



ANYONE FANCY ONLINE RACING QUIZ NIGHTS OVER THE WINTER MONTHS?

During the worst of the Covid lockdowns the club held a number of racing quiz-nights. Thankfully those lockdown days are behind us but, as the dark nights draw in again, I thought it may be worth 'testing the water' to see if it is worth resurrecting these?

They will last 30-40 minutes on a monthly basis until the clocks go forwards again next year. Anyone with a computer, smartphone or tablet should be able to take part.

If interested please contact Phil Evans via email at info@northernracingclub.com

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.

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

This will be the club's last stable visit in 2023 so please come along if you can make it!



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COMPETITION NEWS

59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

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

August 5th – 02 – Ted Halewood (Merseyside)
September 2nd – 16 – Ian Hazel (Rugby)

Your £50 prizes will be with you shortly.

The winning number is determined by the 'bonus ball' drawn in the UK Lottery on the 1st 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 e mail info@northernracingclub.com

ALEX BIRD COMPETITION 2023

Congratulations to **Cieran Cassidy** who receives a £70 prize for winning the Doncaster round in this year's competition. **Steve Cawley** finished in 2nd place and wins a £30 prize.

In the seasonal challenge **Tim Cogan** finished in first place and wins the £120 prize (and trophy) with **Helen Goodwill** in second place winning £60 and **Harold Woodward** in third place winning £40.

Thanks to **Mark Banks & Mike Wheeler** for running this year's competition!

HERITAGE HANDICAPS COMPETITION 2023

After 17 weeks of the competition the leaders are as follows – we finish at Ascot on Champions day:

151.75 Jim Flanagan

125.85 Phil Evans

122.7 Dave Byrne

118.5 Chris Watson

FRANCIS LEE 1944-2023 By Phil Evans

The club was saddened to hear of the passing of Francis Lee CBE at the age of 79.

Francis was best known for his footballing exploits although he went on to become a 'toilet paper' tycoon which no doubt helped fund his move into racehorse training from his Wilmslow base. Apparently Peter Kay was on the payroll at F H Lee Ltd as an employee back in the day!

He did quite well as a trainer although the racing club horse that we had with him in the early 1990's (Blade of Fortune) was not a roaring success on the flat but later had a decent career over the jumps.



In particular he did well at his local track, Haydock Park, and I backed most of his winners there! In particular a horse called Charley Pharley sticks in the memory as I backed on course at 33/1 before it bolted up at less than half that price!

On a club stable visit to his yard (next to his luxury home in Wilmslow) I recall how friendly and welcoming he was and did not hold back when telling us about his horses. Indeed, on that visit he was urging all present to back his runner at Nottingham the next day. I took the mid-day price of 16/1 and had a bit more on (at Tote price – 25/1) when calling into the local bookies after work to watch the race and cheer it home!

Francis Lee stopped training in 2001 to pursue his business interests. The stables were sold a few years ago for housing development although the family home is still intact. R.I.P. Francis.

SUSAN CORBETT'S YARD – NEW SYNDICATION AVAILABLE



This may be of interest to those who came to our stable visit earlier this year or others who could not make it but are looking for a share in a horse this season?

The Northern Racing Club your chance to be part of a small, social, horseracing club based in the North East of England. A maximum of 20 shares are now available in The Northern Racing Club. The Northern Racing Club will have horse(s) with Susan Corbett and will be trained at Girsonfield Stud, which is located in Otterburn, Northumberland. Right now, the club runs Champ Royal. The club is primarily seen by its founder members as a social racing club whose membership will include others who will regularly go racing to watch our horses, and people who will enjoy visiting the yard. In short, people who are happy to become one of the 'Girsonfield Stable family' The cost of joining is a one-

off payment of £750.00 with a £99 all-inclusive monthly fee (covers both training and running costs).

Membership will be set for a rolling 12-month period, at the end of the membership period, members will be consulted as to what course of action the Club should best take.

For further information visit <https://girsonfield.co.uk/elementor-12166/>

*For the sake of clarity, this syndicate is not associated with NMRC despite the name!

PAUL FERGUSON'S JUMPERS TO FOLLOW 2023-24

If you attended the NMRC Cheltenham Preview event last March you will already know that Paul is a leading pundit/author when it comes to National Hunt racing!



Now in it's 17th year. Paul's new annual is available from Weatherbys bookshop and Racing Post bookshop for £12.95 (paperback), £9.95 (digital) or £14.95 for both.

KEY FEATURES FOR 2023-2024 INCLUDE:

- **LEADING PROSPECTS**
- **ACROSS THE SEA**
- **A VIEW FROM THE SADDLE**
- **AROUND THE YARDS**
- **POINT-TO-POINT GRADUATES**

"I just bought 3 hours of fun" by Andy Stallard

"I just bought 3 hours of fun". This is one of the most relevant, profound things I have heard on a racetrack this year. More on this later.

