 2020

Congratulations to **Ken Unsworth** from Liverpool who won the Royal Ascot with runner up **Ted Halewood** who is also from Merseyside.

The second flat round was changed to Glorious Goodwood this year (as no scorers were available in August). A big thank you to **Mark Banks** who stepped in to do the scoring.

Whilst the result is still subject to confirmation **Mike Campbell** from Stockport was first past the post whilst **Jim Aitkenhead** from Chester finished in the runner up spot.

In the seasonal challenge **Ken Unsworth** now leads from **Ted Halewood** with **Jim Aitkenhead** in third spot.

Mike/Mark will advise entrants in due course regarding the final (NH) round this year.

HERITAGE HANDICAPS CHALLENGE 2020

With eight weeks gone in this year's competition the leaders so far are as set out below. Harold looks nailed on for at least one of the prizes!

64.6 Harold Woodward

61.55 Alan Hill

51.2 John Boswell

48 Alan Preston

44.85 Colin Stanton

44.4 Jim Flanagan

44.2 Dave Clutterbuck

40.2 Phil Evans

40.1 Dave Bates

38.4 Steven Purdy

37.9 Harry Sandland

36.8 Ray Squire

In the Exacta/Trifecta league the leaders are as below:

7727.4 Harold Woodward

95.3 Colin Stanton

94.1 Steven Purdy

68.3 Harry Sandland

59.4 Brian James



Great St Wilfrid Handicap, 6f, August

There cannot be many people who have a race named in their honour even though they have been dead for over 1,300 years, but that is the case with St Wilfrid, who is commemorated with Ripon's big sprint handicap every August. St Wilfrid, who was born in 634, was a Northumbrian noble who devoted himself to a religious life after studying on Holy Island, Canterbury, France and finally Rome.

He founded a monastery in Ripon around 660 and became Archbishop of Northumbria in 668 while he travelled the country founding monasteries and spreading the Christian message. It was on his travels that he died in Oundle, Northamptonshire around 710, but he remains closely linked with Ripon and is the city's patron saint. Today, the race in his name is one of the most competitive sprint handicaps in the racing calendar, but it was not always so.

When it was first run in 1839, two years after the current racecourse opened, it was titled the St Wilfrid Gold Cup, a conditions race over two miles. The winner was the five-year-old Fieschi, owned by Mr H. Wormald. Small fields plagued the next three runnings, which included a walk over for Jack Shepherd in 1841 and as a result, the race became a two miles handicap in 1843. The first winner was Hippona, who carried 6st 2lbs. The filly was owned by Mr R. Harrison, who had bred her not too far from Ripon at Studley Park. Hippona was later sold to race in Russia, where she was very successful and went through her career there unbeaten.

After initial success as a handicap, support began to wane again and by 1862, The Field despondently reported: "The Great St Wilfrid Handicap was once the chief attraction of the meeting, but on the present occasion dwindled down to eleven subscribers of which seven were content to stand their ground". In 1865, to try and revive interest, the distance was reduced to 14 furlongs and after three years was reduced again becoming a handicap over a mile and a half in 1868, a move which produced mixed results. After only six horses lined up for the 1878 race, the distance was reduced again to 10 furlongs.

The race did not become a six-furlong sprint until 1956 when it was won by the 7-1 chance Prairie Emblem, trained at Malton by William Dutton for owner Mr F. White and ridden by the previous season's champion apprentice Peter Robinson. One man who did not worry about the distance was the great Northern jockey John Osborne, who rode in his first race at Radcliffe, Lancashire in 1846 at the age of 13 and in his last in 1892 at the age of 59 and who is the last jockey to have ridden a Northern-trained Derby winner at Epsom. Known as 'the Bank of England jockey' because of his reliability and integrity, Osborne loved the Great St Wilfrid Handicap which he first won on Ada Murray in 1849 when he was 16 years old. By the time he was 18, he had completed three wins in a row with Lady Eden (1850) and Mrs Birch (1851), the latter named after the lady who lived at Glasgow House in Middleham.

Surprisingly, he rode only one other winner, Pretty John in 1869, notable for the fact that Osborne walked to the racecourse from his Middleham home – a distance of 21 miles – at a brisk enough pace to lose 5lbs so that he could do the 8st 7lbs on Pretty John. As well as being a top jockey, Osborne also owned and trained horses, at first with his brothers Thomas and William, but latterly on his own account.

He owned four Great St Wilfrid winners, Dart (1866), an unnamed filly who ran as 'sister to Little Agnes' (1868), Confusion (1882) and Languid (1895) all of which he trained with his brothers, while he also trained another unnamed winner, the Memoria filly who won the 1910 race in the colours of Mr W.Cliff. Osborne is credited with being the first man to both ride and train a winner of the Great St Wilfrid although others have achieved the feat including well-known names like Harry Wragg and Doug Smith.

Another to achieve that feat was Bob Colling, who rode Newcourt to win in 1891 and Linny to win for the Osbornes in 1894 and then trained Lovetin, who has the distinction of winning the only wartime running of the race in 1941.

Although seven horses have won back-to-back runnings of the Great St Wilfrid, Desmond (1860-61), Star And Garter (1870-71), Lady Mary (1974-75), Pampas Grass (1886-87), Jacksdale (1920-21), Whitebrigg (1954-55) and Pepper Lane (2011-12), none has managed three in a row. Jackside might have done, but for some reason the 1919 race, the first after a four-year break for the First World War, was run over a mile, an inadequate trip for the horse. So, instead, Jackside ran in and won the 10-furlong Ripon City Welter Handicap earlier in the day, before taking the next two Great St Wilfrids when it was returned to 12 furlongs.

William l'Anson is the most successful trainer in the race with five winners between 1881 and 1902 followed by John Osborne, four winners between 1866 and 1910 and John Drislane, whose four winners came in eight runnings from 1883 to 1890.

