

'He's had the operation on his leg. There are no complications and they are happy with it' – RACING POST HEADLINE ON MONDAY, APRIL 20

JOCKEY Josh Moore was recovering from surgery on a broken leg suffered in a fall at Haydock on Saturday evening [April 16], reported the *Racing Post* on the Monday.

It was a heavy fall from Gleno in a veterans' handicap chase and the 30-year-old also sustained broken ribs, a punctured lung and damage to his back.

Having been taken to Aintree Hospital, Moore was moved to intensive care on Sunday due to a rare reaction while under sedation, but the operation was able to go ahead on Monday.

Everyone involved breathed a sigh of relief. Speaking on Monday afternoon, the jockey's sister Hayley Moore said: "He's had the operation on his leg and there are no complications and they are happy with it. We're just waiting for him to come round."

THAT WAS nearly five months ago, writes Harold Heys. It quickly became a nightmare for popular Josh and his family but now, finally, he is on the mend although it seems unlikely that he will return to the saddle for the rough and tumble of National Hunt racing.

*Josh's long fight towards fitness is chronicled in the autumn edition of the always-excellent **Injured Jockeys' newsletter**. This (below) is the start of the story. For those of our readers who don't pick it up regularly you can find the full frightening story at Injuredjockeysfund.org.uk You can request a free copy of the IJF quarterly newsletter and look through their excellent Christmas brochure which has lots of Christmas gifts on offer. Look out for the colourful socks and scarves and the very useful notepads.*

Lead story in the Injured Jockeys Fund autumn newsletter begins:

THE GOOD NEWS story to top all good news stories in horse racing this year has been the near miraculous recovery of Josh Moore, who suffered so much and for so long from a rare condition in the wake of a Haydock fall. Early fears that he might not survive were followed by talk of a brain injury that could destroy his quality of life, all of which concerns were gloriously dispelled when he returned home to his partner Phoebe and son Freddie in early July, ending a three-month nightmare.

It all began with a veterans' chase in which Josh was aboard the fancied Gleno, a reliable sort in every sense who had never previously fallen. Possibly distracted on this occasion, the chestnut flipped over and landed on his rider, who suffered a broken left femur as well as a fracture of his T7 vertebra. That would have been bad enough, an unhappy brace of injuries requiring half a year in recovery at least, but Josh's luck got worse within a day. Fat from his broken femur leaked into his bloodstream, a rare occurrence but one that is known to follow some injuries to major bones.

Don't miss the rest of the harrowing and heart-warming story...on the IJF website!

Go Racing In Yorkshire – What’s Happening in the County

All the Ladies Days have now taken place and the final judging is taking place by public vote. By the time you read this the winner will have been chosen so look out on our social media channels to see who was judged to be the winner!

As we all know, the running of the Cazoo St Leger was postponed due to the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a huge advocate of racing and she will be sadly missed by the industry.

Eldar Eldarov was an impressive winner of the country’s oldest classic and he currently holds entries in the Qipco British Champions Long Distance Cup at Ascot later this month as well as the Lexus Melbourne Cup in November.



The Yorkshire Wonder Horse competition, sponsored by Wm McIvor & Son has cranked up and six months into the campaign we have a clear leader with It Just Takes Time, trained by Mark Walford for the Go Alfresco Racing Partnership, who has scored at four different courses.

Seven horses have won at three different courses and there are 80 who have won at two. With 15 months left in the competition we watch excitedly to see where the horses will appear next.

Recently we spent a day with top Yorkshire flat jockey Joanna Mason, following her every move to give an insight into a day in the life of a flat jockey. You can watch the video on our social media channels, or on

YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFCCOH4Vx_o&t=65s.

We are nearing the end of the Go Racing In Yorkshire Future Stars Apprentice Series, supported by White Rose Saddlery. With 57 points, Ryan Sexton is currently at the head of the table and looks hard to beat although a win in the next race at Catterick on Saturday 15th October could put current series winner Oisin McSweeney back in the lead. The final will take place at Doncaster on the closing day of the flat turf season.

Jump racing is due to make a return very soon starting at Wetherby on Wednesday 12th October. There are 40 jump fixtures scheduled across our three courses and a preview of some the county’s jump horses will be out by the end of October. Keep an eye on our social media channels to see what our trainers have to say about the forthcoming campaign.

We’re looking forward to watching our Yorkshire contenders take their place in the big meetings abroad, particularly at the Breeders’ Cup meeting at Keeneland in early November and will be following the entries and declarations closely, cheering them on from this side of the pond!

GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

Saturday August 6th Haydock

Plenty of handicappers trying to step up in class in the Rose of Lancaster and it was John Smith's Handicap winner Anmaat who did just that. He did it in impressive fashion as well and could well take another step up before the end of the season. Runner up Grocer Jack had won well in listed company on his British debut. He had plenty of Group experience in Germany but came up short when tried at Group 1 and 2 level.

For a big Saturday afternoon the rest of the card was very average.

Sunday August 7th Haydock

The two-year-old six-furlong race had a decent sized field all of them debutants. They looked a decent bunch and the first four Charyn, Kitai, Yorkshire, and Silver Legend could be above average. The latter was a really nice sort but was clueless for the first half of the race before getting the idea. He is bred to be better over ten furlongs next season.

