

Racin'



Issue 372

December 2021/January 2021

NMRC AGM– MONDAY JANUARY 10TH 2022

The club's AGM will again be held online in 2022. So wherever you live you will be welcome to attend via Zoom.

The start time will be fixed nearer the time although it is likely to be early evening.

If you would like to join the meeting please register by e mailing info@northernracingclub.com and you will then be sent a link to join the meeting in due course.

All members can also send suggestions for club events/agenda items to the same e mail address.

DAVE'S A WINNER!

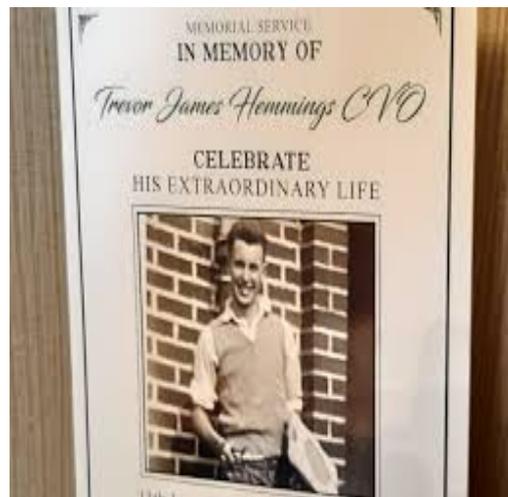
Dave Evans collects his trophy for winning the 2021 Alex Bird competition – photo by Ken Unsworth.



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TREVOR HEMMINGS TRIBUTE – SEE PAGE 3



COMPETITION NEWS & RESULTS

59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

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

October 2nd – 43 – Jill White (Yorkshire)

November 6th – 19 – Juliet Mercer (Lancashire)

Jill & Juliet both 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, but check the magazine each time to check if any numbers become available in the future!

NH SATURDAY NAPS 2021-22

The wait is now over for jumps racing enthusiasts with the main winter season underway.

So, I've tinkered with the format again this year and reverted to a similar format to pre-covid times with this year's competition starting on November 27th and finishing on Grand National Day in 2022, 9th April.

There will be three rounds of 6 weeks each with prizes for the rounds and seasonal challenge.

All registered members can enter and we also allow other family members to enter.

The simple aim of the competition is to select a nap each Saturday with points scored based on the odds of the winners.

The last date for entries this year is **Saturday 11th December** – contact Phil Evans if you want to join in this winter (contact details on page 18).

HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION

The result of the 2021 Heritage Handicap Competition is now final.

The honours and prizes are as follows:-

Main competition

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| 1st Maureen Dawson. | £190 |
| 2nd Peter Flynn | £95 |
| 3rd Jason Sandland | £65 |

Maureen Dawson also wins 1 years enhanced membership of Betturtle, worth £199.

Wooden Spoon

Alan Preston

Exacta/trifecta competition

1st Peter Flynn Prize £100

Thanks for your participation again this year and congratulations to all the winners. Hopefully a few of you made a profit on your selections over the year.

Also, thanks to Betturtle for their added sponsorship of the competition.

- Editor's note – on behalf of all the entrants can I thank Helen Goodwill for all her hard work over the summer months scoring the competition, especially with the rise in the number of non-runners which made scoring even more difficult. Hopefully we will be back again for this flat racing tipping challenge next June.



Thanks for the happy memories, Trevor!

THE recent death of owner Trevor Hemmings at the age of 86 drew warm compliments and recollections from throughout the racing community. Here, three Racin' magazine correspondents add their thoughts on one of the sport's most popular personalities.

TREVOR was such a lovely, kind, generous person who would go out of his way to help someone or make someone happy if he could. Sometimes this would incur a cost and sometimes not, although I rather think he preferred the no-cost option, writes long-time club member **Kate Booth**.

She continued: I first met Trevor at Haydock Park and was introduced by Eric and Sue Alston. Eric trained some of the Hemmings horses and we also had a horse in training with him.

I was an annual member at Haydock, I would mainly see him there when he had a horse running and I was invited to join his group in the owners' and trainers' pavilion.

Trevor was a wonderful character. He let friends have the buzz of bidding for him in charity auctions, he let them walk his horses into the winners' enclosures and even got them job interviews within one of his companies when they were out of work.

He once bought photos of presentations at Haydock Park for all of us who were part of it – and my tickets for Strictly Come Dancing at Blackpool Tower may not have cost anything but to me were priceless.

Whenever I met him at the races he always welcomed me into his group and invited me into the parade ring, introducing me to his trainers and jockeys. And he always checked if I'd backed his winning horses!

He was amused by everyday things and once nudged me excitedly to tell me he had just won £20! But what can you give someone who has everything they want? I did try. I always made him a very personalised Christmas card featuring his winning horses which I'm sure he appreciated.

Trevor loved his horses and racing and I'm so happy that he achieved his ambition of winning the Grand National. He was no less excited when he went on to win a second and a third!

He brought joy to everyone who knew him. He will be sadly missed both on and off the racecourse.

PRESTON North End fan **Alexander Lister** was one of many football enthusiasts who had good reason to think highly of Trevor Hemmings.

He writes: More than 18,000 fans packed into the Deepdale stadium for the first home match after his death.

The club, for which he had worked tirelessly, was determined to make the day as special as possible and to get as many into the stadium as they could they reduced all ticket prices to £5 and announced that all excess funds from gate receipts would be donated to Mr Hemmings' favourite charities.

As the players came out on to the pitch, club captain Alan Browne carried one of the tycoon's famous flat caps, something he was rarely seen without. It was placed in the centre of the pitch and a minute of rapturous applause followed.

The cap spent the rest of the match positioned behind one of the goal posts in front of the home fans. A nice touch which he would have liked!

Trevor Hemmings had been the owner of the club since June 2010, buying it shortly after it had been served a winding-up petition by HMRC. Preston fans saw him as not only the club's owner, but its saviour. Today the club is holding on doggedly to a mid-table position in the Football League Championship table. Without his support who knows where the team might be?