I lived in Liverpool for the first 33 years of my life. From the age of 5 (in 1973) until we had our first child I spent most of my waking life and money watching Liverpool play football, including commuting 5 hours each way from Scotland every other week. When our first born arrived I stopped instantly. This was 2007. I said I wouldn't go back until I could take him, even though I still had a season ticket. I eventually got 2 tickets together in January 2020, just before Covid. Why am I telling you this?

Football in the 70s and 80s was pretty much exclusively for hardcore fans. You ate, slept and breathed football, and so did most of the crowd. You got legged every other week at away grounds after getting kept in half an hour after the match, presumably just to let the nutters get round to the away end exit gates. You didn't dream of wearing a Liverpool top or scarf at an away ground and I'm sure Anfield was much the same for visiting fans. Again, why am I telling you this?

When I went, after a 13-year hiatus in 2020, things had changed. Dramatically. There were still a core of hardcore fans but you had the tourists, the once in a lifetime trippers from Tokyo or Oslo. There was a band on a stage by The Kop playing "Sit Down" but with Egyptian Kings. You could even get passable food inside. I suspect my 20 something self would've despised it, but my 50 something self is more tolerant. Football isn't just for the obsessives any more. It's also for the selfie crowd from Stockholm, Singapore or South Africa. So why, for God's sake, why am I telling you this?

It was student day at Musselburgh on Sunday. Check back through my blogs; I like student days. It may look like a set of extras from Peaky Blinders and you won't have seen this much tweed unless you've recently taken a day trip to Harris. They made up approximately 50% of the crowd today. And what an unfailingly polite, lovely bunch they were. Barely any of them knew the front end of a horse from the back but that didn't matter to them or, frankly, to us. Go to virtually any Saturday, when the crowds actually attend, and you'll find 95% of the crowd have the same level of racing knowledge, though rather than students, they may be stag dos, hen dos, birthday bashes or frazzled parents with kids dressed up as Batman. I didn't go racing in the 80s but I'd imagine there are parallels you can draw with football. Racing crowds, like it or loathe it, are not the same as they were 30-40 years ago. The purists are in the minority, the trippers are in the ascendency. To think, suggest, hope otherwise is, to paraphrase Blackadder, like a broken pencil... pointless. These students are the racegoers of tomorrow, like it or not- personally I like it.

So, on Sunday, we had a student guy who won 40 quid in the last. He said to me he had broken even on the day. I made some vaguely encouraging noises. He said to me "I've had an absolutely brilliant day- I've just bought 3 hours of fun". Wow. I've been moaning about premierisation, 6 race cards and, to some extent, intrusive off course affordability checks for months. I've tried to present logical arguments and rationale and this guy has nailed it in one, single, sentence.

So, to the BHA, the parliamentarians behind the white paper and the Gambling Commission, please, for the love of God, open yourself a Word document, get the biggest font you can fit on a page and type the words "I'VE JUST BOUGHT MYSELF 3 HOURS OF FUN", get your laminator out, laminate it and stick it on the wall in your conference room. This is, for good or for ill, your bog-standard punter. This is the person you should be considering in every decision you make.

- 1) This guy shouldn't have to send their life history in, even if they don't win 40 quid in the last- this is their accepted price of a day's entertainment, just like going to the pictures, going to the theatre or having a steak and chips.
- 2) This guy shouldn't have to travel a million miles on a Saturday to find a "premier" meeting when, frankly, this person doesn't care about the standard of the horse on show. This guy wants to rock up to his local track, have an acceptable for him, level of stake that he is prepared to lose and BUY HIMSELF 3 HOURS OF FUN.

3) This guy shouldn't have to set his alarm at an ungodly hour on a Saturday morning just because his nearest track is Thirsk, or Hexham, or Newton Abbot, or Perth who are being forced to start at 10am. This guy just wants his 3 hours of fun and, at this precise moment, he wants it by going racing because he's never been before and now, after today, he already loves it.

And you're all doing your damndest to deny him that. And guess what? If you make it almost impossible to have his 3 hours of fun racing, he'll go and get it somewhere else that isn't racing. And the local go karting track, or cinema, or footy ground, or (in my particular passion) board game club will get his patronage and racing will be something, in 20 years-time, he remembers doing once and wonders why he never did it again. But we know why, don't we? We know why and we stood by and let it happen. Shame on us.

Finally, I get the argument regarding prize money. I see a lot of stuff on social media saying "if they don't put the prize money up, they don't deserve the Saturday meetings".

Cheltenham Gold Cup Tattersalls ticket £82 and likely to be higher nearer the event.

Hexham's October Saturday meeting ticket £12

It's horses for courses. Literally and metaphorically. It's the equivalent of telling Forest Green they've got to kick off at 10am because Manchester United are on at 3 o'clock.

