



## NMRC FACEBOOK GROUP 'ACTIVE' MEMBERSHIP LIST REVIEW AT YEAR END

The admin team are aware that only a relatively small percentage of posts are being read and/or responded to, in relation to the near 500 members that are in the NMRC Facebook group.

The inference is that many people who joined the group are no longer interested in NMRC.

At year end 2023, we shall be reviewing members who have not been 'active' in the group for some time and deleting them from our Facebook group.

So if you want to remain in the group, please become more active with either posts, comments or even 'likes' relating to posts over the next 6 months.

If you just want to remain as a registered NMRC member, but not in the Facebook Group, that is fine and this will ensure you continue to receive the club magazine etc.

The NMRC Facebook Group Admin Team

## 'THE GAMBLING COMMISSION IS WAGING WAR ON PUNTERS' SAYS THE RACING POST

First of all I would like to say that NMRC exists to promote horse racing, not gambling, although the two are of course closely linked. Many people only bet on horses when at the races with others only betting if on TV. Others will like a bet most days. The key message I was always taught in my youth was to 'only bet what you can afford to lose'.

There is no doubt that online betting has made the risk of gambling problems higher in recent years, especially with the introduction of online slots, casinos etc.

For individuals and families affected by gambling problems the results are clearly awful and as the online bookies have frequently been found lacking in their customer protection duties it is no wonder that the government has decided to implement new controls, such as affordability checks.

As Tom Kerr (Racing Post) points out in his latest article on the topic, the new government proposals could possibly require 6 monthly affordability checks – which even lenders for cars, mortgages etc do not require – and you are spending your own money! He is also annoyed by the fact that winnings cannot be offset against losses if more than a week ago, when assessing the need for these proposed checks. He also feels that betting exchanges will be badly hit and those punters without regular incomes, such as self-employed and retired people, will be worst affected by the new proposals.

Despite all these proposed curbs on punters there does not seem to be any new restrictions on bookies who close accounts, limit stakes or limit other benefits on punters with a good winning history. Surely that should also be under review? Perhaps we need Mr Farage to have his betting account closed so the matter receives publicity?

There is a public consultation under way until October 18<sup>th</sup> and views are being collected online at [Consultation](#)

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# COMPETITION NEWS

## 59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

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

**June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 17 – David Bates**  
**July 1<sup>st</sup> – 34 – Jennifer Burgess**

Your £50 prizes will be with you shortly.

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. If you would like to join the draw it costs just £1pm. Please email [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com)

## ALEX BIRD COMPETITION 2023

Congratulations to **Sam Doyle Snr** who receives a £70 prize for winning the Royal Ascot round in this year's competition. **Jeanette Laird** finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and wins a £30 prize.

After three rounds **Tim Cogan** moves into the lead with **Helen Goodwill** in second place.

We move onto Doncaster for Round 4 where the last four days of the St Leger meeting are covered by the competition.

## HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION 2023

After 8 weeks of the competition the leaders are as follows:

79.05 Phil Evans

66.35 Gordon Armistead

60.3 Mike Campbell

55.85 Linda Boswell

55.8 Dave Clutterbuck

## RACING SYSTEMS UPDATE – JULY 2023

One of the statistics measured on the club website on the 'racing systems' page is the fate of backing past winners of races. These are recorded separately as flat and jumps results and also based on horses carrying the same/lower weight or a higher weight than when winning previously.

Much to my surprise this is turning out to be a very profitable winner finding system under both codes (excluding all weather racing).

Not surprisingly horses carrying the same/lower weights than when winning are more profitable to follow and for flat races even horses carrying a higher weight can still be worth backing.

The figures cover the last five seasons. On the flat the Curragh and Cork have been particularly profitable when horses are carrying a higher weight than their previous win. Over the sticks look out for past winners at Carlisle & Sedgefield (carrying the same/lower weights than when winning).

## FESTIVAL GUIDES AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE

On the flat this year the festival guides on the club website (festival guides tab) have covered:

Chester  
York (May)  
Royal Ascot  
Newmarket (July)

It is also the plan to update the following:

Goodwood  
Galway (feature races only)  
York (August)  
Doncaster (September)

Once the jumps season starts we also plan to update:

Cheltenham (November)  
Newbury (December)  
Festive Meetings (feature races at Kempton/Leopardstown etc)  
Cheltenham (March)  
Aintree (April)  
Punchestown (feature races only)

# POINT TO POINT NEWS WITH ANDY WHITE

## End of Season Review

Another successful point to point season ended in June and in my final report, I'll look at the winners in the national championships and some highlights from the Yorkshire area.

In the men's championship it was a eighth success for Will Biddick with 53 winners in season where he also captured the Aintree Foxhunters open Hunter Chase on Famous Clermont for Chris Barber. Runner-up was Jack Andrews with 41 winners and in third James King on 34 Winners. The men's Novice award went to Callum Pritchard with 9 wins.

In the Ladies Championship in was a tenth success for Gina Andrews with 31 winners, most trained by husband Tom Ellis. Runner-up was Molly Landau with 13 winners who was also this seasons leading Novice Rider. Izzy Marshall was third also with 13 winners but with fewer placed rides.



Gina Andrew's winning on Latenightpass Charm Park, Scarborough in March.

This year's leading trainers were Devon based John Heard with 10 winners for trainers with fewer than 5 horses, Joshua Newman with 17 winners in the 6 to 14 horses category and the powerful Tom Ellis stable with a fantastic 70 winners in the trainers with 15 or more horses.

From a Yorkshire area pointing perspective it was success for the Will Millburn trained mare Cullin Hills who won seven times from eleven point to point outings all

ridden by Paddy Barlow. She is the first Yorkshire based horse to win the National Horse Championship for most wins in the season.

Leading Riders in the Yorkshire area were John Dawson in the men's and Rosie Howarth in the ladies. John Dawson had success too in the Hunter Chase Finale at Stratford winning the Champion Hunter Chase - John Corbett Cup on Sine Nomine for trainer Fiona Needham.

Novice Yorkshire riders who had successful seasons were Tom Easterby and Lois Teal both with 4 wins and they can now be seen to good effect in Amateur Riders Flat Races this summer.

So another successful season has concluded and thoughts now turn to the next pointing season which starts in late autumn and from January 2024 in the Yorkshire area.