In a touching gesture by visiting Derby County, their players elected not to wear their usual green away strip, and wore their blue third kit. This allowed Preston to wear their green and gold third kit which they had used since Mr Hemmings had taken over. Of course, they were the colours that had long been sported by jockeys riding for him.

The match result was not what the home fans would have wanted – a 0-0 draw – but the attending fans, both home and away, made it clear that Mr Hemmings and his actions for the club would never be forgotten by North End's faithful and devoted supporters.

Oh, and that flat cap? I read that he had once explained: 'It stands for the working man in the North. And I've always felt like one of them.' Well said, Trevor. And thanks.

REGULAR contributor **Harold Heys** has written several features about Trevor Hemmings whom he often saw at the races. "Win or lose, he always seemed to have smile on his face," he recalled.

He writes: I remember 50 years ago and I was covering my first Grand National for the Sunday People. Specify won for Fred Pontin. Hemmings, who worked for Pontin, wasn't at Aintree; he was too busy grafting. But it fired his imagination for the sport.

It became his ambition to win the National as Fred Pontin had just done. Racing became his second passion — to working hard and making money. "I had to get my mind round something that would stop me wanting to be at work seven days and seven nights," he recalled with a smile.

It didn't seem to take him long to move from shoveling sand into concrete mixers to shrewdly shoveling heaps of money around various business interests. He became a really big player in construction and leisure.

Hemmings had homes in Jersey and the Isle of Man, but his heart was firmly in the North West and he had a base near Chorley which was particularly handy for his business empire as well as for following the fortunes of his string of hurdlers and steeplechasers.

He won three Grand Nationals; with Hedgehunter for Willie Mullins in 2005, Ballabriggs in 2011 for Don McCain and Many Clouds in 2015 for Oliver Sherwood.

Born in Woolwich in 1935, Hemmings was the working-class son of a Royal Ordnance factory worker. The company's World War II relocation to Lancashire necessitated a family move and they pitched up in Lynton Avenue, Leyland, when he was nearly five. He recalled with a smile: 'I soon lost my Cockney accent or I wouldn't have survived.'

After Leyland Secondary Modern School, at 15 he went to Lancashire College night school to study business – alongside a variety of daytime roles, such as cleaning diesel trains and boiler-making, and then he began an apprenticeship in the building industry.

He started at the bottom with newt (nowt) – and went right to the top.



- Photo above shows Trevor (without famous cap) next to Kate Booth with Neil Watson & friends on the podium.



IJF 2022 calendar is a real guessing game

WE always manage to buy something from the Injured Jockeys' Fund prior to Christmas. Last year it was packs of cards, a bobble cap with click-on torch, notepads and so on. We always get a Racing Post desk calendar as well. This year my wife ordered a desk calendar from the IJF, not sure why. But not a problem. Just one complaint though – the excellent photographs don't have a caption between them. The calendar is packed with information, a lot of it rather pointless, but nothing to explain the photos. A few are obvious; several are simply frustrating. This is a detail from a wonderfully atmospheric shot by Nigel Kirby at the start of a race under threatening black clouds. It took me a minute to crack the course. I'm still guessing at most of the others. Disappointing. But do have a look at the IJF web site. Lots of interesting stuff for Christmas. **HH**

TRAINER TRAITS FOR BOXING DAY BY PHIL EVANS

Boxing Day December 26th Kempton – 2m Novices' Hurdle: N Henderson has won 3 times (in 2011, 12 & 15). All finished 1st/2nd on their last run and were sent off as favourites.

Boxing Day December 26th Kempton – 2m 4f Novices' Limited Handicap Chase: Nicky Henderson has won 3 times (in 2009, 12 & 15). All were rested at least 13 days prior to this race.

Boxing Day December 26th Kempton – (Gr 1) 'Xmas Hurdle' over 2m: N Henderson has won for consecutive years (2011, 12 & 13) and further consecutive years in 2017-2019. 5/6 were either 1st/2nd favourites. Race Stat: 2014 winner *Faugheen*, 2017 winner *Buveur D'air* & 2019 winner *Epatante* all also won the Champion Hurdle in the same season.

Boxing Day December 26th Kempton – (Gr 1) 'King George VI' Chase over 3m: Paul Nicholls has won 6* times (2011, 13, 14, 18, 19 & 20). All last ran 21-54 days earlier, finishing 4th or better LTO. Race Stat: Five winners since 2002 went on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup in the same season (latest in 2010). * 12 career wins.

Boxing Day December 26th Leopardstown – 2m Maiden Hurdle for 4yo: W P Mullins has won 4 times (in 2011, 14, 16 & 18). All were sent off as 1st/2nd favourites. Race Fact: 2018 winner, *Klassical Dream*, went on to win the Supreme Novices' Hurdle in March.

Boxing Day December 26th Leopardstown – (Gr 2) Juvenile Hurdle over 2m for 3yo: W P Mullins has won 3 times (in 2012, 15 & 16). All were 1st/2nd LTO.

Boxing Day December 26th Leopardstown – (Gr 1) 'Racing Post' Novices' Chase over 2m1f:

W P Mullins has won 6 times (in 2011, 12, 15, 16, 17 & 20). All had also won their last race 18-44 days earlier with odds of up to 8/1 seen. All but two of the winners were ridden by P Townend. Race Fact: *Douvan* (2015) & *Footpad* (2017) both went on to win the Arkle Chase at the Cheltenham Festival in the same season.

Boxing Day December 26th Limerick – (Gr 1) Novices' Chase over 2m 3.5f: W P Mullins has won 6 times (in 2011, 13, 15, 16, 19 & 20). All finished 3rd or better on their last run and all had odds of 5/1 or shorter (including three favourites).

Boxing Day December 26th Wetherby – 2m 4f Novices' Handicap Hurdle: P Kirby has won 3 times (in 2014, 16 & 19). All carried a weight between 10st 11lbs & 11st 11lb

Milestone for Hughes as he closes in on title



FORMER champion Brian Hughes became the fastest ever Northern-based jockey to reach a century of winners in a season when guiding *Dreams Of Home* to a comfortable success at Ayr a few days ago. The winner was yet another success for the partnership with Donald McCain, writes **HAROLD HEYS**.