Wednesday August 17th York

What a disappointing horse Baaeed is. When you go and see a champion racehorse it should look something special but you wouldn't pick Baaeed out on looks. He is small and before the International was getting sweaty as well. In the race of course he showed his class barely coming off the bridle to make in ten from ten and his sixth Group 1 on the bounce. He looked better at ten furlongs than the mile and will get a mile and a half with no problem. Unfortunately, he will probably never get the chance to prove it as the Champion Stakes at Ascot will likely be his final race and he will retire without really being tested to find out how good he is. There seems no reason why he shouldn't stay in training at five as his owner hardly needs the money from the stud fees. It is a strange sport when the top performers retire at the top of their game to sire horses none of whom will be as good as themselves- but it has been the same since time immemorial. It's ten years since I came to see Frankel here and he dismissed a much better field that day. For my money he would have seen off Baaeed but of course we will never know.

Of the beaten horses Mishriff ran his first good race since here twelve months ago. He will go to stud after a good career (in the top ten of all time in terms of prize money won) but is not a champion. Third home Sir Busker is a Group 3 runner at best and Dubai Honour hasn't been as good this season as last. Native Trail was a disappointment but the three-year-olds are a poor bunch. Finally High Definition has been given plenty of chances since his two-year-old wins but at this level is one paced and he doesn't stay a mile and a half properly. As Derby winners are now getting gelded because they have no future at stud perhaps that operation and eight flights might be the way to go with him.

No stars in the Great Voltiguer and no Leger winner. The gelded Deauville Legend has the Melbourne Cup as his target and this win should be good enough for him to make the field. Runner up Secret State did O K stepping up from handicaps but looked a bit pace less at this trip. El Bodegon is very small and we might have seen the best of him. All sorts of excuses were made for the O'Brien runner Aikhal but the bottom line is he was just not good enough.

Nine runners in the Acomb but most never got involved. Winner Chaldean pulled early and took it up three out. He was soon challenged by runner up Indestructible but really put his head down and never really looked like being passed. He will no doubt get a mile and the Futurity is an obvious target but that is a long way off. He didn't look a Group 1 performer. The runner up was easily second best and was just outstayed. The rest really didn't look up to Group class.

Saturday September 3rd Haydock

This was the fourth leg of a trip to race in four countries in a week.

Looking at the card when I got back on the Friday it looked excellent but it ended up being disappointing with thirty-four non-runners. Good to Firm, Firm in places really shouldn't lead to that number of no shows.

Naval Power was long odds on for the Ascendent Stakes but was edgy and sweaty in the parade ring. He looked in trouble for a second or two in a race run at a crawl but he ended up winning nicely. What it amounted to we will have to see when he goes for a Group 1 later in the season.

They didn't seem to go much of a pace in the Group 3 Superior Mile either but it was two and a half seconds quicker than the juveniles. Winner Triple Time won the Ascendent last season and this was his first run since and he could be useful but the opposition here was not graded class.

The Old Borough Cup cut up to a miserable field for the money but saw the ride of the day. After a slow start Gina Mangan on Island Brave and Hollie Doyle on Amtiyaz kicked on and caught the other four jockeys flat footed.

Amtiyaz was being ridden as the others finally closed but Gina Mangan kept calm and kept enough in hand to kick again to hang on for the win.

No superstar in the Sprint Cup but the course record may (or may not) have been broken as the official timing system didn't work. Different hand timing experts had it either side of the old record so it isn't going to stand. Minzaal took it very easily in the end and let's hope he can go on improving and we don't have another sprinter who wins his Group 1 and doesn't do it again. Emaraty Ana ran his best race since this race last year but favourite Native Crown hasn't gone on since his Ascot win.

If there is a charity race on a race card they are always run as the first or last on the card. The same should happen for the Arab races that seem to be creeping more and more into flat cards.

Saturday September 24th Haydock

It seemed a bigger crowd than some of the higher profile days and I am sure the fact that it was £10 to get in might have made the difference. Prices have just got ridiculous since covid so perhaps courses might be starting to see sense.

The two-year-old mile maidens were the interesting races. Conservationist was given a Guineas quote after making all in the fillies' race and winning easily. That looks a bit optimistic but she looks useful. Third home the Juddmonte filly Cherry a granddaughter of multiple Group 1 winner Midday made a nice debut and will win races. The colts and geldings looked a better than average event as well. Winner Salt Bay did lots wrong. He missed the break, jumped an imaginary hurdle two furlongs out but still won nicely. Runner up Arkendale came from last and certainly wasn't given a hard time of it. Third placed Sir Jock Bennett is a big lump who had shown little on his first two runs but can go into handicaps and it will be interesting to see what mark he is given. Fourth placed New Tycoon is another super looking sort from the James Horton yard who might not have got home. Some others from the yard who had looked promising have not gone on. Hopefully they will do better as three-year-olds.