## TRISTAN DAVIDSON – STABLE VISIT – THURSDAY OCTOBER 19TH

Tristan holds a dual-purpose licence (flat/jumps) and has been training 'full time' at his stables at Irthington, Carlisle for over 5 years and sent out over 60 winners so far.

Prior to joining the training ranks, Tristan had ridden over 200 point-to-point winners.

We shall visit the yard mid-morning and for those who wish to make a day of it, there is jumps racing at **Carlisle** in the afternoon.



### HOW TO BOOK FOR THE STABLE VISIT ABOVE:

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.

Dave Bates (Stable Visits) 01925 574140  
[bates270@btinternet.com](mailto:bates270@btinternet.com)

## THE POPLAR COTTAGE RACING CLUB (MEL ROWLEY)

As we had a good turnout at this stable visit in May so it's worth mentioning that their new syndicate year starts shortly for anyone interested.

This has been the stable's first, flagship members club offering from Mel Rowley Racing and what a great year it has been. It has allowed members to experience racehorse ownership in a fun and affordable way. It really has been a sociable occasion as well as them enjoying some prize money too.

Blue Beech and Prime Time Lady are the two horses we have had in training for the club and they have been fantastic!

The opportunity has given owners the chance to attend National Hunt courses when the horses are running and get the full owners experience including going into the paddock and being wined and dined. Prime Time Lady has won on two occasions, first in the National Hunt Maiden Hurdle at Warwick and then again at Cartmel in the Mares' Novices' Hurdle. She ran in total 5 times and was never out of the top 3, always running from the front at full throttle throughout!

Blue Beach also won on her first outing, winning the Mares' Open National Hunt Flat Race at Uttoxeter very impressively by 12 lengths and is now the highest rated Bumper filly in the country!

A great first year for the club. We opened up a maximum of 20 shares for this syndicate as we wanted it to be a small, fun and friendly group of owners to really enjoy the racing experience with us.

If interested please check which horses are running for the club this season. if you would like to know more, please email [-office@rowleyracingpartners.co.uk](mailto:-office@rowleyracingpartners.co.uk)

Club membership of this kind, can start from as little as £1,000 per annum.



# PREMIERISATION OF RACING by Andy Stallard

No sooner has the dust settled on the Government white paper, which followed hot(ish) on the heels of 6 race cards in summer initiative, we have another new initiative, this time from the BHA in the form of fixture list changes and, of course, premierisation. Which isn't even a word.

Let's start by looking at the BHA's stated aim as per Joe Saumarez Smith;  
"The aim is to grow the sport's reach, appeal to new fans and better engage existing customers with the hope that it will generate extra revenues which will in turn boost prize-money levels."

Honestly, that's a big old sentence with 3 different objectives which, actually, appear to be all exactly the same. No mention of betting there apart from the oblique "generate extra revenues" which I assume is from betting as it sure won't be from increased crowds. At least Harrington had the good grace to mention the "B" word. As an aside, if you're looking for further thoughts on the unmentionable "B" word please check out Simon Nott's excellent piece on the subject.

Firstly I cannot pretend to be objective regarding this as I own a business that is potentially affected by these proposals so, being fair, all of this has to be read through the prism of me being an on-course bookmaker.

As we are at Cartmel this weekend (in May) I thought it might also be useful to try to have a look at the impact on that particular racecourse across the year though, of course, the same effects can, and will, be applied to dozens of other smaller independent tracks next year.

May Bank Holiday Saturday attendances from 2019 (2022 wasn't a bank holiday weekend and the previous 2 years were Covid affected) Cartmel 12000; Chester 18600; Ffos Las 7700 (evening); Goodwood 8800; Haydock 7200; Salisbury 3600 (evening); York 19500

That's about 77500 in total on a Saturday afternoon that are going racing. Fantastic huh? Well, er, apparently not. Only 3 of these 5 daytime meetings will make the cull in the 2pm-4pm slot and the rest will, inevitably, suffer. At least one of them is likely to get the graveyard morning shift- though it's worked so beautifully for dog track attendances you can see why (I don't do emojis on this blog but if I did I'd be going for the "rolling eyes" one). Let me remind you "The aim is to grow the sport's reach, appeal to new fans and better engage existing customers". I've looked at this from every single angle I can think of and I cannot come up with a single plausible way that shifting meetings that currently get (non-Premier League) football level attendances to 10 o'clock in the morning when they'll get one man and his dog will "appeal to new fans" or "better engage existing customers".

There's even been some muttering about the saturation of racing on tv on a Saturday. Yes, I know. So I've done a quick check of ITV's offering this Saturday. They are covering, well, err, 3 UK meetings on Saturday (plus one race from Ireland). So when the cull comes there'll be, err, 3 meetings on terrestrial tv. Spot the difference. Spot the enhanced "premierisation" (still, absolutely, not an actual word) Again, at least Harrington was a bit more up front about why they're doing it.

Finally (in this bit least) the other argument doing the rounds was that a lot of these independent tracks "don't deserve" Saturdays with the standard of racing on offer. There may be some moral argument there but, if these meetings don't exist or are shunted to different times when nobody will attend, will this make any difference to "premier" meetings? I'd suggest it won't. Do these meetings compete for air time on ITV? No. Do these meetings draw crowds away from the "premier" meetings? No. Come on guys, let's at least be honest about it, you want bigger gaps between races so that people will bet more. And you want racing from 10am to 9pm so people will bet more. And, in the long run, receive more money via the levy. Full stop. End of story.

I don't know the sums regarding betting. I really don't. I assume they add up or at least the BHA think they will. But it's not "to grow the sport's reach, appeal to new fans and better engage existing customers". It's just not.

Right. Part 2. Let's have a look at this from the affected racecourses' points of view. In this case let's look at Cartmel. Cartmel have 3 Saturday meetings (total attendance of just under 43000 across the three in 2019) and none of them will likely qualify for premier status. So let's assume one goes to the morning slot and two go to twilight/evening slots.

Firstly, and obviously, the attendances will be battered. So the course will be worse off, less able to invest in improving facilities, unable to support the same level of staff and potentially affect their long-term viability. That's without mentioning the July and August meetings already being reduced to 6 races.