Leading the way among current trainers are Michael Easterby and David O'Meara with three winners each. The most successful jockey in the Great St Wilfrid is James Fagan, who rode six winners between 1875 and 1893, followed by John Osborne and Billy Nevett with four each. Tom Bruckshaw and Charles Ringstead both had three winners, the same as Danny Tudhope, the most successful of current jockeys. Alex Greaves, who won on Premier Touch in 1991, is the only female jockey to have won the race.



GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

(FROM BEHIND THE TV SET AT PRESENT)

Followers of horse racing are lucky in that they can for a price watch every race in Britain and Ireland and from many other parts of the world without leaving home. It's not the way I like to follow the sport but needs must. It seemed a very long time after Captain Kangaroo took the bumper at Clonmel on March 24th until there was any sign of a resumption of racing anywhere close by. The French provided the warm up act resuming on May 11th with trainer Francois Nicolle winning nearly every jump race in the first couple of weeks mostly ridden by Angelo Zuliani and plenty of very short priced flat favourites getting turned over. They also managed to overshadow the start of UK racing with their first classics taking place on the same day as the first Newcastle meeting on June 1st. No handicappers allowed in this review of the closed-door season so far.

French Guineas

The French rejigged the season to allow those that wanted one to have a warm up race for their Guineas and in the case of Poulains winner Victor Ludorum he came on massively for his run at Longchamp. The classics were switched at very short notice to Deauville and the straight 1,600 metres and early in the race Michael Barzalona just had to niddle him along to keep in touch but once they reached halfway there was only one

winner as he cruised through. The ten furlongs of the Prix du Jockey Club looks sure to suit and he would appear to have little to beat amongst the locals.

The filly's equivalent looked an under-par renewal but provided a first classic for Marseille trainer Frederic Rossi with Dream and Do just hanging on by nose from maiden winner Speak of the Devil.

Newmarket Guineas Meeting

Ghaiyyath hasn't taken a lot of racing in three seasons so was bound to be fit enough for the Coronation Cup and was not really challenged making all. The time was a new course record but even I run faster with gale force wind behind me. Runner up Anthony Van Dyck hasn't looked like winning since the Derby and Stradivarius was just on a warm up mission so Ghaiyyath will have to do it again to really justify some of the remarks made about him and he also needs to stand training better.

You should never get too excited about two-year olds and Pinatubo has come back to the pack as he never looked to be going like a winner in the 2000 Guineas. It looks like he will get another go to prove himself but I can't believe he wasn't fully tuned up for this. Just where that leaves the form level we will see. Kameko will get the usual analysis of whether he stay as he heads for the Derby and while Kitten's Joy's does stay, they are better up to ten furlongs. Wichita won't be going to Epsom but fourth home Military March ran well for a big step up in class and will stay.

Last season two-year-old fillies looked much of a muchness and the fact with a horse that had been turned over at Down Royal and Salisbury (Millisle) was challenging for favouritism didn't make it look a good renewal of the 1000 Guineas. The eventual favourite Quadrilateral pulled far too hard which left the tough Aiden O'Brien runner Love to come home unchallenged. She was only two from seven as a two-year-old so has certainly come on and looks certain to stay a mile and a half at Epsom probably even better at that trip.

Irish Guineas

The Irish decided to run their 2000 Guineas on a Friday evening for peak time T.V. and they got a really action-packed race and a very good winner in Siskin. At halfway it seemed impossible that Colin Keane would be able to get out from the rail where he had been trapped from the start of the race but half an opening appeared and he made it bigger and after that he accelerated quickly away. He was value for far more than the length and three parts. Best of the half dozen Aidan O'Brien runners was Dundalk maiden winner Vatican City a full brother to five very high-class animals including Gleneagles. He too had trouble in running and while none of those relatives stayed maybe he could end up in a Derby somewhere. Third home Lope Y Fernandez didn't get home while fourth home Armory is another who could find himself in a Derby.

With the favourite Albigna not running a race on the fast ground the Irish 1000 Guineas went to Peaceful who outran her official rating of just a 100 and is going to be a much better three-year-old. As with Love she will stay a mile and a half and if Love goes to Epsom perhaps, she will be kept for the Irish Oaks. Runner up Fancy Blue was unofficially trained by Donnacha O'Brien last season and looks like giving him an official group winner over ten furlongs before long. Third home So Wonderful is still a maiden after multiple group places.

Royal Ascot

I have been away a few times when Royal Ascot has been on and watched the Gold Cup at La Teste last year. I thought the Sky coverage was excellent for the whole meeting with no gimmicks. Using Matt Chapman for the interviews for both Sky and ITV worked well and was better than the usual scrum of journalists.

Two Year Olds

The rush to get two-year olds qualified for Ascot resulted in some impressive performances in the first few days of the season and nearly all of them then ran well below par off the short break. Maybe some will come back after a break. The two that would seem to have the brightest future are Battleground (not put in the race on debut at Naas) and Campanelle who evidently will have a least one more run before going back to the States.

Three-year-old colts

With Lope Y Fernandez seemingly finding this coming too soon after the Irish Guineas and Pierre Lapin running no race Golden Horde was easily best in the Commonwealth Cup and can challenge the older horses at six as there is nothing outstanding. Mums Tipple's win at York last season is beginning to look a totally freak performance.

Monarch of Egypt missed the break in the Jersey and trailed the field at half way but still it the front inside the final furlong before those exertions told and Molatham came back to nab him close home. The runner up has been disappointing and looks a quirky sort so talk of the winner being a Group 1 horse look a bit premature.

The St James Palace was a very unsatisfactory race run at a slow pace. Palace Pier will hopefully take on Siskin at Goodwood in a proper race to see how good he is. Pinatubo turned round the form with Wichita and looked all over the winner before stopping. The assumption is he didn't stay and should go back to seven furlongs. There isn't a Group 1 over that trip for him in Britain and the Prix Jean Prat in France is very much a junior Group 1 race. Anyway, the race didn't do much to boost the Guineas form.