Brian is now long odds on to retain the NH title he won in 2019-20, the first Northern jockey to win it since Jonjo O'Neill 30 years earlier. But remember what happened last season!

He was also odds on for the title as the season began to draw to a close. But then the Skelton team got into top gear and young Harry scooted to the championship.

Hughes was quick to pay tribute to his trainers on *Racing TV*: "It's me doing the riding but everyone in Cholmondeley [McCain's base] and every other yard I ride for – Charlie Longsdon, Nicky Richards, Brian Ellison – they're the ones giving me the horses to ride."

He added: "The ultimate goal remains reclaiming the championship. Anything can happen during the season, so there's no room to let up. I'll keep pushing towards the next milestone and continue to ride as many winners as possible."

Brian also knocks in quite a few winners for his Irish connections, but he never seems to get many rides from Southern trainers. He has built up a sound go-anywhere, ride-anything reputation in recent years. You don't see the top

Southern lads riding many 50-1 shots. Anything can happen and you can't win if you are twiddling your thumbs in the weighing room, he reckons.

- Brian Hughes on board *Minella Trump* who has contributed six consecutive novice chase wins for him this season. This photo was taken after his win at Sedgefield by Les Fitton.

A CHRISTMAS JUMPER COMPILED By BRIAN GOODWILL

In 2019 I asked a number of respected judges to name a horse to follow for Christmas and beyond. The majority of selections were successful and a few are still winning this season. Two years on here are what the current panel of experts have found for the coming weeks and beyond.

AHOY SENOR (MARTIN HARRIS)

Ahoy Senor, who made 50k after winning a Maiden at Kimble, and went on to land a Grade 1 Hurdle at Aintree for Lucinda Russell. Now chasing, unseated on debut at Carlisle, but ran well all the same. Then ran away with a Newbury chase.

BOLD ENDEAVOUR (MARK SLATER)

Winner of his only point to point on soft going, Bold Endeavour has shown the versatility to land a Sedgefield bumper and novice hurdle impressively over shorter trips on quicker ground. A stiffer test of stamina could see potential for further improvement, and he can make his mark in staying novice hurdles when raised in class.

CAPODANNO (GORDON ARMITSTEAD)

Willie Mullins will as usual have plenty of novice chasers with the two most obvious being Appreciate It and Ferny Hollow. However, he usually comes up with something from lower down the rankings of his novice hurdlers of the previous season which turns out to be much better over fences.

I fancy that Capodanno could be the one for this season. After a win in an ordinary maiden hurdle at Clonmel over two miles he stepped up in trip at Thurles finishing third after being the meat in a sandwich two out before running on well. He was then upped in trip again to three miles in a valuable novice handicap at Fairyhouse where a poor jump at the last cost him his chance. His final run at Punchestown saw him cruise home in a 25 runner three-mile handicap hurdle by twelve lengths off a rating of 132.

Irish novice chases are hard to win but they might not be as competitive at three miles as they will be at shorter trips.

FIRESTEP (GRAHAM GOODE)

My one for the mix is a 5-year-old trained by NJ Henderson. The form , two wins in moderate bumpers at Southwell and Chepstow is nothing to write home about , but the style was good and the whispers are getting louder . So, who knows !

HAPPY AND FINE (DAVID FITZGERALD)

A 4-year-old gelding trained by Alex Hales

A lovely, chasing type who was placed twice in France prior to arriving at Alex's this season. His debut for the yard at Sandown was more than satisfactory, finishing 3rd over a trip that will prove short of his optimum. He should start handicapping off an attractive enough mark and is capable of winning races this season and beyond.

SCENE NOT HEARD (DAVID CARR)

Trained by Charlie Longsdon he has taken to chasing exceptionally well and is the sort to continue rising up the ratings for a while yet.

He made a BHA mark of 112 look extraordinarily lenient when winning at Hereford first time out and left the impression he'll stay ahead of the handicapper for a good while yet when following up stylishly off 119 at Newcastle.

Scene Not Herd jumps like a seasoned chaser rather than a mere six-year-old and is ripe for a step up in class.

IRON BRIDGE (DARREN OWEN)

Trained by Jonjo O'Neill he has made a lasting impression after two career starts thus far.

He made his racecourse debut in a point-to-point bumper at Tipperary last Spring, winning by three lengths. Subsequently, the 5-Y-O son of Milan was sent to Jackdaws Castle and made his British debut at Ffos Las this Autumn. He duly obliged, over two and a half miles in soft ground, he beat the highly touted Bill Baxter by two and half lengths.

Running in the colours of the late Trevor Hemmings, he looks an exciting prospect and according to his trainer will spend this season novice hurdling but looks an embryonic staying chaser.

MALYSTIC (MALCOLM TOMLINSON)

Trained by Peter Niven I first became aware of him when I called a beginners chase at Carlisle in October 2020. He finished 7L second to Protektorat and for me was staying on at the end without being overly worked on. He then ran in a series of good races before being beaten, decisively, by the brilliant Allmankind back at the Scottish National meeting in April. His form is rock solid and in my opinion he'll be even better stepped up in trip.

TRAPISTA (TIM PETERS)

I am going to select a horse I commentated on recently at Huntingdon. She is trained at Jackdaws Castle by Jonjo O'Neill and won quite impressively on her British debut having been well backed (12/1 into 6/1) and that despite having to carry a penalty.

I read with interest that Jonjo wasn't overly convinced it was the strongest of contests, however, I would beg to differ, as the 4th and 5th have won since. Clearly the BHA were also quite impressed, as they have given her an opening mark of 131. The plan is to now send her to a Mares Handicap Hurdle in December but, I wonder if loftier targets might await down the line.

She had raced twice in France before being bought by prolific owner JP McManus. The first run was a highly promising third to a subsequent Group Two winner on the flat, before winning easily on her hurdles debut at Angers in March.

I think she will improve once she steps up in trip to three miles and she will have no problem handling the softer winter ground. That's if the rain ever arrives.