Some folk want to watch Forest Green, some Manchester United in the same way that some folk are happy to pay 7 times as much to watch the pinnacle of National Hunt racing and some people want a bloody good day out at a pretty track, at a price they can afford, cheering in their £2.50 each way selection.

I have just read that the fixture list for next year is delayed again. It's not too late. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Don't kill the grass roots. Don't be Beeching, or the small, often vibrant racetracks of today will be the abandoned, derelict, unused overgrown rural train stations of yesteryear.

GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

Friday August 11th Clairefontaine

In August all racing stops at the Paris tracks and everyone heads for the coast. So this year's road and rail trip was to five courses all along La Manche. Originally it was meant to be done just using the railways but timetable changes from when I started planning meant a few adjustments. I stayed in Rouen which meant about an hour's drive for the two days in Deauville but was easier for Dieppe and connections later on.



It lies on the River Seine where the river takes some wide meandering loops and is the city where Joan of Arc was burned to death. She is commemorated by a large church, one of the main avenues, and one of the many bridges over the river. There were some nice areas around the old part of the city where my hotel was.

Before the first race meeting I spent a day visiting some of the D Day landing beaches. Now and before the war they are and were just holiday beaches and resorts. Pointe de Hoc still has the concrete bunkers that the US troops assaulted up the cliffs to stop the firing along Omaha Beach. The bunkers are surrounded by bomb and shell craters from the pre landing bombardment. Along the coast at Arromanches-which was part of Gold Beach- are the remains of the Mulberry Harbours which were constructed to offload thousands of vehicles and tons of equipment. There are a whole host of museums dedicated to the landings in the area but the new (opened 2023) museum on the front at Arromanches telling the story of the harbours is outstanding. You could easily spend a few days visiting all the sites.

On to the racing and Deauville's other track. Strictly speaking it is not in Deauville but the neighbouring commune of Tourgeville but you can't see the join.

After the success of the main Deauville course it was deemed essential to build another course and in 1875 one was built at Pont l'Eveque about fifteen kilometres away. This was eventually thought to be too far outside the resort so in the early 1920's land was bought and in 1928 the new racecourse opened. It holds trotting as well as all three galop disciplines and during the August festival it races on the days when the major track doesn't. There are a total of nineteen galop meetings from June to October of which seven are jumps only and two mixed. There are three listed flat races while the main hurdle and chase of the season are also listed but are handicaps.

€5 for admission and €3 to park the car on the smallish car park. When I left all the roads around had cars parked on the verges on both sides. This seemed to be the norm throughout the resort. The last few times I have raced in France the racecard has been an A4 size booklet containing all the form for the meeting. Not so today with just an A2 double sided sheet listing runners, connections, form figures plus the colours. With plenty of runners the print size was very small. So it was sit down with the phone and try and do the form from the France Galop website.

A super big grandstand although you would hope it didn't rain as the steppings weren't covered by the roof. Two restaurants one on the upper level and another on a terrace area at one end of the stand. There was also a snack bar down the course near another open stand. There are lots of trees and plants around in the enclosure and it was all very picturesque.

A really good crowd of all ages and there was a supervised children's play area with pony rides. The course is right-handed with the flat track being about 2,200 metres around with the hurdle track on the inside being about 2,000 metres. The chase course is not a simple circuit having two alternative lines of fences down the back of the course and finishes by jumping the last two obstacles on the hurdles track.

Nine races on the card with two chases, a hurdle and six on the flat.

First up was a four-year-old chase with the Munir/ Souede owned Captain Du Berlais on his chase debut an even money shot. He stood out in the parade ring, jumped perfectly and was the winner from very early on. His main rival Aelle was already running in his eleventh chase of the year. The winner beat nothing here but is probably useful.

The four-year-old hurdle saw previous two-time winner James's Passion giving away five kilos to most of his rivals (1 kilo for each €4,000 won in prize money) and he managed it well. He is by dual French Champion Hurdle winner Gemix who hasn't had too many representatives in the UK or Ireland so far. He has however had two Grade 1 chasers in France with his oldest progeny being only seven. Runner up Bojack Horseman made most till the run in and was well clear of the third and will certainly win races. His sire Whitecliffsofdover won a Newmarket Free Handicap for Coolmore and was by War Front so hardly a jump pedigree.

There were two races for unraced three-year-olds over 2,400 metres which contained a mixture of slow maturing flat animals and prospective jumpers.

In the colts and geldings race the Aga Khan had the 11/10 favourite in Dalmanndi. He is a grandson of dual Group 1 winning mare Dalkala by sire of the moment Siyouni. Already gelded he looks slow and just failed by a short head to beg back front runner Dschingis Prestige who battled on well. Another short head back to the third Zagros. No doubt Dalmanndi will be out around the provinces to win before going to the sales.