Grange over Sands is rather misnamed. I understand there used to be sands there but there isn't any more. But it is really close to Cartmel. I've had a look at hotels there. You can get them this weekend but they're not cheap. I assume that those 4 racing weekends are the jackpot days for the hotels and restaurants in the area along with the school holidays. Won't be any more. And what about all those sticky toffee puddings that will remain resolutely unsold?

Then there's the other ancillary stuff. The fairground, the concessions in the course, the pubs in the area, the self-catering cottages, the restaurants, the local suppliers, the shops, the staff that work in all of those industries and, of course, the on-course bookmakers.

And, finally, logistics. 10am start or 9pm finish. Stable staff, jockeys etc coming from all over the country. Though at least they get their Sunday nights off- sorry, what? Not to mention, of course, on course bookmakers (need that smiley emoji thing). Alarms set for times that should only be reserved for 5-year-olds on Christmas morning. And this story will be repeated across the country at track after track, week after week. Some tracks will go to the wall. And some folk will take the moral high ground and say that they "deserve" to because the standard of racing doesn't justify Saturday meetings. Try telling that to the bloke who owns the local restaurant/pub/hotel. Try telling that to the staff that will either be laid off or, in the case of agency workers, just not employed in the first place. Guys, it's not to grow the sport's reach. It's not to appeal to new fans. It's not to better engage existing customers. It's not. It's to increase off course betting. And that might be enough to offset all of the stuff I've just written. It really might. I don't know. But let's not pretend it's something it isn't. There's even an admission from the BHA "The governing body also said talks would take place about how to support racing's workforce in light of the changes" but I doubt the sticky toffee pudding shop will feature highly in those talks.

So, for me, the winners, in the short term, are the off-course bookmakers. They will be getting 3-4 extra hours of UK horse racing betting on Saturdays with the clear aim of doing much the same on Sundays. They will also be getting longer gaps between races on Saturdays which is also likely to increase betting turnover. Long term the hope will be that increased betting turnover leads to greater investment in the sport via the levy which should increase prize money, increase field sizes and help keep UK horses in the UK. Presumably the hope from the BHA is that the extra money in the long term will offset the obvious downsides associated with this initiative.

I don't, honestly, see the "premier" meetings receiving a short-term benefit. I'd be very surprised if we saw fewer races on tv in order to "tell the story". I'd also be very surprised if "telling the story" was something that the average viewer was particularly interested in anyway. Football and cricket have been quoted as a blueprint for not standing still but there is a fundamental difference between the motivation for watching football and cricket v watching horse racing. Most people who go to a match are emotionally invested in supporting the team they are spectating, most people who watch horse racing are invested in watching the horse they have backed. There are a few exceptions of course but generally speaking there is very little emotional attachment to a particular horse that is the driver for spectating for the vast majority of spectators. Horse racing crowds are referred to as punters for a reason.

The losers are, clearly, the smaller tracks, the ancillary staff and businesses related to these tracks and the punters who attend.

As I say, it's a balancing act; will the extra revenue generated by these proposals offset the downsides to smaller tracks? The see saw is currently balanced in the middle, only time will tell which way it comes down. Or, if you like, who has the heavier bum.

One final thought on the subject before I pack it away (at least until the fixture list comes out). There's a pretty straightforward way, I think, for the BHA to clear this up. Publish the following right now;

- a) Expected increase in revenue via levy by increasing betting window and intervals between races
- b) Expected net loss of income for racecourses affected by moving start times
- c) In the wider context publish expected impact on local economy and related businesses. Whilst BHA not directly responsible for these businesses it is not unreasonable to expect the impact to be assessed.

Publish the actual results at the end of each year. Data driven and transparent.

**Editor's Note:** We are in an age where both the UK and Ireland are seeing crack-downs on gambling activities. So what does the BHA do? It snuggles up with the online bookies to help them encourage more gambling during Saturdays! Well done BHA!! We all know that come the time these stupid changes take place the bookies will fill the 'voids' created by moving some meetings to less convenient start times by adding more 'cartoon' racing etc in their shops. Surely the only tracks who will even consider early Saturday morning start times will be the all-weather tracks where attendances are generally small anyway. No doubt the BHA will be encouraging more 'Be Gamble Aware' logos on bookies adverts in exchange for compliance with this 'plan' at the same time as encouraging racing fans to bet even more on Saturdays in 2024.

# Memories of L'Escargot

Book review by HAROLD HEYS

DAVID OWEN'S excellent new book on L'Escargot – cleverly titled *No Snail* – brought back a few memories!

Yes, this was the horse that foiled Red Rum's gallant bid for a hat-trick of wins in the Grand National back in the 1970s. Nearly 50 years ago, so why a book now?

The horse won two Cheltenham Gold Cups and then ran third and second in the Aintree race before winning in 1975. He should have been something of a legend. But instead he has largely faded from memory.

David Owen – author of award-winning *Foinavon: The story of the Grand National's Biggest Upset* – reckoned it was time to redress the balance.

Of course, we all know why the exploits of L'Escargot have faded, unlike for instance Tiger Roll and Aldaniti, Arkle and Kauto Star.

Simply because he was the biggest party-pooper of all time. Just about every racing fan felt the same way. Certainly everyone at Aintree on that April day in 1975 felt robbed and cheated out of a special moment – Rummy's hat-trick.

I was among the crowd; sparse in the extreme, because course owner Bill Davies had hoiked the entrance charges while mulling over closing the course he had bought from Mirabelle Topham.

I'd cheered on the previous 15 winners and I did the same for the next 25 years and more (it was an annual pilgrimage). But everyone apart from the connections of the winner was deflated that day. We'd all seen Red Rum alongside L'Escargot battling it out over the last three fences and we cheered him on with gusto.

Over the last and Tommy Carberry gave L'Escargot the Go! Fletcher gave Rummy one crack, but immediately realised it was over. He looked round a couple of times to see if second place was in any danger as the pale blue and chocolate colours raced away for an easy victory.



As Owen says: "It was an anti-climax." And he quotes Red Rum's trainer Ginger McCain as saying with some feeling that L'Escargot "never properly received the credit he deserved."

He was quite right. And he is to be congratulated on shining an interesting light on the horse's racing record – especially as he was only the second horse ever to win both the Grand National and the Cheltenham Gold Cup after magical Golden Miller in the Thirties.