Russian Emperor will surely not be good enough for the Derby after taking the Hampton Court. He looked paceless at Leopardstown and again here. His stable mate Mogul's run in the King Edward was typical of a first time out from the yard in a normal April when not wound up and heading for targets later on. He will come on for this but will need to. Pyledriver won it well and would be shorter for the Derby if he was in a big yard but in all probability won't be good enough even in what looks a moderate year. Present favourite English King is terrible value and the horse he beat at Lingfield Berkshire Rocco was turned over in the Queen Vase by Santiago who must have been well down Ballydoyle's pecking order when racing resumed.

Three-Year-old Fillies.

The fillies races produced a couple of excellent performances with Alpine Star easily taking the Coronation looking like she could stay at least ten furlongs. Quadrilateral again pulled and then hung and I would not be putting too much trust in her in the future.

Frankly Darling pulled too hard in the Ribblesdale yet still had enough in the tank to pull away in the straight. Quite what she beat might be open to question but she will go to Epsom as a worthy challenger to which ever Guineas winner is sent from Ballydoyle.

Older Horses

A Battaash running to form was far too good in the King Stand and while in the Golden Jubilee Hello Youmzain outstayed Sceptical and is a tough sort.

Another tough sort is Circus Maximus who took the Queen Anne by just out battling Terebellum. He will give anything a run at this distance and the three-year olds will know they have had a race come the Sussex Stakes.

Japan's main target is in October and he was well beaten in the Prince of Wales under a strange ride. Lord North is improving rapidly but this might not have been the greatest Group 1. The horse he beat at Haydock Elarqam didn't get home in the Hardwick and with Anthony Van Dyke looking like he got himself in a real mess and not liking the soft ground it was not a good race for the grade

The star of the whole meeting was undoubtedly Stradivarius in the Gold Cup. Without Kew Gardens he may have only second raters to beat but he really put them to the sword. His main rival may well be back for Goodwood but he will need to be at his best to challenge him.

Irish Derby Meeting

For the first time the Irish Derby was run before that at Epsom and was a below par renewal as a consequence with Ballydoyle not surprisingly sending the second string into bat at the Curragh. This season they seem to have even more good horses than ever but whether any are superstars I am not sure even they know. Saratoga looks a really straight forward animal but if I had to guess he will be on the Ascot Gold Cup team next season after going for the Leger this year and they will be disappointed if he is their best colt.

Coolmore bought his pregnant dam at the sales and he was the produce. Connections would not normally have a horse by Authorized who now gets a Derby winner to go with a dual National winner. He has also sired a £4 Million winner in Hartnell and probably didn't deserve to have been exiled to Turkey. Runner up Tiger Moth and third Dawn Patrol came here from the same maiden and have improvement in them but the rest are nowhere near Group 1 class.

Last year's Irish Derby winner Sovereign appeared for the first time since that success in the mile six Vintage Crop Stakes. He was given a ride which was totally the opposite to his Derby victory and as they say was not knocked about in third. Where he will fit in is anybody's guess but maybe in the King George.

Magical returned to action taking the Group 1 Pretty Polly very easily. She is a super mare but has missed out in the top Group 1's but will presumably try again this season. Cayenne Pepper ran a super Irish Oaks trial in second place.

I wasn't going to mention any handicappers but the race of the meeting was the Rockingham Handicap as Strong Johnson, Jungle Jane, and Urban Beat slugged it out head to head for the whole five furlongs and a triple dead heat would have been a fair result.

It was perhaps fortunate that there was no crowd at the Curragh as the howling from the wind blowing through the new stand was loud and clear on the T V coverage and it seems the architect and builders will be back in over the summer.

Double Derby and Oaks Weekend

I should have been at a Derby this weekend- the Polish version at Sluzewiec racecourse in Warsaw. Not to be of course and I doubt that a visit to the Austrian version in September has much chance either.

The 1000 Guineas form has taken plenty of knocks but Love won well there and going up in trip suited her as she strolled home in the Oaks with the winning margin of nine lengths in no way flattering her. Second favourite Frankly Darling wouldn't have won under any circumstances but the tactics were very strange. She had showed she stayed the trip but was ridden well off the pace set by her pacemaker and was never really a factor till the race was over. After the first three the rest are probably only listed class.

It is important for the connections to get the Group 1 wins into the colts and with Magical also in the mix it is impossible to know where Love will head next.

I couldn't see the first four in the betting for the Derby being anything like good enough in a normal year. Much was made of the easy lead given to Serpentine but the pack didn't even get to Khalifa Sat or the maiden Amhran Na Bhfiann so I am not having any hard look stories for the fancied runners. Serpentine has improved rapidly from his first run of the season when only fifth in a maiden and he was a worthy winner on the day. I find the runner up performance harder to explain as his Goodwood win really looked nothing special so it will be interesting to see how he gets on later in the season. Amhran Na Bhfiann came from what must be the best maiden in quite a while which supplied all the placed horses in the Irish Derby and perhaps, he shouldn't have been a 66/1 shot. Kameko didn't stay and neither did Vatican City. Russian Emperor probably finished where he should have and it is hard to know what of make of Mogul. English King had no chance after five yards when he hung left out of the stalls (some would say he had no chance once the draw had been made) and he will probably be shorter in the betting next time he runs than he should be. While Frankie Dettori rides Ascot far better than any other jockey he hardly has Lester's record at Epsom and replacing a jockey riding as well as anyone since the restart seemed strange when the world's top stable were happy to let their fifth string jockey ride and prove good enough to win.

One other note on the race was that for all their hundreds of horses in training the Maktoums could not muster one horse good enough to take its chance in either classic.

Running the Derby and Oaks on the same day may have been forced this year but seems to make sense and dropping the meeting to just one day would also probably be a good idea.