YAMBOCHARLIE (STEWART MACHIN)

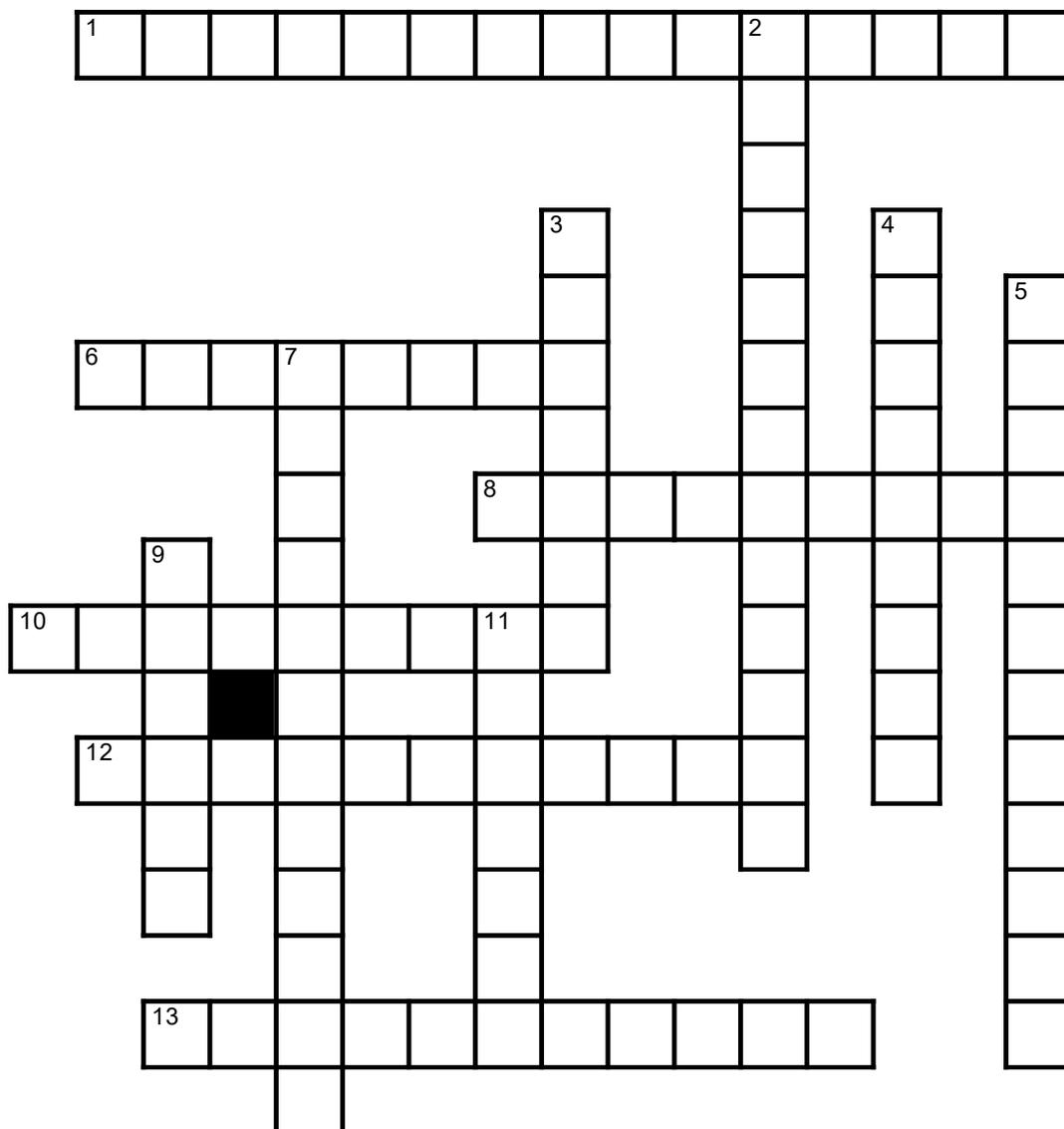
A four-year-old trained by Sam Allwood, he has been big prices in three hurdling runs to date but probably has a bit of ability. It has looked as though getting him to settle has been the main object of the exercise in his latest two runs.

He caught the attention of the Stewards following his sixth place at Ludlow in October (explanations noted). I didn't think he was knocked about either when again sixth - at Warwick in mid-November - behind a talented winner.

May be one to look out for in a low grade 2m novice handicap hurdle further down the line.

Mal Boyle's Kempton's King George – Jigword puzzle

Thirteen individual winners of the 'King George' have emerged since the turn of the Millennium – can you name and frame them?



Members need to complete the grid (like a crossword) with the names of all 13 'King George' winners.

Once completed, please send your entry as a completed grid to NMRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, M33 3LB and a winner will be drawn to receive a racing book prize. **Closing date is 31st January 2022.**

To receive the answers members can e mail Mal Boyle on/after 1st February. The address is malcolmboyle2@gmail.com

To receive Mal's weekly jigwords please also e mail Mal and he will add you to his mailing list.

Marin Withinshaw from Chepstow was the winner of the last book competition.

RACING SYSTEMS FOR THE 2021-22 ALL-WEATHER SEASON

BY PHIL EVANS

All of these systems are available on the club website www.northernracingclub.com 'Racing Systems' tab with results tracked throughout the year and updates posted most months. Whilst the data covers a 5-year period in most instances, where a shorter period is covered this will be stated. All data assumes a notional profit against a £1 stake for qualifying selections. Data as at 29/11/21 with course lists in alphabetical order for those with the most favourable results.

Where Southwell is highlighted the results are based on the old fibre sand track and alternative data will in future be collected for the new tapeta track.

*****LUCKY STALLS** (3 years - horses that have won at least 3 races from the same stall number in the last 10 years): In handicap races only – Lingfield +£100.40.

***DOUBLE DRAWFACTS** (2 years – based on the two ways of finding the best drawn horses being (a) the best draw percentage overall & (b) the most wins in a similar sized field): In non-handicap races at Chelmsford +£36.86.

******TRAINER PAST WINS** (Races which the trainer has won once/twice before in the last ten years): Southwell +£168.99, Wolverhampton +£48.81.