L'Escargot ran in the Grand National four times. He was brought down in 1972, ran third behind Red Rum and Crisp - in '73 – not that anyone noticed – second to Rummy in '74, which everyone noticed, before his win the following year.

It finally ended a lifetime quest to win the big race for American Raymond Guest and a near-40 year wait for trainer Dan Moore who had ridden Royal Danieli, pipped a head by Battleship and Bruce Hobbs, in 1938.

L'Escargot won on the biggest stages in Ireland, Great Britain and America. But much of his racing career, certainly after his 1971 Gold Cup win, was spent with just one target in mind – the National. Consequently his win-ratio was very poor.

After winning the Gold Cup for a second time on March 18, 1971 he won just one race – at Haydock – before the momentous National victory of April 5, 1975. He ended his days in peaceful seclusion on the Guest family farm in Virginia at the age of 21. (Photo above: Over the last in the 1975 National. Red Rum (left) is about to give way as L'Escargot sets sail for the Elbow and an easy win).



# Farewell to Free Love Book Review by Tim Cogan

Available in Paperback from Amazon £9-99 - All proceeds to Bob Champion Cancer Trust

Ok I will start this review with a confession – I was a member of the The North South Syndicate in whose colours Free Love ran – an inexpensive filly who gave great pleasure to her owners during her racing career that ended in July 2021.

But this book isn't about the band of racing brothers who owned Free Love - although we are part of the background to the story – it's about the author and his racing dreams and his undiluted passion for the thoroughbred – and one particular thoroughbred in particular that dominate this compelling read – and the Holy Grail of “a bit of black type” if possible as well.



This is the third volume in a trilogy - but a self-contained read in itself – covering the authors association with his beloved filly who he purchased at Tattersalls sales to run in our name. This volume not only covers two seasons of racing. It also tells the story of coping with the pandemic in everyday life when for 15 months all sorts of restrictions were in place affecting our everyday lives. On top of that were the restrictions placed on sport and horse racing in particular coupled with the frustrations of running a tiny racing syndicate and trying to find that opportunity to get a small return on your investment – and perhaps even being allowed to go and see your horse run.

Anyone can read a horse's racing history in the Racing Post but if you have ever owned even a minute percentage of a horse you will know that there is a vast back story behind that with not only all the highs and lows of racing itself but also the dedication of all those involved in the care and ownership of horses that remain hidden from public view – this book tells that story.

And almost simultaneously with the end of Free Love's racing career the author begins his own personal battles with truly shocking cancer diagnoses – it's a poignant tale of grit and determination – of getting your head down and giving your all – just like the filly who inspired these books to be written.

And It's that grit and determination shown by the author that has given this story an equine fairy-tale ending –

although the book ends in July 2022 I can add a postscript that Free Love now has a foal at foot by Sergei Prokofiev and is also in foal to Lope Y Fernandez.

Tony himself is also very much alive and kicking and about to undertake a tour of British racecourses. So if you find yourself one day on some far and distant racetrack leaning over the paddock rail musing over your selection in a 16 runner 5 Furlong Class 5 handicap – and you happen to spot someone doing the same – it could well be Tony. If so just introduce yourself to him - and start talking about racehorse ownership – that's as long as you have got an hour or two to spare of course ! Or just simply buy and read this book – and raise money for a very worthy charity at the same time.



# GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

## **Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

Many moons ago when the six-furlong track was run around a bend here the field always came across to the stand side on soft ground and invariably the one who bagged the near rail won.

Today it was supposedly good to firm but you had to be drawn on the stands side and even with only seven runners in the Sandy Lane Stakes those wide had little chance. The favourite Little Big Bear probably did not need any advantage as he cruised through the race but beating the seemingly exposed 102 rated Shouldvebeenaring a length and a quarter is only OK. He would have been long odds on but for his Guineas flop and is a super looking beast and will go to the Commonwealth Cup. Shouldvebeenaring just followed the winner up the rails for second while 1000 Guineas third Matilda Picotte had no chance from the outside draw. In the Temple Stakes the first four were the four highest drawn and William Buick on favourite Dramatised was not leaving the rails as he followed leader Live in the Dream. Apprentice Sean Kirrane perhaps showed his inexperience in having his whip in his right hand allowing his mount to drift off the fence and Buick shot through. The runner up Equilateral and fourth Existent are not Group 2 horses so what the form is worth is anyone's guess. L'Abbaye winner The Platinum Queen was a real handful in the parade ring and finished last. The £1.2Million she cost after that win was for her breeding career and on this form she will be heading that way very soon.

Of those drawn low Royal Acclaim ran well in seventh and was not knocked about when he had no chance. The draw bias on the inner straight track was noticeable last summer but varied from one meeting to the next making it hopeless to have a bet until after the first sprint race of the meeting.

On the round course it paid to lead. 50/1 shot Swift Tuttle was only caught close home in the mile and a half handicap and Solent Gateway made all in the two miler. In the Silver Bowl Covey again made all and had it won a long way out. He will get a good hike for this and might have to step up to listed or Group 3's. Runner up Royal Cape came from off the pace to take second cosily and could be one to follow. Fifth home Bodorgan also came from off the pace and might be better than he showed here.

## **Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> Hexham**

You meet and chat with plenty of the regulars at race meetings and I have known John from Sheffield for a good few years. I had never seen him move as fast as he was when he raced passed me after the first race today. Only later did I find out he owned 50% of the winner Classic Lady. It may have been a three-mile amateur riders handicap hurdle and her rating is only 64 (she ran here off 74 being 10 pounds out of the handicap) but a win is a win. This is her first season under rules having missed three years after winning a point as a five-year-old. Three runs for a handicap mark over two miles and then bits of promise in handicaps. Her fourth dam Artiste Gaye was the dam of Champion Hurdler Gaye Brief so the rules win was important. Bodhisattva was on my tracker when I backed him in a decent handicap hurdle at Navan when I was there in November. I got 20/1 and he finished third having been backed into 9/1. He turned very dodgy after that and Gordon Elliot did well to find a very poor novice chase for him at Perth when looking far from an easy ride. He went to the sales then and he made his debut for John McConnell here in the three runner three-mile novice handicap chase. The race was run at a crawl but in what looked a match he couldn't even beat the third runner who was twenty-seven pounds out of the weights. The winner Universal Folly has now won his last two races against three opponents two of which were very reluctant and one totally outclassed.