The French also doubled up this year with the Jockey Club and Prix Diane. Victor Ludorum was the short-priced favourite even from a poor draw and Michael Barzalona seemed to have overcome that and a slow start as he swept around the field. His run however just petered out and surprisingly after his easy Deauville win, he looked a patent non stayer. The horse he beat there The Summit finished second but both failed to hold the John Gosden runner Mishriff. It didn't look anything special and the O'Brien runner Order of Australia was beaten less here than he was at the Curragh if you want to take a blinkered maiden as a guide.

The Diane was run at a moderate pace and the first two Fancy Blue and Alpine Star had those positions throughout. I fancy third home Peaceful should really have won as she had a perfect position from the break but Seamie Heffernan pulled her back off the first two and managed to get himself boxed just before the straight. A classic winner with only his fourth official win for Donnacha O'Brien so he must have been watching his dad as closely as Joseph did. Raabihah was easily best of the French in fourth and Speak of the Devil did little to boost the form of the Pouliches.

We also had the Eclipse on the Sunday with the return of Enable and she ran a fine race with John Gosden telling everyone beforehand she would come on for the run. It still looked like he has the heart for it. Ghaiyyath proved he could follow up after only a month since the Coronation and it would be interesting if he and Serpentine went head to head in the King George. Ghaiyyath is the one bright spark for Godolphin and they will be hoping some of the two-year olds show something.

Rest of July

The Prix Jean Prat turned out to be the soft Group 1 for Pinatubo with he and the runner up Lope Y Fernandez bringing placed Guineas form and both running to about the level of those places. Maybe they will call it a day.

The decision not to chuck Highest Ground into the Derby proved wise as he was turned over in the rearranged Dante. He may be better later on but neither he nor winner Thunderous are yelling out they are Group 1 class.

I used to go down for the Newmarket July meeting many moon ago when the Falmouth Stakes or Child Stakes as it was then was won by Al Bahathri, Sonic Lady and Chimes of Freedom. I don't think this year's winner Nazeef is up their class honest sort that she is. In the other Group 1 of the meeting Golden Horde was very short taking on his elders but ran a fine race. It was interesting to see after the Golden Jubilee Frankie Dettori on Sceptical letting Hello Youmzain lead him and waiting to pounce late. Unfortunately Hello Youmzain faltered at the furlong pole and before Dettori realised Oxted had first run. It probably made no difference to the result but it would have been closer.

Ger Lyons is always good when interviewed and before the Irish Oaks he said his runner Even So probably wasn't a Group 1 horse but had earned a run. She might not have been good enough in a normal year but this was a substandard edition and she ran out a clear winner. Favourite Cayenne Pepper probably didn't get home while third home Passion has already shown she is well off the best fillies. Romanised's 2018 Irish Guineas win looked fluke for a long time but he returned to form last summer and kept up that revival taking the Group 2 seven-furlong Minstrel Stakes and will be heading to Deauville to try and win a second Jacques le Marois.

Some people complain about the Coolmore operation but nobody else had horses to take on Enable in the King George. If the Irish hadn't decided to rearrange the Tattersalls Gold Cup for this weekend, they would probably have had half a dozen runners. They seem just about the only breeders who want to have mile and a half horses. It proved a cake walk with Japan never going a yard while Sovereign probably ran up to his best. The Tattersalls Gold Cup usually run in May has always seemed one of the Group 1's we could well do without as it just dilutes the status and Magical had no difficulty at all seeing off the underperforming Sir Dragonet.

I would love to know when the last major Derby winner ran over two miles in the same season as Santiago did in the Goodwood Cup. The third horse from the Irish Derby Dawn Patrol was not impressive winning his maiden and Santiago hardly boosted the form in third here. Stradivarius won cosily in the end despite Frankie trying to get him boxed in and we will now see how he goes trained for mile and a half races.

Nobody was missing from the Sussex Stakes and the first real clash of the three-year-old and their elders and the old boys had it with Mohaather coming late to take it. Circus Maximus as he does battle hard and saw off

Siskin but had no time to react to the winner who surprised me. Siskin ran his race while Kameko got into the sort of mess you can get into at Goodwood but he had a couple of opportunities to get himself out early in the straight which his jockey didn't take.

Some of the "unlucky" Derby horses came on to the Gordon Stakes and English King was indeed too short in the betting and showed that he is not going to be Group 1 performer at a mile and a half. It's possible he could be the replacement for the owners Stradivarius over Cup distances. Mogul stepped up from the Derby without doing anything too special while Khalifa Sat again sat behind the pacemaker but faded and this was probably his level.

The final Group 1 of the meeting went to Diane winner Fancy Blue and she again battled hard as she did at Chantilly to hold One Voice who had hardly looked a Group 1 performer despite her unlucky run at the Curragh on her previous start.

Hughes and Johnson set for another championship battle

By HAROLD HEYS

IT WASN'T much of a race, a Class 5 midweek handicap hurdle at a damp Stratford on July 8. Jamacho, one of Charlie Longsdon's, trotted up after a bad early blunder. Four days later Dear Sire, trained by Don McCain, picked up a handicap hurdle at Bangor.

National Hunt racing was back, after a fashion, and champion jockey Brian Hughes was back in action. Two winners in the first week. Plenty of time to get really serious before the season comes to an end on April 24.

Sport needs keen rivalries and earlier this year champion Richard Johnson and Hughes were serving up one of the most compelling duels since Richard Dunwoody passed Adrian Maguire at the end of an epic 1993-94 season.

Johnson travelled to the furthest corners of Britain in search of winners to try and reel in the relentless Hughes. They had been neck and neck for months.

The championship race had been something of a foregone conclusion for 24 years, with the legendary AP McCoy winning 20 titles in a row between 1995 and 2015, and Johnson dominating the four since his retirement.

In recent seasons, Hughes, from South Armagh, Northern Ireland, has been snapping at Johnson's heels.