****BEATEN FAVOURITE LTO + TOP RATED** (3 years): Kempton + £20.43, Wolverhampton +£19.93.

****RESTED AT LEAST 365 DAYS** (3 years – based on flat races only): Kempton +£106.1, Southwell + £28.55.

****OVERSEAS RUNNERS IN UK** (3 years – excludes Irish trained runners): In non-handicap races only – Chelmsford +£23.

*******SECOND RUN SINCE WIND OPERATION** (3 years): Chelmsford +£89.46.

***DAYS LAST RAN** (4 years – covers races won at least three times in last ten years by horses who have had a similar break since last run, often in the same race): Dundalk + £43.1..

*This information is available from the NMRC website.

** This information is available from most online racing websites & racing papers.

***Course winners are noted on most race cards in the press/online whilst the RTF score is available from the Racing Post printed/online editions.

****For past winners details I use either Betturtle or Irish Racing websites.

*****For second run since wind operation I use the Racing post printed/online editions. Irish cards rarely show this data.

UNDER ORDERS PHOTOGRAPHY

NMRC member Christopher Leech has a Facebook page called [Under Orders Photography](#). Like most members - he regularly visits different courses. In the last 6 months, he has managed 15! After a visit he posts a few of the better photographs on the page. If you hit the LIKE button on the Facebook page you'll get to see them too! Plus he now has a challenge with his prospective son-in-law to get a certain number of likes by year end. Any help appreciated. Chris. 🐎📷👍

- Editor's note – some of the photos are also shared on the NMRC Facebook page but I am sure Chris would like to get the numbers up on his own page! Recent posts were from Haydock & Wetherby. Some are quite quirky and all are excellent quality, usually with nice captions helping to capture the moment.

I would suggest to Chris that in future he could consider putting his best ones into a racing calendar to raise a few quid for himself or maybe a racing charity as they are so good!

GO RACING IN YORKSHIRE

Thanks to Charlotte Russell at GRIY for keeping us advised of the Yorkshire racing scene.



First of all the Yorkshire Flat Championship results for 2021 saw **Tim Easterby** winning the trainers title with 82 wins with his stable jockey **Dave Allan** taking the jockeys title with 48 wins.

Oisin McSweeney was the winner of the Go Racing In Yorkshire Future Stars Apprentice Series. Oisin is based with leading Yorkshire trainer Kevin Ryan. Oisin rode in seven races in the series, winning at Redcar and scoring points in five others, finishing with a total of 48 points, 11 clear of his nearest rival.

The Yorkshire jump season is now in full swing as both Catterick & Doncaster hosted their first jump fixtures of the 2021/22 season this month.

GRIY has produced a jump season preview which has already thrown up several winners, including the fabulous Midnight Shadow in the Paddy Power Gold Cup at Cheltenham in November. There are some exciting Yorkshire horses to follow!

To watch the 20-minute preview on Youtube please use this link: <https://youtu.be/JQruVHbofVY>

Coming Soon – The 2022/23 Go Racing In Yorkshire Season Ticket

Offering incredible Yorkshire value, the Go Racing In Yorkshire season ticket is just the ticket for you! A season ticket holder can gain admission to all race meetings across Yorkshire. There is racing at a Yorkshire course most weekends, giving you the opportunity to watch all the big races live and FREE parking (except on-site parking at Doncaster St Leger Festival.)

There are two types of season ticket a single at £380 or a joint, for two people living at the same address, which costs £620 and there is a £3 booking fee per order. The ticket is valid from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Fuller details of how to purchase will be available on the GRIY website soon at <https://goracing.co.uk/>

GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

Monday September 27th Roscommon

First overseas trip during covid and a few more preparations than previously needed with the petrol crisis coming from nowhere as well. So electronic locator form filled in for the Irish government, NHS overseas covid passport downloaded, and luckily just enough petrol to get me to a petrol station in Dublin. Apart from Covid there was also Brexit to take into account and a green card needed for the car. (Which isn't green or a piece of card)

The Irish have been much stricter in their rules than the U K so the covid passport would not only be needed for entry into Ireland but also to get served in any restaurant.

It was prebooked tickets only but the different courses had their own interpretations of the rules that needed to be followed. Today was classified as an outdoor event with none of the indoor facilities open and no tote was in operation. Even Jerry Hanlon was commentating from the steps of the grandstand perched on one table with his kit on another.

The usual mixed bag in the two mile four-year-old maiden hurdle. Trezibond for Henry de Bromhead had the best form and just got home. He already had a rating of 111 which looks fair enough and he should stay further. I liked sixth home Heronord who can now go into handicaps while the two Elliot runners The Goffer- a big lump of a thing- and The Waltzer- very much a flat type didn't shape with much promise.

Only two mattered on looks and in the race for the mare's two-mile four maiden hurdle. De Lady in Red led four out and won well. Runner up Humble Glory was ridden at halfway and just stayed on a one pace to close the gap. With the opposition so poor it would be easy to overrate these two so we will see next time out.

Main race of the day was the Grade 3 two-mile Kilbegnet Novice Chase with three equally matched runners. The winner Exit Poll made most and battled back when headed by Embittered at the last. He looks like he still has improvement in him and certainly has a good attitude. This was Embittered's ninth chase for just the one win and while he might be worth a try at two and a half he has been expensive to follow. The third contender Bold Enough might just struggle off his rating of 140.

You couldn't miss bumper winner The Big Doyen who lived up to his name and came from off the pace to win. He could be anything but looked useful for this stage of the season. Runner up Ballyglass was unsold at €125K in the spring after two placed efforts and was here to win this before being reoffered for sale. He could not have been fitter and the pair were well clear. (He was eventually sold for £60K)

Tuesday September 28th Cork

A step up today with one indoor room open but still no tote while the course betting shop had the screens working but was not taking bets.

Modest fair in the main. In the two-year-old six-furlong maiden Pirate Jenny won for Ger Lyons but she was not the scopiast and might just be a two-year-old. Third home Dancing Rebel had much more substance and should have a future next season maybe over a bit further.

Main race of the day was the listed one-mile Navigation Stakes where they all finished in a heap after a slow gallop despite a big field. Winner Queenship had won a handicap off 85 and the form should probably not be taken literally.