Editor's Note: I made only my second trip of the season to Haydock on Sept 24th and can confirm the place was very busy! It was, of course, a weekend of no top flight football locally and that may also have helped. However, let's hope that the reduced pricing will not be a one off! One thing Haydock could have done better on the day was to utilise the Newton Stand as well, especially as there were so many unused benches/tables available in that fenced off area that would have been quickly occupied had access been allowed.

READERS LETTER

I was a member at Carlisle for several years, and always enjoyed the friendly welcoming atmosphere of a small country course I visited again last Friday (19/8/22) for what was marketed as "Carlisle Youth Zone Family Fun Day" . A discount of £4 pp was available for Seniors, but not if you bought your tickets in advance. Payment at the gate was card only

The facilities in general were much improved since my last visit-the Bell Hall now has food outlets, including fish & chips at £8 a go and reasonably priced tea and coffee. There is a new Owners and Trainers room, near the paddock which looks nice

On the down side, I had to use a card to buy a £3 race card -no cash accepted, and the Annual Members facilities are basic to say the least. They are now located in a wooden structure, with just 4 tables, a TV and coffee machine (free). There is a second members room at a remote part of the course, but not much better. I spoke to some Members who expressed disappointment at the way they had been ousted from their previous "home" which was the 1st floor of the main Grandstand. This is now a restaurant-much larger than before, but a sign of the money-focussed times we live in.

The biggest disappointment and surprise was the fact that no picnics were allowed! Bags were searched for food on arrival by security staff, which seems bizarre, given it was a "Family fun Day" !! There were lots of unused picnic tables around the racecourse. I wonder if this is the policy of Jockey Club Racecourses nowadays (presumably to maximise income and protect the interests of the food outlets) I cannot imagine a day at Cartmel without picnics! I enjoyed the day, but felt that the "no picnics" rule was an own goal on a Family fun day - surely it could have been relaxed for this one day? I wonder if the families who attended will ever return? **John Boswell (Ainsdale, Southport).**

Editors Note: I also cannot understand why the trackside parking at £10 a car is no longer available at Carlisle when the only other option is parking in the car park opposite the main entrance, which in winter is often a muddy field fit only for four-wheel drive vehicles and tractors!

2022/23 NATIONAL HUNT 'SATNAPS PLUS' CHALLENGE

This winter's NH tipping challenge has had a facelift! We will be running over 21 dates (split into three rounds of seven weeks each) covering the main jumps season in the UK and finishing on Grand National Day in 2023. Generally entries will take place on Saturdays but in December I have added an 'extra day' on *Tuesday 27th December so we can include the Welsh Grand National. There will be no competition on New Year's Eve or Easter Saturday next year.

This means that we shall be starting earlier than usual on 12th November this year with the big jumps meeting at Cheltenham that weekend.

The main change this winter is that entrants will need to make **TWO** selections on each date. **Selection one** is the 'nap' and will have a notional 2pts win staked. **Selection two** is on the feature handicap race of the day and will have a notional 1pt each way staked. (Round 1 list of feature races is available in the 'rules' with subsequent rounds to be advised in due course when the 2023 fixtures are confirmed).

All entries will be scored based upon Tote returns with a cap on the maximum points per selection set at 25 pts – or 50pts per entry date.

No 'spare' selections will be allowed in future so if you fail to enter on any date you will be allocated a 'default selection' per the revised rules. Similarly, default rules will apply for any non-runners selected.

Entry fees are again held at £10 for all three rounds. There may only be one entry per member for this competition although spouses/partners/family of members may also enter. If paying by cheque please make payable to 'North & Midlands Racing Club'.

The aim of the competition is quite simple – select your nap and feature handicap race picks each Saturday* and if it wins (or placed for the feature handicap race) your points are based on the 'Tote' prices declared.

Weekly selections can be registered by phone, text or e mail. This year the deadline for all methods of entry will again be 1pm, or for races that start before then at least 15 minutes before the race start time. This rule is to ensure all entrants are able to enter on a 'level playing field'.

Full rules will be supplied to all entrants in due course – for postal entries please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a copy of the rules posting out. The entry form below can also be used.

You can also enter 'online' by e mailing info@northernracingclub.com and sending your entry fee via direct bank payment (bank details are the same as in previous years but can be supplied if required).

✂.....

SATURDAY NAPS+ NATIONAL HUNT CHALLENGE (2022-23) ENTRY FORM

Please enter me in this winter's tipping competition. My £10 entry fee

(payable to North & Midlands Racing Club) is enclosed.

I do/do not require a copy of the rules posting out (sae required). Full rules also available on club website.

As score updates are provided weekly via e mail, an e mail address is preferred. Scores also in Racin'.

NAME(S).....

ADDRESS.....

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PHONE.....E MAIL.....

CARTMEL REFLECTIONS - 2022 SEASON

It was great to see big crowds back again for all the meetings this year and even the twice cancelled (due to Covid-19) David Gray music concert went ahead!

Readers may recall that this time last year I reported that local trainer Jimmy Moffatt and rider Charlotte Jones won the top trainer/jockey awards at Cartmel and guess what – they did it again in 2022!