AP McCoy said in mid-season: "A lot of it will be down to how healthy they both stay. If they both remain fit, without injuries, it could be very close.

"Brian's going to have a lot of support from the North. If he's in with a chance of winning the championship, I would imagine all the northern trainers who support him already will *really* support him. He's a very good rider, no doubt about that. No weakness. And Richard must be finding it that bit tougher after a few bad falls."

Johnson must be one of the veterans in the weighing room at 42 but his appetite for the game remains undiminished.

"Reaching 100 winners is always the first goal of the season," he said. "Winning the title for the fifth time is obviously the main goal and I will be doing my utmost."

The previous season Johnson won with Hughes trailing by 33 despite partnering 146 winners, numerically his best achievement.

The man from Newtownhamilton, now 34, has come a long way since Boxing Day 2003, when he first took part in a race over obstacles, having finally accepted he would not make it on the Flat.

He was barely seven stone and to persuade trainer James Lambe that he was not some weakling and deserved a shot at the winter game, he claimed to be two stone heavier than he was. Lambe wasn't taken in but played along and gave Hughes a leg-up. Boleys Pride finished "completely tailed off" at Down Royal that day. Hughes smiled: "I could barely lift the saddle." It was packed with about four stone of lead.

Ferdy Murphy found him a lot of winners in England. But the power of northern racing has slipped since Murphy's heyday. Last season Brian looked back to a recent day at Wetherby as an example of the way things are these days. All seven races at the Yorkshire track were won by stables in the south. The closest was nearly 150 miles away.

Johnson's season took a blow when he broke his right forearm at Exeter in mid-January. "We were neck and neck at that time," recalled Hughes. "A couple of days before Richard was injured, he was a couple of winners in front of me. Then I had a double at Ayr. Then we were at Newcastle and I rode a treble. He didn't have a winner and the next thing he got injured. It was a shame. It was building towards being an exciting end to the season."

Just 37 days after the break, Johnson was back with two from two at Musselburgh. Average recovery time for that sort of injury is over 60 days. "I'm fine. It's great to be back," he said.

Hughes had extended his lead to 20 winners which would have been more but for some weather-enforced cancellations.

"When I was lying on the ground at Exeter knowing I'd probably broken my arm I thought the championship had gone. But the weather has been on my side and Brian hasn't had as many opportunities as he might have had." said Richard.

"I'm just delighted to be back racing. Hopefully we can keep at it and we'll see where it takes us."

And then of course, the Coronavirus pandemic struck and the season came to an end after the Cheltenham Festival. Brian Hughes, married to teacher Lucy and based in Cleveland – they live on a farm owned by her father and help out – brought the jockeys' championship back north for the first time in 40 years. And Richard Johnson took his list of runner-up spots to 17.

Hughes had notched 141 winners when the season finished on St Patrick's Day, March 17; Johnson was 19 adrift.

It should be another keen fight this time round – as long as the pandemic doesn't ruin another National Hunt season.



Let battle commence!
Champion
Brian Hughes
(left) and big
rival Richard
Johnson



CLUB RACING SYNDICATES OVER THE YEARS (PART 2)

BY GORDON ARMISTEAD

Burrogerard

Another horse with an interesting sire in Royalty. The Pattern race classification started in 1971 the year Royalty was a three-year-old when he won all his six starts without contesting any group races in the U.K. On the back of a warm up race at Redcar Dick Hern sent him for the Arc de Triomphe where he finished sixth to Mill Reef and he never ran again. Burrogerard's dam was an unraced daughter of brilliant racehorse but dreadful sire Brigadier Gerard and he was her only foal,

Burrogerard was trained by Ginger McCain and had been sold for 940 guineas as a foal. He raced four times in 85/86 season showing little. After a long break he showed some modest ability posting a fourth in a Catterick novice hurdle in December 1987 on his second and last run that season. Another break but he returned to show improved form to take a Carlisle novice hurdle in November 1988 under Neil Doughty where unfortunately he broke down and wasn't seen out again. In the last three runs he raced in the name of club member Rob Young. The horse he beat at Carlisle was The Antartex who turned out to be very useful winning in a Topham, finishing second in another, and was third in a Becher Chase.

The Dinger

In late 1987 club member Angela Beardsworth offered two unnamed horses she had bred to run in the club colours under lease, a filly by Vicomte and a gelding by Scallywag both greys. Having just turned three in 1988 it was understood that the Scallywag would be at least a year off a run but that we could have some outings in the meantime with the mare as she was a year older. There is no doubt it was the Scallywag that had the appeal being a big chasing sort. Scallywag himself had been so big he didn't fit into the starting stalls and had to have a special strap around the rear of his stall.

Both were already in training with Robert Earnshaw at Killinghall near Harrogate and it was to become a regular drive up the A59 as we went up each month for a stable visit and Sunday lunch at a nearby pub.

Known as Susie in the yard the mare was a half-sister to a modest northern flat handicapper called Cavalier Servente who won five races and she was given the name The Dinger.

And so, April 30th 1988 and Market Rasen for my debut as an owner. Just the twenty-four in the bumper a couple of which would go on and be above average. Winner Nodform at 8/11 for Don Eddy one of the first trainers to target the bumper winner for sale market went on to be placed at both The Cheltenham and Aintree festivals for Jim Joel. Broctune Grey was a good northern handicapper on the flat and over hurdles winning ten times for Mary Reveley finished third.

We weren't expecting much and Tommy White who worked for Robert had her fairly well back in the field as they turned for home. Then she was down and obviously severely injured. As it turned out she had broken both front legs and the vets were soon there to do the inevitable. As a start to ownership goes it doesn't come any worse and it was a pretty miserable drive home from Lincolnshire.

Captain Caveman

The gelding that had been called Captain Caveman by Angela's son was confirmed with that name and eight months later in January 1989 he started off in bumper at Ludlow. Tommy White again had the ride and remembering Market Rasen he took Caveman as far around the outside as it was possible to go yet he was still on the heels of the leaders turning in. I don't think anyone was exactly chuffed with the ride but at least he came through unscathed.