Not much of a crowd and the next time I visit here has got to be on one of their big days as it has been a bit soulless on both my times here so far.

Wednesday September 29th Bellewstown

Five Euro (old codger rate) for entry which included a free proper race card (Only printed single sheets were available at the first two meetings). You won't get a deal like that in Britain. Lots of tents up and you could get a sit-down meal and one tent even had a singer belting out classic hits all afternoon.

Star of the show came in the last with Grade 1 hurdle runner Cask Mate making his flat debut in an all-aged mile and a half maiden at the age of eight. He scooted up and no doubt Noel Meade will be finding a top-class handicap or small graded race for his return to jumps action. In the three-year-old maiden over the same distance his stable mate Scrum Half just came up short to a granddaughter of Oaks winner Shahtoush. He will no doubt be in juvenile hurdles before long and should do well.

Earlier in the afternoon leading Irish female flat jockey Siobhan Rutledge lost her seven-pound claim. Apart from Rachel Blackmore there are no other established professional lady jockeys in Ireland. A few others are just getting started but Siobhan is leading the way at the moment.

Thursday September 30th Clonmel

Perfect Attitude who had three placed efforts in bumpers last season got off the mark on his hurdle debut for Gordon Elliot but not before Davy Russell rescued himself mid race by pushing himself back into the saddle off another horse's quarters. It was a modest maiden hurdle but he looks a chaser in the making at some sort of level. His stable mate Sam's Choice took the bumper and will be hurdling soon. I liked runner up State of Honor who looked like she would win a furlong out and will have no trouble taking a mare's only heat.

Two winners on the day in the claiming hurdle and a division of the 80-95 handicap hurdle with Fleury's Fort who was winning for the eighth time which is not bad for a low grade eleven-year-old never rated above 103.

Friday October 1st Gowran Park

The Boyle Sports course betting shop was open but you needed to show your Covid passport to enter- a requirement that went by the board on day two with a bigger crowd.

Two divisions of the two mile four-year-old maiden hurdle. Only three mattered in division one with Showbusiness for Gordon Elliot just odds against. A big son of Camelot he had had two goes on the flat in France plus four efforts in maiden hurdles but is just very one paced and was again found out here. Easca Peasca had himself had six goes over hurdles and just had a bit more close home. Division two was better. Vultan had beaten Luke Short six lengths at Navan when they were second and third to Weseekhimhere and extended that to ten lengths here. The runner up should win his maiden and both have a future. Third home The Big Chap was a nice individual and although beaten thirty lengths at 50/1 he too has a future.

The third two-mile maiden this time for older horses was not a strong race. Winner Still Standing is a third season maiden but had enough to see off Cirque Royal twice a winner for Charlie Appleby two summers ago. The interesting one from the race could be jumping debutante Corbin (a son of Jeremy naturally) who was beaten about twenty lengths but looked alright and he might have a future in handicaps down the line.

Willie Mullins had three in the listed mare's bumper with the favourite Flemencello being a big lump who was outpaced on the fastish ground. She will want a good trip over hurdles. Winner Quiet Escape will evidently be put away for the winter and resume for a summer hurdling programme next year.

Saturday October 2nd Gowran Park

The roads were awash with water as I got back to my hotel the night before but no rain fell in Gowran and when I saw Henry de Bromhead digging his heel repeatedly in the turf before one of the early races it was obvious that Champion chaser Put The Kettle On was not turning out for her seasonal debut. Still five good runners and a cracking race for the Grade 2 PWC Champion Chase as Royal Rendezvous who had done me a good turn in the Galway Plate just battled on to beat one time Arkle favourite Hardline. The winner knows how to get his head in front while the latter usually finds something too good for him nowadays.

The juvenile hurdle was a strange race as Virtual Hug and Inca Prince were first and second all the way with the latter refusing to settle yet he went clear going to the last where an awkward jump gave it away and Virtual Hug ran on again to take it. It is probably only moderate form but Inca Prince (who while at Henry de Bromhead's ran against Poetic Flare in a Group 2 as a two-year-old) while obviously not the full shilling has plenty of ability.

Willaston was a big priced winner of the two-mile four maiden hurdle after one pulled up effort in a point. He won it well and looked a scopey sort beforehand. We will see what the form is worth down the line.

The beginners chase went to Fully Charged who has already run in some decent handicaps. It was a poor contest and he isn't one to put any faith in.

Sunday October 3rd Tipperary

Almost normal for Tipperary's big Super Sunday fixture with the course restaurant, bar, and betting shop all open. Of course this is normally a mixed card but those will not be back in Ireland till next year.

The prices looked just wrong for the opening Joe Mac Hurdle a Grade 3 two-mile novice hurdle with Willie Mullins Sligo winner Arctic Warrior in at 5/4 (Willie does not send his good horses to Sligo) and Listowel winner San Salvador in at

12/1 for Joseph O'Brien. San Salvador took it up two out and just had to jump the last. Sean O'Keefe on eventual winner Purple Mountain thought he would have won anyway but he wouldn't. Purple Mountain will be competitive in mare's graded races but the stable probably has a dozen better mares. Arctic Warrior barely jumped a hurdle and pulled up. Got the race right and only a loss to show for it.

Galway Hurdle winner Saldier was allowed to dictate things in the Grade 3 Horse and Jockey Hurdle and had too much speed for the versatile if inconsistent Darasso and the in need of the run Jason the Militant. I imagine he will go to the Morgiana Hurdle he won two years ago.

The Grade 3 two-mile four novice chase has been won by some good horses and Gin On Lime looks another good winner. She is a solidly built sort who goes from the front and jumps really well. The mares chase at Cheltenham looks an obvious target for her with evidently only one more run before a winter break. Runner up Fan De Blues is down the pecking order at Willie Mullins but is a solid customer who could go for a good handicap somewhere.

The two-mile handicap hurdle was not a bad class race and winner Brides Hill could well be a factor in better races during the season.

The bumper was a moderate race with point winner Copper Nation making all. It had turned heavy by the time this was run after a torrential downpour so she will stay well when sent over jumps.