However, the trainer lost one of his long-time supporters in July with the death of Varlien Vyner-Brooks at the age of 88. Although I never met him formally, he was always at Cartmel with his friends/family in the 'Hill & Stream' enclosure, quite close to where we have a spot. A retired solicitor by profession, but he was also well known as a racecourse commentator back in the day. He had horses with Jimmy Moffatt for over 15 years and enjoyed 28 winners during that time, including *Altruism*, who still holds a course record at Cartmel.

I mentioned last year that the course is somewhat specialist and that *Dressed For Success* & *Tonto Spirit* were two of the top performers last season. Both found it harder this season, with higher handicap ratings, but both managed to win again with *Tonto Spirit* now holding the most wins record at the track. Other top performers last year included *Alqamar** & *Native Fighter* although both struggled with their higher ratings in 2022 but are still young enough to bounce back in 2023. *Part owned by Varlien Vyner-Brooks.

I also highlighted the good record at Cartmel of Guisley based trainer Sam England in 2021, so it was no surprise to see that she enjoyed a triple success at the track with *Liffeydale Dreamer* in 2022. (Photo below courtesy of Brian Goodwill).



This year's top performer was, however, *Rapid Flight* with 5 wins and a 2nd place (beaten a nose). Other creditable performances were seen with *Dee Star*, *Mah Mate Bob* & *Tico Times* all winning twice.

My highlight of the year was attending twice as an owner with *Going Mobile* (trained by Sam England). On the first visit he didn't handle the softish ground too well whilst on the second outing he was a creditable 3rd being just run out of it up the home straight.

It was 22 years earlier that I was last at Cartmel as an owner when club horse Colmarann (trained by Sue Smith) was 2nd here behind the top-class veteran Mcgregor The Third.

Whilst some people say that the admission costs at Cartmel are on the high side for the facilities available, I would counter that by saying that their model of encouraging race goers to bring own food/drink (even BBQ), allowing dogs on lead and allowing as much on course parking as is possible more than makes up for the slightly higher entry costs. I cannot wait to be back again next year. Roll on Whit Week 2023!

GORDON ARMISTEAD'S EUROPEAN RACING TRAVELS

Sunday August 28th Krefeld

They first raced in Krefeld in 1884 but it only lasted six years and it was 1913 before racing returned. Not perhaps the best time to start such a venture but soon after World War 1 in 1920 it was up to fourteen days racing a year. After World War 2 it was 1950 before racing returned after repairs to the track and stands. As has been the case with virtually all the German tracks I have visited Krefeld has had financial troubles and in 1997 the club went bankrupt. That was probably brought about due to the extensive renovation work carried out over the previous two years. Almost immediately another club was formed and racing was able to take place in 1998.

In 2013 the course staged its first Group 2 race the SWK Mile Trophy. This race has had several names and moves courses with great regularity and this was the only time it was run at Krefeld. There are at present three Group 3's at the course. The Dr Busch Memorial run in April for three-year-olds over 1,700 metres. The Herzog von Ratibor Rennen for two-year-olds over 1,700 metres and run in November and the latest addition the Neiderrhein-Pokal for three-year-olds plus over 2,000 metres and also held in November. The latter race was transferred when Frankfurt racecourse closed its doors.

There are now eight days racing per year with one meeting each month from March to December except for September.

The racecourse is also a training centre with three trainers in residence the main one being Mario Hofer with about sixty horses. Hofer won the German Derby in 2012 with Pastorius who had won the Herzog von Ratibor the previous autumn.

While originally Krefeld was located a few kilometres west of the River Rhein its expansion and absorption of neighbouring districts means it is now one of the twelve German ports on the river. Its population is over a quarter of a million and industries in the city have included steel and chemicals but it was also once called the velvet and silk city being famous for its textiles especially ties. Its attractions include a textile museum and the very picturesque Castle Linn dating back to the year 1200.

It is about twenty kilometres north of Dusseldorf and famous people from the city include Thierry Hermes -born in 1801 founder of what is now the famous fashion house, and Ralf Hutter -founder and lead singer with the pioneers of electronic music Kraftwerk who were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021.

Once Krefeld became part of this trip how to get here underwent many changes. The original plan was to fly to Frankfurt from Liverpool and stay in Cologne but the flight arrived late in the evening. In the end the choice was to fly to Brussels International with Brussels Airlines from Manchester and stay in Aachen which is the easternmost city of Germany and where I could easily get the train to Krefeld.

It was my first trip to the continent since Brexit and of course we are now second-class citizens having to wait half an hour to go through passport control as E.U citizens have priority.

Staying in Aachen allowed me to take advantage of what must have been the best travel bargain for many a year. You could for €9 buy a ticket which would allow you on to all public transport in Germany for the entire month except for the main line trains. The scheme which ran for June, July, and August was brought in as petrol prices rose and nearly forty million tickets were sold. I was only going to use it for three days but it must have saved the locals a lot of money.

All great plans however do not run smoothly. I had expected the card in Krefeld to be in the afternoon but as with some other meetings I had been to it was an early start to cover the morning slot for the French PMU. First race was 10.45 and to make sure I got there in time meant catching the 7.37 which got into Krefeld just before 9.00. So, too early for breakfast at the hotel, too early for the bus to the station and as I walked through Aachen town centre there was still activity at some of the bars from Saturday night.