The Most Important Three-Year-Old Race Today Juvenile Hurdle went up against the Cup Final unlike the race at Epsom. The Alan King runner Hourless although rated only 49 on the flat looked alright and ran out a ready winner. Four of the last nine winners of this never won again over hurdles but he looked like he could win again over the summer. He is only the second jump winner for Time Test whose best run was third in a not very good renewal of the Eclipse.

One of the winners of the three-year-old hurdle that has gone on is Lord Caprio who took his fourth hurdle win in the last contest the 0-100 two-mile four handicap. As my one fancy of the day was the 9/1 runner up Chancer Dancer I'd rather he hadn't. Irish amateur Oran McGill who rode Chancer Dancer had only ridden eight winners. He is however three from twelve rides in the new season so I will be watching him as he did nothing wrong here.

## **Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

The stand rail bias was not in effect today and indeed in the sprint handicap the last five home raced in the stand side group including three of first five in the betting. That probably boosted Equilaterals effort in the listed

five-furlong race in coming second. He hasn't won for two and a half years so maybe he isn't one to put any faith in.

The Group 3 Pinnacle Stakes is evidently going to have its registered name changed to the Lester Piggott Stakes before next year. The five in this year's race were all at a level and it was a surprise to see Time Lock in as an even money shot. In a decently run race she looked a bit one paced at this trip never looking like winning. The trip suited winner Sea Silk Road and she would get a bit further if asked. It's doubtful if she could step up in class. The German trained runner up Nachtrose set a good pace and kept on well. She won the Italian Oaks last year and I saw the third in that race Zefania running behind Zenda over hurdles at Fairyhouse in February.

The John of Gaunt looked a moderate Group 3 and winner Jumby evidently has the Wokingham Handicap as his next target even though seven furlongs seems his best trip. The Australian trained The Astrologist is not up to the class of most of the sprinters sent over in recent years. He will be a big price for what is called the Jubilee Stakes this year.

### **Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

A decent novice mile and a half race for three-year-old fillies and winner Truthful had things covered for the last two furlongs. She can step up to group class and will stay further so maybe the Park Hill could be a target later in the year.

The two-year-olds in the six-furlong novice didn't look the greatest bunch and all but one was on debut. Winner Lake Forest is not very big but he scooted clear to win well. Not group class but useful.

The seven-furlong colt's novice two-year-old race had two Godolphin runners as first and second favourites. Both were by Frankel but favourite By The Book was a size bigger and on debut was well on top at the end. He looked useful once he got the hang of things and should get a mile well this season and a bit further next. His stable mate had been beaten at odds-on on his debut and finished second here and is ordinary. The rest were all big prices including £400K yearling Touch the Moon who will fetch a good deal less when he goes to the sales when the John Dance horses are sold.

### **Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

I can remember when there were always big crowds for evening meetings here without the need for a long past their best music act. Tonight there were barely enough for a quorum despite it being a super evening. Charging full price instead of using these meetings to try and attract new customers by just charging £5 or even giving free entry just seems stupid.

Once again Godolphin had the favourites for the two-year-old races. In the six-furlong filly's novice Star of Mystery was 1/3 after being runner up first time out. The opposition didn't look a great bunch in the parade ring and she strolled home by eleven lengths. She is useful but the rest here will be in handicaps later on probably at a modest level.

In the five furlong two-year-old novice the Godolphin runner Impressive Act had been turned over at odds-on on his second start and was again well beaten here looking far from keen. Winner Purosangue won by four lengths but they were not a great bunch.

### **Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup> Hexham**

After an excellent morning visit to Susan Corbetts stables it was going to be interesting to see how her four runners performed this afternoon.

First up was Beaumesnil in the two-mile novice hurdle who had shown promise on his hurdle debut three weeks before. I had last seen the favourite Carrarea in a €75K handicap hurdle at the Dublin Festival in 2022 running for Emmet Mullins. He had looked none too genuine (five times a beaten favourite) but the transfer to Mark Walford produced wins in two poor races. Odds on here under a double penalty he was well beaten. Beaumesnil jumped well but was just held by Irish challenger Killeenmore Lad under yet another promising Irish claimer in Cian Quirke.

The second Corbett runner Konik King was the one disappointment dropping away tamely in the two-mile handicap chase.

In the three-mile handicap hurdle Velasco made all for the Corbett team and had it won two out. Whether he will be able to follow up must be under question as he isn't the most reliable.

The stable must have been thrilled with their final runner Jessica Rabbit in the two-mile handicap hurdle on her stable debut after her £4K transfer from Fergal O'Brien and nine months off the course. Behind after an early mistake she had plenty to do before the hill but ran on before just faltering after the last. There are wins in her at this level.

Susan had told us they were aiming Clear Angel at the Carlisle Bell and quietly fancied him. He didn't make the cut but won the consolation race at a well backed 7/2.

#### **Friday July 7<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

Five newcomers in the seven furlong two-year-old filly's novice race with three of those being by first season sire Too Darn Hot. All three were on the small side and a bit dipped back. For an undefeated two-year-old he hasn't hit the ground running as a sire and nowadays new sires aren't given much time. The winner of the race Expensive Queen won well but I doubt she will be a stakes performer.

The three-year-old novice over the same trip had an easy winner in Poet Master who gave away the penalty with ease. It's hard to say what he beat but he could be useful.

#### **Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

Probably not the greatest Lancashire Oaks. Three came on from the Pinnacle Stakes here but the result was turned around with Sea Silk Road coming to win the race but seemingly giving it away close home as Poptronic repassed her. Time Lock in fourth was beaten slightly further. Third home Mimikyu found little under pressure.

The Old Newton Cup cut up badly on the faster ground and was run at a crawl. Those off the pace had no chance as Wootton 'Sun who raced in second held off a late challenge from Scampi with long-time leader Cumulonimbus third.

The three-year-old mile six handicap was won in good style by Lordship and he can add to this his third win on the bounce. Back in seventh Roque Sea was badly hampered on the first bend and knocked back to last place. He made some ground in the straight but wasn't given too hard a time of it and he could do better.