Monday October 4th Tipperary

The mixed Sunday card is usually followed by an all-jump card but with the no mixed meeting rule the last two years it has been a flat card on the Monday.

The nine furlongs two-year-old maiden has seen many future group performers in the past. I am not sure it was that good a renewal this time around. Winner Enthralment needed all of this trip on testing ground. Fourth home Dark Note for Joseph O'Brien is a big sort who opened favourite on his debut but drifted and will come on plenty for this. Paddock pick was 40/1 newcomer Conquer the Breeze for Andy Slattery who led early on before fading. He is another big type who I will watch with interest. The two Aidan O'Brien runners Sussex and Sundial were beaten at halfway.

The fillies equivalent saw Ahandfulofsummers win at the ninth time of asking following listed race places and a run in a classic. This was probably her job done. Third home Le Jardin Secret on only her second run at age four ran really well and as trainer Harry Kelly is more of a jumping man she could go down that route.

The listed seven and a half furlong Concorde Stakes was easily won by Maker of Kings for Ger Lyons and on this ground he could be picking up these sorts of races for a few seasons.

Runner up Carrytheone also a four-year-old gelding can also win some more with give in the ground.

I have been watching for Cracking Name running here for a while and these were her perfect conditions as she scooted up in the second division of the 45- 70 seven-and-a-half-furlong handicap for a fifth course success. She will get herself well handicapped again some time next season. Also for next season in sprints on soft or heavy are the Ken Condon pair Moss Tucker and Swift Flight who bolted up in their respective five-furlong races.

Tuesday October 5th Galway

The best beginners chase of the season so far was the highlight with Noble Yates coming from fourth at the last to get up in the two-mile two contest. He was sent to the sales after his bumper win but a £290K bid was not enough and he was led out unsold. This looked a minimum trip and his jumping will need to brush up a bit but he will be in graded novices before long. Runner up Gabynako was Grade 1 placed behind Bob Olinger over hurdles and is another who will want a bit further. Third home was the mare Magic Daze who was runner up in the mare's novice hurdle at Cheltenham. She tried to make all and was not given a hard time close home and a mares beginners race is there for the taking while a drop to two miles would not do any harm. Fourth Julies Stowaway will win chases as will sixth Railway Hurricane but Birchdale once so promising at Nicky Henderson's never got involved on his second start for Enda Bolger.

The maiden two-mile three hurdle looked OK and winner Blazing Khal won nicely for a horse that looked like it would benefit for the run. His trainer Charles Byrnes will no doubt find a handicap for him over the season. There will be one of these for the Gordon Elliot trained runner up Gringo D'aubrelle and the pair were well clear. The two trainers both back from six-month bans were having a good chat for most of the race.

The handicap hurdle over the same trip was for horses rated up to 113 but looked better than that and winner Pour Pavore and third Fancy A Cosmo who is still a maiden might be worth following.

Ilkedwayurthinkin took the winners of one race two six chase but his jumping was not good. He will be in handicaps now and will struggle unless he improves over the jumps. Runner up Eleazar Des Neiges is now 0 from 7 over fences and just looks slow.

The bumper looked ordinary with winner Smooth Player being a huge four-year-old who just did enough and it will be at least next season before the best of him will be seen.

Wednesday October 13th Wetherby

Still too firm for many but a couple of good chases with tight finishes. Whoshotthesherriff managed to fall and get beaten from a seemingly winning position when I had backed him previously. He snatched the win here when he looked beaten jumping the last fence better than Gaelik Coast in the two-mile three handicap chase. He deserves a chance in a decent contest. Road Warrior back in fourth looked in need of it and didn't have his usual cheekpieces and can win again in ordinary northern company.

A short head again in the two-mile chase as Return Ticket saw off Prince Escalus who might just have a few quirks.

Flight Deck took the three-mile handicap hurdle like a horse that is a lot better than his 130 rating.

Friday October 15th Haydock

Three two-year-old novice events were the main attraction. In the six-furlong fillies' race third home Hooked On You was easily paddock pick and looked the sort to be better next season.

The first division of the mile event looked the better race with two newcomers in first and second. Franz who I thought might need it is a big sort and just held off the much smaller Mandoni. Both should be O.K. while Magisterial took the second division at 4/9 without looking anything special.

Friday October 22nd Cheltenham

Third Time Lucki ran away with the two-mile novice chase but it is too early to get carried away with him. His two market rivals didn't jump a fence properly and runner up Buddy Rich while a really consistent performer has been seen off easily three times in beginners chases in Ireland. Third Time Lucki will no doubt be back here for the November meeting and we will know more after that.

The two-mile maiden hurdle was not good by Cheltenham standards with only three lengths covering the first five.

Winner Top Bandit will need to go up in trip.

Saturday October 23rd Cheltenham

I Like To Move It was paddock pick before the two mile four-year-old conditions hurdle and saw off his two more experienced and shorter priced rivals well. He was outpaced at various times of the race but by the end his stamina kicked in and he will be well suited by another half mile. Runner up Tritonic will go into handicaps with something to prove.

Before Midnight turned in a super display of jumping to win the two-mile handicap chase and his front running style will always be an asset.

The three-mile novice chase cut up badly and winner Does He Know won in spite of jumping worst of the three runners.

Sunday October 24th Aintree

Allmankind walked around the parade ring before the Old Roan half asleep looking a totally different animal than the one who use to tear away as a juvenile hurdler. He still led but under control and then battled well to defy top weight.

His main target will be the Melling Chase back here in April. Runner up Itchy Feet is a hard horse to trust.

The two four maiden hurdle looked a decent contest. Gelino Bello had too much speed in the end but second and third Ree Okka and Doctor Ken will certainly win races the latter being a really nice sort.

It will be interesting to see if bumper winner Lady Excalibur goes over hurdles as she is tiny.

Saturday October 30th Wetherby

The Charlie Hall had plenty of stories in it. Probably the last appearance of Cyrname who turned in a couple of mighty efforts in his time without winning one of the top races and then the fall of Shan Blue. He is now being talked up as the big British chase hope of the season but I don't think he would have won this by a huge margin if he had stood up. We

will see. Down the field over a totally inadequate trip Mighty Thunder stayed on well and no doubt will be aimed at Aintree in April.