It was still the law that masks had to be worn on public transport in Germany and these had to be FFP2 masks and everyone was complying.

From the main station in Krefeld it was only a few yards to the bus stop to catch number 054 which runs every half hour to stop Schonwasserstrasse. From there it was a nice walk for about a kilometre through the Stadtwald or city forest to the course. The area was donated to the city by William Deuss a silk manufacturer in the late nineteenth century and has walking and cycling trails, a boating lake, an outdoor concert area, and a large beer garden.

€9 for an advance ticket to get in which included a free race card. All the races were sponsored by Sparkassen Bank and their branches in Krefeld had given away free tickets to all customers.

German tracks all seem to have lots of space both behind and in front of the stands. They also have virtually no tarmacked surfaces and here it was mainly gravel behind and grass in front. There are three main buildings. The Derby Grandstand houses a restaurant with a glass front and has an extra charge of €2.50. The main grandstand fully seated looked like it had recently had a new paint job with the steps up to the seats and the seats themselves looking pristine. There was a third stand about fifty metres further down the track also all seated. The parade ring behind the main stand has a raised grass bank around it and the pre-parade/ saddling boxes were off to one side. Between the stands and the parade ring were the mobile caterers and tote outlets. As is usual with German tracks the crowd was mainly families and while there were some play areas a large number of the younger racegoers were around the parade ring and watched the races from the stands. British tracks have mainly given up on family groups and when they do hold family fundays they are in enclosures way down the track where they just see the horses flash by every thirty-five minutes instead of getting close up to the animals.



The track is right-handed and about eighteen hundred metres around with a run in of about four hundred metres. The map in the race card still shows a figure of eight course and if you look closely amongst the trees in the middle of the course you can vaguely see what looks like an old hedge from a long disused jumps track. The trees were a problem and viewing was not good. There is a nine-hole golf course in the centre and as with all golf courses on racetracks that is bad news.

With Baden Baden also on today this was very much the second meeting with only eighteen-year-old Leon Wolff-third in the jockeys table with forty-three wins-being in double figures for the season. Only six races on the card with a planned seventh cancelled after the entry stage as it had not attracted enough horses. The standard was

not great with four category F races a category E and a category D with five handicaps and a three-year-old maiden.

After watching the first two races from the main stand I thought I would try out the less populated stand down the track and I got chatting to a local who had been going racing a long time. He was 81 and would rather have been at Baden Baden but couldn't be bothered with the travel any more. He watched all the big British flat meetings on the internet and thought the jockeys over here were a poor lot as a whole and the French were better.

The locals riding today at Krefeld today rated even lower except for Wolff who he said would win the next race for local trainer Hans-Albert Blume who is Wolff's boss and who's stable you could just about see in the back straight. Blume's father he told me was an excellent trainer before the war who would regularly have lots of winners in France each year. Wolff duly out rode the Dutch amateur Lize Dieteren who was on the favourite. Leading and kicking early in the straight he was five lengths up before she made her move and while she gained hand over fist it was all too late. There were quite a few Dutch trained runners some in the colours I remembered from the Dutch Derby I saw won by All Percy. His owner/trainer Lucien van der Meulen has since handed the licence to daughter Romy who has had nearly forty winners in Germany over the last two seasons since taking over.

The early start meant the last race was 1.23. I had checked out whether it was possible to get to the Castle Linn but the bus timetable just didn't work so it was back to Aachen (bus and train fell perfectly and I was back before 3.30) and on the trail of Emperor Charlemagne.

Aachen a spa town from Roman times became the chosen base of the first Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne and it continued to be the home for the empire (Also known as the First Reich) for several centuries. Charlemagne ordered the erection of the cathedral which is the main attraction in the city.

The Centre Charlemagne Museum tells the history of the city from Charlemagne's time until the present day. All the tourist attractions are near to one another around the main square.

Many of the historical buildings in the centre had to be rebuilt after World War 2. Although not bombed as it was not an industrial city the Battle of Aachen lasted twenty days. The Americans advance was street by street using

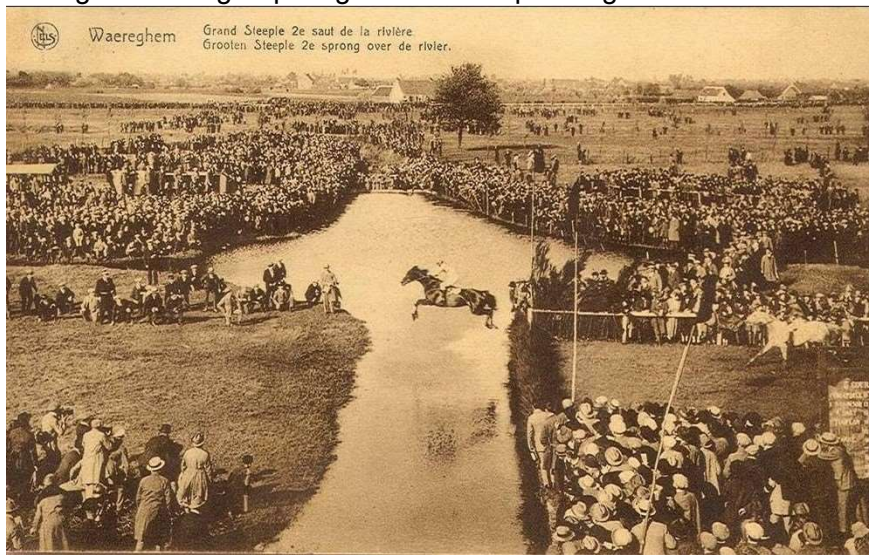
artillery and tanks to blast many of the buildings. Restoration of the Cathedral alone took thirty years and €40 million.