## **STEVEN POWELL UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT – COMPILED BY BRIAN GOODWILL**

### **I remember you being in the judge's box at Warwick as a mad keen 11-year-old racegoer. When did you first get an interest in racing and how did it come about?**

I've been interested for as long as I can remember. I recollect watching the 1994 Grand National, when I would have been five-years-old. The love of the sport comes from my Grandad, Tom. He followed it his whole life, and used to take me racing at Warwick, Stratford and Uttoxeter. As I got older, we would go to Huntingdon, Worcester and, eventually, Cheltenham! Note, there weren't many Flat meetings we attended.

### **Your equine and human heroes from the world of racing?**

My equine hero would be Persian Punch. His front-running, battling performances over so many seasons at all the big meetings I found enthralling. I remember being devastated after dashing home from school to watch his seasonal debut at Ascot in the Sagaro Stakes, only to discover he had been fatally injured during the race. I used to love Jenny Pitman trained horses when I was a kid, particular the band of staying chasers she had in mid-90's such as Willsford, Mudahim, Garrison Savannah, Do Be Brief, Superior Finish (I could go on!). It's only since I reached adulthood that I realised what a trailblazer she was.

### **Your first ever paid gig in racing?**

Commentating at Pikehall Harness Racing in Derbyshire when I was 16, in July 2005. I'd met commentator Darren Owen at Ludlow three months previously and told him I wanted to be a commentator too, and under his mentorship, learnt the commentary ropes stood in a field (normally getting soaked!) at point-to-points and harness fixtures. He later was best man at my wedding!

### **What would you put in racing's Room 101?**

The fixture list. The whole thing needs binning and starting again from scratch!

### **You have worked abroad. Can you expand on that?**

I've been very lucky over the years to have commentated in America, Dubai, Ireland and Bahrain. The first, fully-televised meeting I covered was at Down Royal on Boxing Day in 2018 due to the pool of Irish callers being otherwise engaged. I was up at 4am, flew to Belfast, taxi to the course, commentated on the seven races (most of the jockeys were conditionals and amateurs as the most well-known were at Leopardstown and Limerick!), back to the airport, flew to Birmingham, and got home at midnight!





### **Any particular embarrassing on course moments you can relate?**

I once squatted down to speak to someone in the press room at Aintree on Grand National day and a loud rip echoed around the room as my suit trousers split from back to front! I had to borrow a long mac from a colleague for the rest of the day to keep covered. It was bit draughty!

### **What are your professional ambitions?**

It was always to be a Racecourse Commentator, which I achieved in June 2022. I suppose now it would be to commentate on the Grand National.

### **A flat horse to follow?**

By The Book, a two-year-old son of Frankel trained by Charlie Appleby, who won on debut at Haydock on 14th June. The yard haven't been flying by their usual standards but this horse was well-backed and he won easily, despite showing greenness.

### **Do you bet and if so can you relate a day when it went spectacularly well or just went wrong at the last moment?**

I do occasionally but not as much I used to as I don't have time to do as much homework as I'd like. My best day was the first day of Cheltenham Festival in 2005. I had singles, doubles and trebles on Arcalis (Supreme winner at 20/1), Contraband (Arkle winner at 7/1) and Hardy Eustace (Champion Hurdle winner at 7/2). I won nearly a four-figure sum which wasn't bad for a 15-year-old!

### **What can racing do better?**

Work together for the betterment of the sport. There are too many areas pulling in different directions (BHA, RCA, ROA, NTF, PJA NASS, JCR, ARC, ITV, SKY, RTV, HBLB, HBF - I mean, come on!). Hopefully, the recently announced "Industry Strategy" will bring everyone together. There are some positive early signs, I think.

## **Go Racing in Yorkshire Summer Festival 2023 by Andy White**

Moving from the North West to North Yorkshire in early 2021 after retirement, I this year traded up from a couple of Race Course badges for the Go Racing in Yorkshire season ticket. Here are my highlights from the week and some historical memories from my early visits to each course.

### **Pontefract Friday Evening**

In a change to the usual schedule for the festival, it started a day earlier at the Pontefract Friday evening meeting. Setting off from North Yorkshire, I hit torrential rain but moving into West Yorkshire the skies cleared for a dry evening at Ponte. Plenty of coaches unloading in the car park given the after-racing concert by "Dreams of Fleetwood Mac" and a beer festival. Malcom Tomlinson on Festival duty in the commentary box. Richard Fahey top and tailed the meeting with first time out winner Ziggys Condor ridden by Ryan Sexton and Sir Maxi ridden by Billy Garrity. Highlights were wins for Tim Easterby's Copper Knight in the sprint and the front running ride by Jump Jockey Sean Bowen on his father's Supposedtobe in the confined handicap. This was for horses with no more than one win and I backed it at 25-1 also getting the forecast. Bowen showed great strength in the saddle up the Pontefract hill in what he said was likely to be his only ride at Ponte. This Friday evening meeting used to be the Red Shirt Night where Jack Berry raised funds for the IJF. It was where I attended my first race meeting in July 1996. There were five of us in the car for the drive over the M62

and paid a just fiver for entry with the car into the picnic enclosure. Twenty-seven years on the meeting is still very clear in the memory. The first two winners were ridden by J F Egan, the first for Lynda Ramsden as a jockey change because Kieran Fallon was stuck in traffic after riding at Haydock. Commentator for the night was Tommo and I even won a couple of quid on the placepot.

### **Ripon Saturday**

Gloomy weather with low cloud and rain over Sutton Bank and on through Thirsk as I made the short journey to Ripon. Arriving at the course the Car Park was fairly quiet but the Coach park was rammed. Plenty of people on group outings before the football season restarts and the stands were packed as people avoided the rain. Bars were doing a good trade too. For the second day it was really quiet around the parade ring and winners enclosure, with only a few die-hard racing fans. Again it was in form Richard Fahey who won the opener with the unraced Tropical Island ridden by stable jockey Oisin Orr. It was Ben Curtis who had the riding honours with a double on Baltic Voyage for Ralph Beckett and Another Batt for David and Nicola Barron.