He was always going to have a quite season so it was Spring Bank holiday and Huntingdon for his second and final run on the season.

Ger Lyons now a top Irish flat trainer was to have the ride. A bank holiday might have been a good time for him to run for most of the owners but not for me as I worked nearly all of them. Therefore, I was not there to see him lead seven furlongs out before being outpaced a furlong from the end and finish a good second. It turned out he had an impossible task that day as the winner Mellottie was slightly better than your average bumper winner. After winning two more bumpers and a maiden hurdle he had his sights changed to flat racing eventually winning a Cambridgeshire and three listed races. Apart from the winner it turned out to be a dreadful race with only two others winning under rules. One in a hunter chase at Fakenham, and the horse that finished fourteenth and last Orchipedzo who won a novice chase at Ludlow at 33/1 where half the field fell and a four-runner handicap chase at Worcester off 91.

Still we didn't know that at the time and optimism was high for the next season when Caveman was going over hurdles. He started off at Haydock in December with a seventh of nineteen behind future National winner Minnehoma. A fifth place at Sedgefield and a sixth at Carlisle earned a rating of 84 for his handicap debut at Newcastle on a freezing cold March day. Brian Storey was riding and I was certainly thinking he had to be competitive off that mark. He led at the third going well until they went out of site to jump the fourth last but back into view he wasn't going as well and faded into sixth. It turned out he had clobbered the hurdle we couldn't see and when he got home it was discovered he had managed as the euphemism goes to get a leg. A year off and then as he was being readied to return the leg went again and that was that.

I did see him one more time as after four years off he returned in points and hunter chases owned and trained by M Sams at Richmond in Yorkshire. I was at Hexham when he ran in the famous Heart of All England Maiden Hunter Chase where he unshipped his jockey. His record that season of nine run, six non completions and being the last finisher in two of the others. The next season under new ownership back under rules for Cheshire trainer Anne Hewitt he ran in four novice chases and was the last finisher each time.

Blade of Fortune

Before the 1990 flat season Francis Lee offered the club the chance to take a half share in a two-year-old, he had bred himself. By Beldale Flutter Blade of Fortune was a half-brother to a horse that had won and been placed four times for the stable called Coral Sword while the dam was unraced. He should have been up to doing something as a two-year-old yet would probably be better at three and older. I wasn't going to get involved but with one of the twenty club shares left I was talked into taking a share of the last share so ended up with a fifth of a twentieth of a half of the horse. New racing colours here of yellow blue triple diamond and yellow and blue striped sleeves with yellow cap and I must admit to having no idea why.

Not to put too fine a point on it he was not very good as a flat racer. I only saw him run once at Carlisle when he was fifth of eleven and that was by far his best effort. The words tailed off appear quite often in his eight runs and I was surprised when I looked up his form to write this that he ran for the club once as a four-year-old in April 1992 when his rating was just 40.

He did however have a future. After one run in a Lincolnshire point in 1994 for a W H Eastwood he found himself in the Taunton yard of dairy farmer V. G. Greenway. Pointing in the spring of 1996 he placed twice and then the next season he was back under rules finishing fourth to Deano's Beeno in a novice hurdle ridden by seven-pound claimer Joe Tizzard. That season he won three hurdle races at Taunton (Selling Handicap), Chepstow (Claimer), and Newton Abbot (0-105 Handicap) finishing with a rating of 98. The first win came just two months short of seven years after his first racecourse appearance. He went on to win another selling handicap hurdle at Taunton and a novice handicap chase at Newton Abbot. In 2001 he won a club members point before finishing as a fourteen-year-old in April 2002.

- Editor's note – I was at Taunton one day when Blade of Fortune ran there and contacted Mr Greenway at the time and met him on course and took photos etc for the club magazine at that time.

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From becoming a commentator to being a commentator...virtually!

By Stewart Machin

It's over 20 years since I did my first full day of commentating. It was Easter Monday 1998 - the year of flooding and several of the then 16 meetings scheduled were off - at Hereford. A four runner novices' hurdle was a gentle way to start the day. There was no monitor and of course no big screen in those days. I recall one of the later races was run in a snowstorm - typical Bank Holiday weather. I survived - just. I think by the end of 1998 I had done around a dozen full days.

Fast forward to late winter 2017 and a phone call from Nick Luck. He'd very kindly mentioned my name to the producer, Rob McLoughlin at Carm Productions, of a completely new type of show - the Virtual Grand National.

Having spoken to Rob, I agreed to commentate. I wasn't sure what to expect but the concept was interesting and it would give me the chance to work with Nick together with Richard Pitman and Alice Fox-Pitt. Each of whom I greatly admire as broadcasters and are great fun to work with.

I think in that first year I felt more pressure doing the Virtual version than I did the real thing a few days later!

Happily, the production team have stuck with me and of course this year, for reasons no one expected or wanted, the Virtual National became a major event.

I prepare for a Virtual National in exactly the same way as for the "real" thing. Making notes of any greys, the different caps for those in the same ownership, horses with any distinguishing markings etc.

There are subtle differences - for the actual race we as commentators would get to see the horses and jockeys in the parade ring. That's when most of the last moment learning happens. That doesn't happen in the Virtual world.

The most significant difference however is that I do the whole Virtual race whereas there are three of us in relay at Aintree for the real version. I'm always mindful that 9/10 minutes of hearing my voice alone is a long time for the viewer! It's important therefore not to peak too soon!

Once the Virtual race starts, it never for even the most fleeting of moments goes through my mind that it isn't real. The CGI is so advanced that it looks exactly like Aintree. The attention to detail by Inspired, the company who generate the race, is outstanding. For me it IS a National.