On a sporting front Aachen is the home each June of the Concours Hippique International Officiel the biggest and most important horse show in Europe featuring Show Jumping, Dressage, Eventing, Carriage Driving, and Vaulting.

There was a wine festival on this weekend in the square near the town hall and an outdoor classical music festival in the Kurpark just outside the city centre. There were also evidently plenty of people in town for the Spa Grand Prix which was being held about fifty kilometres away.

Tuesday August 30th Waregem

The 175th year of the Waregem Koerse as the meeting is known. Waregem is in the Flanders region of Belgium not far from the French border. It is officially a city (since 1st Jan 2000) but a small one of about 40,000 people and grew as a textile town especially its flax mills. It is known in the Wigan area because Athletic played S V Zulte-Waregem in the group stage of the Europa League in 2013.



The first race meeting here in 1847 featured a flat race for local farm horses and a ridden trotting race and was run in the streets of the town. In 1855 the races moved to a meadow outside of town and in 1858 the first Grote Steeple Chase van Vlaanderen was run. The main feature of the race was the jump across the Gaverbeek a small tributary of the River Leie. The jump was five metres wide and as the postcard from the 1920 race shows it was a formidable obstacle. Multiple winners of the big race include Spectre five wins in the 1870's, and more recently Taupin Rochelais with four wins on the bounce 2015 to 2018. There is also a dual British winner in Kildagin for David

Nicholson and John Suthern in 1974 and 75.

The record holder however is Redpath with seven wins between 1887 and 1896 which is joint second for the most wins in one race. The only horse ahead of him is Leaping Plum who won the Grasmick Handicap at Fonner Park Nebraska eight times between 1995 and 2003

Trotters were added to the program in 1920 and in 1972 the present dedicated trotting track was built. There are now also twelve trotting meetings at the track over the summer with four also having some flat gallop races. These other meetings are run by a separate organisation from today's card in Waregem draft.

This race meeting is held on the first Tuesday after the last Sunday in August but nowadays the festival is a weeklong event. It starts on the Thursday when the fairground opens and there are free toys thrown from the balcony of the old town hall for children up to the age of 12. There is also a comedy night, music festival, drama productions, and a market. The week ends on the day after race day when the fair is free for any locals with disabilities.

Arriving by train there is the choice of walking the couple of kilometres to the course or taking a shuttle bus. To see a bit of the town I walked passing through the church square where the fairground is set up and then straight on to a street that was lined with fast food outlets and bars along its length. After crossing the ring road (which was closed to traffic as were all the town centre roads) the course was on the left.

€12 to €15 depending on when you buy your ticket if you want to go in the centre of the course, €25 to €27 for basic entry on the outside of the course and €55 if you want entry to the temporary grandstand. €3 for a race card. I imagine you won't see anything live in the middle and it's not much better on the outside and the big screens are a necessity. There were some steppings around what the course calls the most beautiful grandstand in Europe (new for the 2016 running of the race) but for today it is four levels of corporate/private boxes and for the rest of the year rooms to rent for events and also home to a restaurant. There was a raised flat area with bars and then by the famous water jump and finish line was the temporary seated stand which maybe held five hundred people. In the area around the water jump lots of people had brought folding chairs to get the front row positions early in the afternoon. There was also a VIP stand tucked in the corner. In old pictures of the race there is a two storey

open topped stand running half way down the straight with what looks like an old mill and chimney where the new stand is.



One thing missing is a parade ring. The horses circled out on the track so the only people who could see the horses before the race were those who had chosen that area of the rail to watch the races.

Plenty of fast-food outlets which accepted cash but the bars did not. You had to buy tokens to swap for your drinks at special kiosks- one token was €3. Not much choice at most bars as it was one brand of beer and either full coke or coke zero. One token per drink for beer or coke in a very small one trip cup. They weren't giving it away and if you worked it out I am sure even Jockey Club Racecourses would blush at the mark up.

The crowd estimate was given as 35,000 and it was packed. I had a couple of walks around while the trotting

races were on and it was just hard work weaving through different groups of people. As the afternoon wore on the one trip cups and other rubbish littered the ground making it even worse and a story the next day criticised the amount of rubbish.