It was a Saturday back in 1997 when I made my first visit to Ripon, again in the Picnic Car Park. My lasting memory of was a two-year-old maiden race. Everyone except us had backed a Mick Easterby horse Hit the Beach ridden by Terry Lucas which romped home with every North East accent shouting "go on hit the beach". Terry Lucas sadly passed away a couple of weeks ago in his native Australia but he was a great horseman around the Northern Circuit in the years he worked for the Mick Easterby Stable.

### **Beverley Monday**

The rain continued on Saturday which caused the abandonment of Sundays Redcar fixture so it was off to Beverley for the Monday night fixture with sunshine this time.

It was another Richard Fahey first time winner as odds on favourite Airman who won the opening 5-furlong maiden, again under Oisin Orr. Good performances from Phil Makins Impressor ridden by Shane Gray and an all the way powerful ride from Hollie Doyle on How Bizarre for Liam Bailey.

My Beverley memory from my first visit in 1997 was another Mick Easterby horse Dee Pee Tee Cee. The horse won 13 times, 11 on the flat and 8 of these were under Terry Lucas who got the best out of the horse.

### **Catterick Wednesday**

The sun shone again for the Catterick meeting which had the lowest attendance of the week's festival but there were plenty of people crowded around the parade ring.

The opening two races were won by the inform Karl Burke / Clifford Lee team on Petra Celera and Making Dreams both for Nick Bradley Racing. The latter led home a Nick Bradley 1-2 with the Craig Lister's Buttercross Flyer as runner up and for me another winning forecast.

Not many Catterick Flat race memories for me as I usually attended NH fixtures, particularly the North Yorkshire Grand National Day where Sue Smith had plenty of success.

### **Thirsk Friday**

After giving Doncaster a miss on Thursday, a good crowd was in attendance as the festival moved on to Thirsk. The opening race for Apprentices was won in good style by Mia Nicholls on Foreseeable Future for another in form trainer Ruth Carr. Mia and younger brother Jack riding as an amateur are both working for Eve Johnson Houghton and following dad Adrian's footsteps as competent riders. Both have made promising starts to their careers, Mia having 13 winners including a fine 28-1 winner at Sandown just prior to Thirsk and Jack three winners from six rides since his first ride at the end of May at Redcar.











Darnation for Karl Burke / Clifford Lee and Game Breaker for Ben Curtis and Ralph Beckett were both impressive winners.

My Thirsk memory was a Friday meeting in 1998, not for the races but because the day before I had an interview and job offer for a job in Leeds where I worked for 16 years. It was always our aim to move to Yorkshire which due to circumstances did not occur until 2021.

I had planned to go on to York after Thirsk for the evening fixture but my other hobby is a Referee Observer and the FA gave me a game in the Northern League at Billingham Synthonia at Stokesley on the season opening night. So it was Fish and Chips at the White Rose Café in Thirsk and then off to the match. I did watch the opening York amateur race on my phone where I managed to select the Tri cast winning £105, Jack Nicholls finishing in third.

Not a fan of big crowds so I gave the York Saturday finale a miss. Another successful Festival with the top trainer Richard Fahey and top rider Oshin Orr and an enjoyable racing week for me with the great value season ticket.

Leading Trainer			
1	Richard Fahey	7 wins	
2=	Tim Easterby	4 wins	
2=	Karl Burke	4 wins	
3	William Haggas	3 wins	
4=	Alice Haynes	2 wins	
4=	Ralph Beckett	2 wins	
4=	Ruth Carr	2 wins	

Leading Jockey			
1	Oisin Orr	4 wins	
2=	Ben Curtis	3 wins	
2=	Billy Garritty	3 wins	
2=	Clifford Lee	3 wins	
3=	Cam Hardie	2 wins	
3=	Pierre-Louis Jamin	2 wins	
3=	Ryan Sexton	2 wins	
3=	James Sullivan	2 wins	
3=	Jim Crowley	2 wins	
3=	Sean Kirrane	2 wins	

## FUN AND GAMES THIS AUGUST AT CATTERICK'S FAMILY DAYS

The August Family Days at Catterick Racecourse are one of the highlights of the fixture calendar with families and racing fans alike, and this year is no exception

The first of Catterick's family days is the Salute Our Heroes Family Day on Tuesday 8 August, in support of ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Gates will open to the public from midday, and the afternoon is set to be full of action with six thrilling races to enjoy alongside free children's entertainment in the Course Enclosure. The first race on 8 August is scheduled for 2.50pm, and the last race at 5.45pm.

Alongside the racing action, younger racing fans can enjoy a variety of free entertainment available in the Course Enclosure, including a Bootcamp Challenge and Bungee Run, plus bouncy castles for the younger children. There will also be the opportunity to win tickets to Lightwater Valley Family Adventure Park by following the clues in a treasure hunt!

Catterick Racecourse is delighted to offer complimentary admission to this fixture for all military personnel and their families. Military tickets can be collected from the Catterick Garrison Headquarters or from the Racecourse Office.

Emma Stevenson, General Commercial Manager said: "It's great to be working with ABF The Soldiers' Charity again this year to give something back to our community. We always look forward to welcoming the next generation of racegoers to our family days – it's a great way for the whole family to enjoy some time together!" Catterick Racecourse will then host a Family Sports Day on Monday 21 August, when young racegoers will have the chance to take part in the first race of the day – the Egg & Spoon race at approx. 1 hour prior to the first (horse) race, which is due off at 2.25pm.

The gates on 21 August will again be open to the public from midday, and there will be an array of free sporting activities to enjoy in the Course Enclosure in addition the racing action on the track, including a 9-hole crazy golf course and penalty shoot-out!