It's been immense fun to be involved in and the "Race of Champions" has given me the chance to call the type of great National horses I would never otherwise have. It also goes to show the advancements in modern training methods in that horses like Manifesto and Reynoldstown can run such huge races despite a century or so off the track!



A LIFETIME AS A RACING JOURNALIST (PART 1)

BY FRED SHAWCROSS

Those members that have been in the club for many years may recall the days when we held an annual racing dinner with Fred Shawcross hosting these events for several years in his role of 'Club President'.

As part of the club's 40th Anniversary celebrations we managed to track down Fred who now resides on the Fylde coast. On chatting to Fred when we were first re-united it was clear that he was full of interesting tales about his life time in racing and I was delighted when Fred agreed to write an article for the club magazine. Here is part one his story (straight from the horse's mouth....).

'We don't get winters like we used to' is one of the overworked statements of the 21st Century, and the person forwarding it will almost always be a senior, possibly very senior citizen. If you were around in the 1950's you will be among the ranks of those familiar with the 'four seasons', before global warming emerged to shake up the planet's weather systems.

In January 1958 we were in the depth of a typically harsh winter. Snow, ice, bitterly cold winds. But one night in that month, I stood at the top of Fleet Street, immune to the weather. I had just landed a job on the News Chronicle, a national morning newspaper. Me, a lad from Bolton, had made the quantum leap from a provincial evening paper to Fleet Street. I was too excited to be affected by anything the conditions threw at me. I headed from Euston Station and the 'rattler' back to Bolton, bursting to tell people the news. Earlier that day myself and the other applicants for the job of sports sub-editor (specialising in racing) had been interviewed by Bill Hicks, the News Chron's sport's editor, and then asked to write a preview of an upcoming 4yo hurdle race to feature at Hurst Park. It was to be assessed by Percy Holmes, famous for his daily column 'Bookworm' in the paper's racing pages.

By an astonishing stroke of luck, I had previewed the very same race, just days before, in an article for the Bolton paper. None of us doing that test had access to form books so knowledge of current and relevant form was of vital importance. Three of us were short listed from the original group of hopefuls and eventually at around 6.30pm I was told by Bill Hicks that I had got the job. Much of my delight and, to be honest, surprise, emanated from the fact that I had applied in response to an 'ad' in the UK Press Gazette. My colleagues in Bolton, while wishing me luck, said the route to Fleet Street went via a position in a provincial morning paper not a local evening paper.

No matter, a month or so later I took my place beside Percy Holmes at the 'News Chron' sports desk assuming the racing tipster title 'UNO', and deputising for Julian Simcocks (Captain Heath) by writing his column when he was on holiday. I truly loved my job, being alongside a man admired and respected for his immense knowledge of racing, his passion for facts and figures gleaned from turf happenings, past and present. Percy Holmes was 'Bookworm' in just about every sense of the word.

Bill Hicks, much as Percy did, gave me every encouragement. I was given space and time to interview and write columns about racing personalities, including (trainer) Captain Ryan Price and (jockey) Frankie Durr. And the bookmaking behemoth William Hill. I found Ryan Price the most agreeable of chaps. I arrived at Findon very early one morning to be greeted by the Captain in his famous trilby and was immediately offered a G&T, which I accepted with grace. What a man. Weeks later I rang him at Percy's request to enquire if he had engaged a jockey for *Done Up* who was entered in the 1959 'Whitbread' Gold Cup at Sandown but without a jockey still. Captain Price revealed that he was hoping to secure the services of Harry Sprague, a brilliant hurdles jockey but not usually associated with a 3m+ Chaser, let alone in a big Saturday race. The added twist being that Harry had come out of retirement for one last ride on the horse. He added that I mustn't print the news in advance in case Sprague's booking didn't come off. Needless to say, 'Bookworm' and I helped ourselves. Sprague rode the horse and lost his false teeth after getting *Done Up* up on the line!! I remember that Ryan picked up Harry's 'gnashers' on the walkway. As I say, what a man. (Photos on next page are Ryan Price and Harry Sprague (far right) in his last race on board *Done Up*.)



Besides writing racing columns and tipping, I, alongside all the other sports desk subs, was offered the chance to report on football matches on Saturdays, mainly those in the 'old first division'. So before long I was sharing train journeys and press boxes with the likes of Brian Glenville and (Sir) Clement Freud. I also ghosted reports and comment pieces for the brilliant former winger, Joe Hulme whose football career was mainly with Arsenal but in the days when sportsmen were allowed to play more than one sport, he also had a career playing cricket for Middlesex. He was another lovely bloke, who was happy to let me interpret his somewhat colourful assessments of what was happening on the pitch with more printable paragraphs.

Around that time, in the early 1960's, I was approached by Solly Chandler (Sports editor of the Daily Sketch) and offered the job of football columnist. It came as a surprise, albeit a somewhat flattering one, as I thought racing was my main, preferred route to the sunny uplands of sporting journalism.

I decided to consult Bill Hicks. I figured I owed him and the News Chronicle loyalty as he, and it, had given me my chance in Fleet Street. He thanked me for my openness but suggested I would be better served staying where I was as opportunities for further advancement were in the pipeline at the 'Chron'.

Unknown to Mr Hicks and all the other editorial senior staff management of the News Chronicle were negotiating to sell the title and only six months after my chat with Mr Hicks, the proud old national morning disappeared (on 1st October 1960). Technically the paper was then absorbed into the Daily Mail and a number of 'staffers', particularly the brilliant wordsmith Ian Woldridge, were taken on by the Daily Mail. Others, like me, were scattered across Fleet Street. I got the Daily Sketch, but not the reception I had hoped for from the Sports Editor.

Solly Chandler, who only a few months before had offered me the soccer columnist post, now decided I was only worth a down-table subbing role. He made sure I knew I hadn't best pleased him by snubbing his original offer, keeping me away from writing on anything, racing, football or knitting!! It didn't take me long to realise that life at the Daily Sketch would be long, hard and dull, so, after one particularly unpleasant flare up with Mr Chandler over a headline I had written, I packed my bags, said goodbye to London and headed back North.