The course is right-handed and tight being only about 1,450 metres around with the hurdle and flat track being a bit less at about 1,350. The fences are a mixture. The water has been greatly modified with the Gaverbeek culverted although the large lake on the inside on the photo is still there on the infield. It has a much wider fence in front than in Britain and the water is wider but most horses were landing in the water which had no depth to it. The bank is similar to the one at Cheltenham having two or three strides on the top. The rest are mostly hedges that are jumped through and not over and do not have much substance to them. The fallers on the afternoon seemed to be horses that jumped crookedly rather than straight through. The hurdles look quite big but again the top is soft and horses jump through the top few inches. Flat racing at the meeting was a recent addition in 2019 with the St Leger. This year's winner under top weight was a horse called Lady Magda who was rated 54 in the UK when trained by Jonathan Portman but is evidently undefeated this season at Ostend, Mons and now here.

Ten races on the card with four trotting events, two on the flat including one for Arabs and four over jumps. The one trotting race that was out of the ordinary was a celebrity charity event. The sulky's had two seats for the driver and celeb who were mostly sportsmen but the winner was a local who had won a competition to take part in the race.

I did the form for the jump races from the France- Galop site as there does not appear to be any Belgium paper or web site that gives horse racing form. The Belgium Galop Federation website just gives the basic results for flat races but no details and you could not look up any form.

The first jump race was a hurdle over 3,600 metres and just the five runners. I noted when I went racing at Ostend that the Belgium bookmakers were rip off merchants and they confirmed it here. You could make a case for all five but odds of 6/4 twice 2/1 twice and 5/2 the outsider are just on the tight side for me and the tote got my small wagers. Surprisingly for such a big crowd there were no queues at the tote windows all afternoon but perhaps the crowd were not there for the betting.

The winner of the hurdle Buen Star is an old timer by French standards at nine and this was his eighteenth win from seventy-four starts mainly in claiming class.

The four- and five-year-old chase over 3,950 metres missed out the bank and the water jump. The winner Dreammy Love had been well beaten in handicaps this year.

The big race was the fifth and the build-up started with a young lady riding a winged horse parading down the home straight. She followed a cart with several other young ladies draped over it on to which when they reached the starting area the jockeys were introduced individually.

All this had been done twenty minutes before the start of the race and then everyone just hung around waiting for some horses to appear.

The race which is part of the Crystal Cup of cross-country races is a handicap with a top weight of 70 kilos over 4,600 metres worth €40K to the winner. All the runners as for all of the jump races were trained in France. It was 2007 when the last Belgium trained horse won and the last UK challengers were in 2019 when Jamie Snowden sent Fact of the Matter to finish fifth and David Pipe sent Van Gogh de Granit to finish fourth.

Patrice Quinton had trained the last ten winners and had three of the eight runners but surprisingly they were all among the outsiders in the betting. Favourite was Arc Du Chatelet who had finished second in the last two runnings in 2019 and 2021. The favourite ran a shocker pulling up and the Quinton run came to an end with Polinuit winning for trainer Francoise Nicolle and jockey Angelo Zuliani. Quinton had the second and third with Premier Vert-an ex stable mate of the winner-and Heclypse Blue under Felix De Giles who carried my money but looked to need a more galloping track.

The final chase was over the same course and distance and Gard Feel under top weight cantered in to win his fifth race on the bounce and will no doubt be here for the big race next year.

I had paid to get into the temporary grandstand and chose a seat on the back row thinking I would get a clear view of the whole course. However, there were plenty of temporary tents and a stage in the infield. From when they swung down the side of the course until they re-entered the straight all you could see was the top half of the jockeys so you could see when they jumped but not the fence. Having watched the hurdle from the stand I watched the first chase from on the rail by the water (behind the people in there folding chairs) and could see just as much live from there as in the stand. I ended up watching the jump races again when I got home on YouTube.

Thursday September 1st Hippodrome Marcq-en-Baroeul Le Croise-Laroche

Originally in the planning I had been going to Paris for Paris-Longchamp today and Auteuil on the Friday before coming home. I didn't actually know where La Croise Laroche was and just looked it up for interest on seeing it in the fixture list. It fitted in nicely and a new course was too good to miss and it became the 150th I have been too. Just forty-five minutes on the TGV high speed train from Brussels

Midi to Lille-Europe Station.

La Croise Laroche is a crossroads in the town of Marcq-en-Baroeul and Marcq-en-Baroeul is a suburb of the grandly titled European Metropolis of Lille. This incorporates what were once separate French cities and towns and also crosses the border into Belgium.

The course was originally going to be called the Hippodrome of the Three Cities being at the midpoint between Lille, Roubaix (famous as the finishing point of the classic Paris- Roubaix cycling race) and Tourcoing. It however took



the name Hippodrome des Flandres before being renamed the Hippodrome Serge Charles after a former mayor who took over the racecourse for the town in 1990 to stop developers buying it for housing. That name however does not appear on the course's website and just seems to have been dropped.

The course was opened in 1931 and after closing during the war it reopened in 1951. It was totally refurbished just before the turn of the century. The seventy fifth anniversary booklet shows some of the highlights from the course's history. In 1947 Charles de Gaulle addressed a crowd of 50,000 at the course and there has been a stage finish of the Tour de France on the trotting track. Other sports hosted include greyhound racing and horseback basketball which evidently at one time used a duck before that was replaced by a ball.