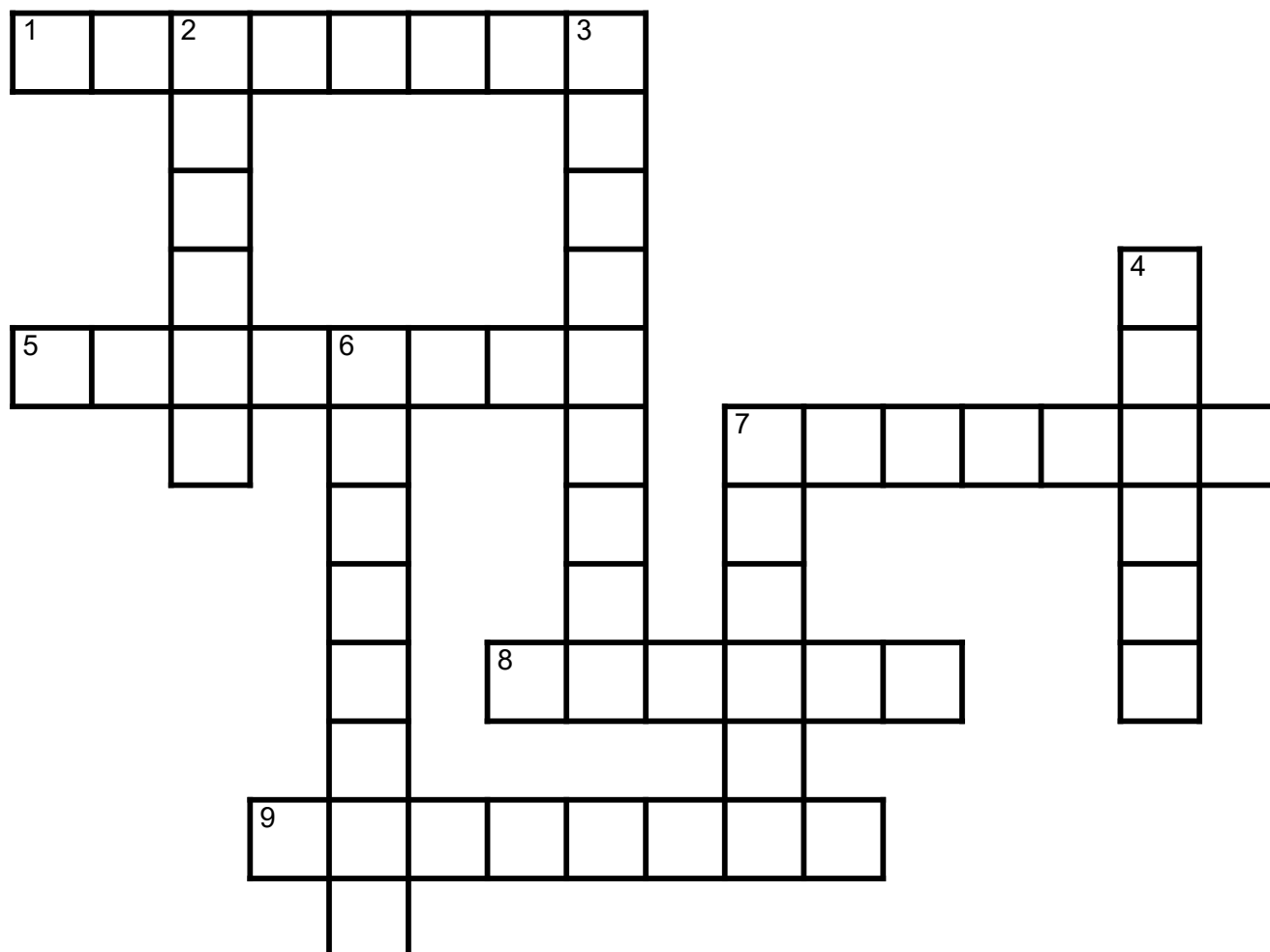
As with all of Catterick's fixtures, accompanied under 18's are admitted free of charge, and a complimentary shuttle bus service will run between Richmond Market Place and the racecourse, starting one hour prior to the first race. Tickets for both fixtures, starting at just £5 per adult, are available to purchase online at [www.catterickbridge.co.uk](http://www.catterickbridge.co.uk), over the phone by calling the racecourse office on 01748 811478 and at the gates on the day, while group and advanced booking discounts are available up until 48 hours prior to each race day.



# MAL BOYLES EBOR MEETING PUZZLE

## NAME AND FRAME 10 WINNERS FROM LAST YEAR'S EBOR MEETING

The horses have a maximum of nine letters to their names and with only one answer with seven letters and one other with nine, the puzzle is not as difficult as you might think!



Once you have solved the puzzle please send entries to NMRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, Cheshire M33 3LB to arrive by Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The correct entries will be put into a hat and the winner drawn will receive either a book prize or a free racing club competition entry. E mail entries can also be sent in at [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com)

We had two competitions last time and the winners were: Mike Campbell (Mal Boyle's Derby Puzzle) & David Watson (Derby picture puzzle). I shall contact the winners directly regarding their prizes.

As regards the latter picture puzzle it proved a bit more tricky than usual so here are the correct answers in case you got some wrong: (1) Donovan (2) Coronation (3) Kettledrum (4) Royal Palace (5) Blue Peter (6) High Chaparral (7) Orlando (8) Pont Leveque (9) Motivator (10) Galileo (11) Nijinsky

# Ryan nets his first big one

By Harold Heys

ROSSA RYAN seems to have burst on to the racing scene from almost nowhere. In fact, he came over from Ireland and is really starting to make his mark.

He took a bit of time out from his busy schedule to tell the *Injured Jockeys Fund* newsletter about his ambitions and his biggest day in the saddle so far.

Not hard to guess which day that was – yes, his first Group 1 with Shaquille in the July Cup at Newmarket in mid-July for Julie Camacho.



He'd never ridden Shaquille before and he said he really didn't feel any pressure. "I wasn't guaranteed to keep the ride so if I was beaten it wouldn't change anything. I had nothing to lose. I just had to do my best."

It worked out fine and the combination won the big sprint comfortably by a length and a half from Run to Freedom to pick up the prize of £356,000 from seven rivals.

Rossa had already built up an impressive tally of seven Group 2 wins, and four Group 3s. Looking ahead now with even more confidence his dream would be to land the Jockeys' championship one day. "We'll see how that goes," he grinned.

Ryan comes from a racing family. His Dad still trains a few horses and his uncle and cousin are both jockeys. His hero as a youngster? Well, probably Mick Kinane. He grew up watching him riding Sea the Stars.

What would he be doing if he wasn't race riding? Probably something in construction. And favourite racecourse? "I'd have to say Ascot. I've had a bit of

luck around there."

What food is his guilty pleasure? Probably ice cream. And the short interview closed with Rossa's thanks to the IJF. "I probably didn't realise until I was injured quite how valuable it is. I've used the gym at Oaksey (House) and it's great when you are trying to get going again."

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