Paisley Park is now just going through the motions and while there is talk of cheek pieces going all the way with a pair of blinkers would seem a better move.

Only seven in the two four novice hurdle but some good types. Winner Tamar Bridge may well go chasing after this but still looks like he can strengthen up a fair bit. The second and third Storm of Light and Kalmoor will win a novice hurdle while Hidden Heroics should be all right in time.

Saturday November 6th Aintree

Trevor Hemmings was never one to spend big money on his horses so you would expect something special for the £180K he spent on Hillcrest and he is certainly a very fine looking and very big beast. He can only improve but took the two-mile four novice hurdle in good style.

I was expecting a slightly better class field for the Grand Sefton on better ground than it regularly got in December. Mac Tottie has been steadily improving over the past year and kept on well to win. He will need to go up another few pounds to make the cut for the National but will evidently be back for the Becher in the meantime. Midlands National winner Time To Get Up presumably running here with a view to April looked in need of it and this trip was too short but he showed little to think he will be a National contender.

Friday November 12th Cheltenham

Art Approval looked the one in the conditional jockeys two-mile five handicap hurdle and duly won with substitute jockey Peter Kavanagh impressing on only his ninth winner. I liked the way he was very positive from two out and he looks a jockey to follow with his claim.

There is always something new in sport and the two-runner two-mile four novice chase provided it today. I thought Gin on Lime would give My Drogo a real battle and had been disappointed in her jumping before everything happened at the second last. She goes into a winter break while others will get a chance to make their case for the Mares Chase at the Festival. My Drogo was unlucky but falling over when he hadn't made much of a mistake was not good.

Blazing Khal was a great deal fitter than at Galway and ran out a good winner of the Grade 2 two-mile five novice hurdle. He will stay further. Gelino Bello again ran well and he too has a good future.

Saturday November 13th Cheltenham

Third Time Lucky had another easy win in the two-mile novice chase and will hopefully find something to give him a run for his money next time up. He is one of the strangest walkers you will see in the parade ring with his hind legs taking little skips every few strides like his rear end is out of sync with the front end but it obviously doesn't stop him running fast

A below par field but a wide open one for the Paddy Power Gold Cup. It's a while since I backed the winner of the race so it was nice to cheer home Midnight Shadow who looked fitter than he had at Aintree on his return. He got first run on the placed horses and those three Protektorat, Lalor, and Dostal Phil might want to step up in trip.

Sporting John only had to be nudged out to take the three-mile handicap hurdle and it was good to see after the poor end to his chasing efforts last season. Onagatheringstorm just failed to get home but can win on an easier track.

Sunday November 14th Cheltenham

The pre parade ring before the three-mile novice chase and David Bass wanders in and hides around the corner from where the horses come in. The object is to catch his mount Does He Know by surprise and when he appears Bass was on his back before he realised. He wasn't happy about being mounted and looks a real nut case but he runs his race. He just wasn't good enough to beat Threeunderthrufive who seems a horse that needs to be asked at every fence and will stay extreme distances.

Put The Kettle On lost her unbeaten Cheltenham record not getting going until far too late as Nube Negra made the first move of the season amongst the two milers. He is in against a deep group of horses this season so we will see how he fits in as the season goes on.

The bumper was probably only average but winner Timeforatune showed great resolution in taking it and should make a decent staying hurdler.

Saturday November 20th Haydock

A good renewal of the Betfair Chase turned into a cakewalk for A Plus Tard. He just travelled with so much ease during the race. It's hard to judge off this whether he has improved since last season and if previous seasons are a guide he might just go to Leopardstown at Christmas and then the Gold Cup. Royal Pagaille probably ran up to his best. His official rating is inflated after beating some ordinary horses easily on bottomless ground here in the Peter Marsh. It wasn't Bristol De Mai's ground but he stopped quickly and we will see if they carry on with him.

There was a super display of jumping from Bravemansgame in the two-mile five graduation chase and he should have a good season at least until he has to take on the best of the Irish novices whichever they might be. Itchy Feet again placed is happy to go along at his own pace but will certainly not put himself out to try and win a race.

Barrichello made all in the two-mile listed novice hurdle. He has the size to go chasing but could be worth a go in a decent handicap before that. Sonigino on his first run for Paul Nicholls was paddock pick and you would imagine that softer ground and a longer trip would suit in the short term but he looks like a chaser for next season.

Wednesday November 24th Wetherby

Skycutter the November Handicap fourth made his jumping debut in the juvenile hurdler but anybody taking the odds on survived plenty of scares on the way around has his jumping left much to be desired. He had little to beat here and his jumping will have to improve if he is to make the grade. He is his sire Scissor Kick's (an Australian Sprinter) first winner over jumps and the stamina must come from the dam a daughter of Arc and King George winner Hurricane Run.

MICKY HAMMOND STABLE VISIT (MIDDLEHAM)

Thanks to all who made it to our first stable visit for some time in October. Provided the new strain of Covid-19 doesn't create unexpected restrictions in the New Year we hope to resurrect more stable visits next spring. Here are a few photos from the visit provided by member Angela White. More on the NMRC Facebook page.



On the left are two of the stable's horses walking back from the gallops, which most trainers in Middleham share. The one exception is Mark Johnston, who has his own private gallops at the bottom of the valley and can just be made out in the background.

On the right is the 'third lot' walking past the castle on the way up to the gallops which are about 1 mile from the main yard which houses about 40 horses. The trainer also has two satellite yards nearby taking his total in training currently to around 70 horses. Due to time constraints, we only managed to look around the main yard & gallops before setting off to nearby Catterick for their afternoon meeting.

Whilst the yard has since sent out a few long-priced winners Micky tends to aim at races between November and early May and whilst he has summer jumps runners he does not like running them after the end of May.

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Festive Greetings from all the NMRC Committee! The above card is available to purchase via The British Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Centre – website <https://britishtrc.co.uk/>

Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 30th January

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