There are eight flat meetings during the year rather biased towards the autumn with one meeting in March and May and two each in September, October, and November. There are also twenty-two trotting meetings spread throughout the year. The main race is the Grand Prix de la Ville de Marcq-en-Barouel run in November. Last year it went to a Godolphin horse Impulsif who had been up to winning the Group 3 Prix Messidor at Deauville in 2019. Another morning start but this time 11.30 and only a half hour trip from my hotel just opposite the old Lille-Flanders station from where all local services run. The two tram lines run from there and go to Roubaix Euroteleport and Turconing Centre. At the Lille end its just one line and you get off at the sixth stop Clemenceau Hippodrome before they split. Trams run every five minutes.

It is about a five hundred metre walk along Boulevard Clemenceau to the course. €2.50 for a pre booked e ticket which included a race card with all the form. After the crowds at Waregem this could hardly have been more different. I would bet there wasn't a hundred paying racegoers and the three Pari Mutual workers weren't overworked.

The stand was massive for today's crowd but the website shows large crowds for trotting meetings and there is a large panoramic restaurant. Today there was just one mobile catering van with a small bar.

The course is left-handed about fifteen hundred metres around with the trotting track on the outside of the turf track. Once again the trees on the golf course were a pain but they weren't as bad as at Krefeld and the viewing was basically good. The parade ring wasn't that big but the pre-parade/saddling area was large.

Eight races on the card but only three distances with the first four over 1,800 metres and the next three over 2,500 metres with a sprint to wind it up over 1,100 metres.

Even with a meeting at Longchamp starting mid-afternoon where he had several rides Christophe Soumillon was here for two mounts. The first in the three-year-old conditions event was on Zanndabad for the Aga Khan. He is a half-brother to four winners in Ireland the best being Zannnda a Group 3 winner at Cork when trained by Dermot Weld. Zanndabad had won twice at two including here but looked regressive, had been gelded, and gained cheekpieces. He was 3/10 and had to be taken on. The only one to do it with was a Juddmonte filly called Suyian placed on both her starts. She is a half-sister to double Group 2 winner Headman from the family of multiple Group 1 winner Flintshire. Soumillon set a slow pace while the filly pulled in spite of being hooded. Trying to kick entering the straight Zanndabad found little fading to third while Clement Lecoeuvre just got enough out of Suyian. It is probably job done for the winner as she isn't up to stakes class while Zanndabad will be in the Autumn sales. While it was understandable Soumillon being here for the Aga Khan horse he stayed on to ride moderate handicapper Aiguere D'Argent in a condition race for horses rated 32 (probably equivalent to a UK rating of 70). He bolted in at evens.

The card was on the whole moderate. The two-year-old claimer went to the first Moroccan bred horse I can remember seeing in Shakstar Fal. He is by a horse called Shakespearean who ran down the field in the Racing Post Trophy of 2009 for Mark Johnson before winning the 2010 Hungerford for Saeed bin Suroor.

It's amazing how even very moderate animals can suddenly hit form. The winner of the amateur handicap Tounmy had gone twenty-eight starts for one win on his second start in 2019. This was his third win on the bounce as he battled like a good one to win by a nose and a short head under Lara le Geay who was also in form riding her fourth winner from five rides.

The city of Lille itself is actually only thirty odd kilometres from Waregem. Being on the border it is one of the few French cities occupied in both world wars. It suffered damage in 1914 when shelled before being captured but was mostly undamaged in World War 2.

It used to be a mining and textile centre but has had to reinvent itself and the arrival of the Eurostar train station helped in that respect. In terms of tourist sites there is not a lot with the Grand Place being an area for outdoor eating as is the area around the old railway station.

It could however be used as a base for exploring the World War 1 battle grounds and cemeteries.

The 9.45 Eurostar on Friday morning to St Pancras and then even Aviva West Coast were playing ball. My original train had mysteriously disappeared from the timetable but I managed to get an earlier one. The twenty sixth and last journey on public transport was the bus home. Just the one ten-minute delay on the train back to Brussels from Aachen on the trip and I would certainly have signed up for that at the start.

MEL ROWLEY – STABLE VISIT THURSDAY OCT 20TH

We will have our final stable visit of the year to the up-and-coming yard of Mel Rowley on Oct 20th. The yard is located at Morville, Nr Bridgenorth in Shropshire. We expect to arrive mid-morning (time TBC) and will depart in good time to visit Ludlow racecourse in the afternoon for their second jumps meeting of the winter season.



Mel had her first full season in 2021-22 and sent out 14 winners with 3 winners already in the bag for 2022-23. Some stars from last season include: *Wishing & Hoping*, *My Bobby Dazzler*, *Ginger Du Val* & *Latitude*. There are plenty of syndicate opportunities in the yard for those interested in taking a share this winter!

Husband Phil Rowley is the named point-to-point trainer in the yard and will be best remembered for winning the 2019 Cheltenham Hunter Chase with *Hazel Hill*, as well as being champion point to point trainer in 2018.

Phil was originally a sheep farmer and Mel involved in dressage and hunter chasing albeit both are now much more focussed upon their training careers.

To reserve places(s) please contact Dave Bates (details below) who will send out final details a week before the visit. We also like to leave a donation for the stable staff and will collect £5pp on the day from those adults attending. Well behaved children also welcome!

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