Again, luck played a big part in controlling the way my career in journalism went. While active writing soccer reports and colour pieces for the News Chronicle and a number of national Sunday titles, I had got to know Frank Nicklin, Sports Editor of the Sunday People in London. I told him I was returning 'home' and asked would he let me know of any jobs that came up on the Northern edition of the People. He said he would.

True to his word, Frank had a word with Harry Peterson, Sports Editor of The People's northern edition, and I was taken on as sub-editor doing casual shifts. Harry was a giant among sports 'journos' and a soccer fanatic. He had a great flair for layouts and punchy headlines and encouraged his staff, permanent and casual, to be

bright and inventive. I gleaned a lot of knowledge from Harry and I know that remark will be repeated by Harold Heys, whom I first met at The People, when he was a staff man and, on his way, to becoming a 'name' in sporting journalism in general and racing in particular.

While 'casualising' at The People and other daily papers in Manchester I got the job of chief sub at The Sporting Chronicle, the 'racing bible' for punters, big and small. Bill Clark was its editor, Quentin Gilbey its chief correspondent and Dick Adderley 'Beat The Book' its most consistently successful tipster and punter. I got on well with 'Quiney' although we very rarely met, as I was mostly office bound and had to talk to him by phone. I also covered his 'Kettledrum' column when he was on holiday.

During my spells on the nationals, and particularly during my time at the Sporting Chronicle, it had become increasingly obvious that Phil Bull (a previous President of the racing club) was one of the most influential figures in the racing industry. A brilliant mathematician and founder of Timeform, he revolutionised the basics of horse racing form and the application of his conclusions to betting earned him fortunes.

I decided that Timeform was the place to be and, after an interview with Reg Griffin, was appointed as staff comment writer, turning reports from racecourse observers into sections for the daily race cards. Phil was a tetchy character, short to the point of rudeness but could be a different person in his huge property above Halifax which he called 'The Hollins' which was also operated as a stud farm. There he would host snooker evenings for staff who didn't mind the fumes from his ever-present Cuban cigars.

Next time – Fred tells us how he decided to mix his racing-based career with that of a musician.

Photos below show Solly Chandler (to right of Rupert Murdoch) and the cigar smoking founder of Timeform, Phil Bull.



PHIL BULL

- Editors note. Some facts about the characters mentioned so far. **Captain Ryan Price** was involved in the D-Day landings in 1955 and after the war resumed training and was champion trainer five times. He retired in 1982 and died in 1986. **Harry Sprague** was born in Devon and was a leading apprentice jockey before WW2. He rode over 250 winners under NH rules and after his final ride in 1959 returned to Devon to take up farming. He died in 2017 at the ripe old age of 97. **Phil Bull** was the son of a miner and went to Leeds University before becoming a teacher. However, he soon realised that he could make more money from his betting activities and in 1948 set up the Timeform business. His own betting records show that between 1943 and 1974 his cumulative profit from betting was £295,987 (nearly £5 million in 1995 prices), although other sources put this figure at over £500,000.

RACING BOOKS FOR SALE – IJF FUNDRAISER

Member Kate Booth has kindly donated a selection of racing books to the club. They are hard back editions (unless stated) and all are in good condition.

If you would like any from the list below please contact Phil Evans (see committee panel) and these will be despatched on a first come first served basis.

Members who receive the books will then be asked to cover the cost of post/packing and make a small donation towards the IJF. The cover prices are quoted to give an idea as to their original values.

1. Fit for A Queen by Richard Pitman £17.99
2. Obsessed by Richard Dunwoody £18.99
3. Come To Grief by Dick Francis £15.99
4. 10lb Penalty by Dick Francis £16.99
5. To The Hilt by Dick Francis £15.99
6. A Year In the Life of Frankie Dettori by Frankie Dettori £15.99
7. McCoy – The Autobiography by A P McCoy/Steve Taylor
8. Racing Lexicon by Leigh & Woodhouse £9.99
9. A Question of Racing (Quiz Book - paperback) by Emlyn Hughes £2.50
10. A Touch of Colwick (History of Nottingham – paperback) by Grenville Davies £9.99
11. The Classic Racehorse by Peter Willett £16.95
12. British Racing Prints (1700-1940) by Charles Lane £29.95
13. Racing Yearbook 1996 by Phil Smith & Simon Holt £19.95
14. John Lawrence's World of Racing (aka Lord Oaksey)
15. Racing and the Irish by Sean Magee £16.99
16. Point To Pointing by Terence Brady & Michael Felton
17. The Irish Derby (1962-95) by Daniel Roddy £24.99
18. Ossie Dale's Grand National Scrapbook by Reg Green £12.95
19. Tom Dreaper and his Horses by Bryony Fuller £12.95
20. The Sporting Collector by Louis T Stanley £12.95
21. Great Racing Gambles & Frauds by Richard Onslow £13.95
22. The Roodee (History of Chester) by R M Bevan £9.95
23. Vincent O'Brien (The Man & The Legend - paperback) by Raymond Smith £9.95
24. Great Racehorses of the World by Roger Mortimer & Peter Willett



Catterick Racecourse News

Despite lockdown, work on the new Owners & Trainers building at Catterick Racecourse continues apace. The two-story trackside building, designed by Elliott Architects has transformed dramatically since March and draws on the history of horse racing and the buildings of the region. With a restaurant on the first floor and a bar at ground floor level, the building will offer excellent views south towards the racecourse and north over the parade ring.

Catterick's Ride of the Meeting Series with Millbry Hill continues into the flat season and winners so far are: Jason Hart, Paul Mulrennan and Hollie Doyle. As with the NH Season, there will be a public vote on Catterick's social media for the 'Ride of the Season' winner.



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Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 27th Sept