Godolphin had the favourite for the filly's race in Love of Joy whose dam Khawlah once ran in the Lancashire Oaks. She was disinterested in racing from early on but the winner Shakti who won by seven lengths could be useful. I was stood beside the owners and I think they enjoyed the win more than Sheikh Mo would have done. No fancy breeding here as the dam was very moderate but she is by another stallion on the up in Zarak.

Saturday August 12th Deauville- La Touques

Napoleon III was the last Emperor of France and it was his brother the Duke of Morny who was responsible for starting racing in Deauville. He had already overseen the construction of Longchamp in 1857 and seven years later the first meeting was held here. The site next to the River Touques has been expanded over the years with the straight 1,600 metre course (the only one in France after the closure of Maisons-Laffitte) coming just after World War 1. It became a training centre in 1982 and in 2003 an all-weather track was opened racing on Polytrack. From just holding its August fixture it now holds forty-eight race days in the year.



Right-handed the round course is 2,100 metre around with the all-weather being 100 metres shorter. The centre of the course is occupied by the Deauville International Polo Club and at least two games were held during the afternoon I was there. Indeed it was a very horsey weekend as when I was leaving I passed what looked like a show jumping event about a kilometre from the course.

The first race was at 1.28 but I arrived early as I wanted to walk up to the seafront and look around the town. The car park (€3) hadn't opened so I slipped into the owners, trainers, and jockeys car park close to the Arqana sales complex. It was about ten minutes' walk up to the front near the famous casino. The buildings are not right behind the beach with either a grassy area or sports facilities like the tennis club or swimming pool in between. The shops away from the beach were every top designer brand you could think of spread just over a couple of streets. My only purchase however was a copy of Paris Turf for the next day's racing at Dieppe.

€5 prebooked admission or €10 on the day and again just the single sheet for a racecard. It's cheaper on days away from the August festival. The grandstand was all seater and you could pay extra for a

seat right on the finishing line. It was great for the round course but the angle was wrong for the straight course. It didn't help that they had erected a large gazebo in the way which seemed to serve no purpose. The 1,600 metre races today were on the round course but it was a poor view even for the 1,200 metre races. There is a permanent big screen. The panoramic restaurant is high on the stands roof while there was also a snack bar.

There was also a large restricted area behind the parade ring with another restaurant but no indication of the admittance criteria.

A conditions event over 1,200 metres to open things up with a long odds on shot in Dariym for the Aga Khans daughter Zahra. He won well but is no more than a handicap prospect.

Two 1,600 metre races for unraced two-year-olds were probably the most interesting races of the afternoon.

Nothing special on breeding in the filly's race and a turn up with 16/1 shot Dare To Dream leading a fair way out and running on well. Just ordinary form. Again no super stars on breeding in the colt's race but a decisive winner in Metropolitan. He came from off the pace to win by three lengths. He is another by Zarak and we will have to see how he goes next to see the races worth.

The rest of the card was not great with a claimer, a claiming handicap, and the equivalent of a 0-50 handicap with two of the races run on the all-weather. I guess with a month-long meeting not all the races can be top class.

Of the two courses I much preferred Clairefontaine. A better stand, better viewing, and nicer surroundings.

Sunday August 13th Dieppe

4.42 for the first race on a seven-race jump card so a later start and on the train today for the fifty-minute trip from Rouen. Once a fishing village then the most important port of France Dieppe is now a beach resort. It is still however an important port with the twice daily ferry running to Newhaven in Sussex. It's been fought over in many conflicts the last time being in August 1942. A raid took place to capture the port from the Germans and supposedly gather intelligence but there is still debate today about the real reason. I had heard of the attack but knew little of the background so visited the museum dedicated to it. There was a film made in 1982 on the fortieth anniversary featuring interviews with survivors and locals. The poorly planned attack- made up mainly of Canadian troops- was a disaster from the start and within six hours a withdrawal was ordered. Half the force was killed, wounded, or captured.



The racecourse was about a half hours walk from the port and they have raced on the present site since 1852. The first star here was Franc-Picard who having finished second in the first running of the

Grand Steeple de Dieppe won the next seven renewals. The port was captured without a fight following D day but over three thousand mines had to be removed from the course before racing resumed in 1947. Thirteen meetings from May to September with seven flat and six jumping cards. They also hold trotting meetings on the flat track. The track is right-handed with separate courses for the flat, hurdle, and chase races. The flat track is about 2,000 metres per circuit being on the outside and there is a 1,100-metre straight track. The courses web site also shows a cross country course but the obstacles in the infield that you can see look overgrown and the fixture list does not show any races.

€3 for the concessionary admission but once again no racecard and just the one sheet with runners and colours. I had a Paris Turf for today but it's not a great paper and the form in it is limited. A good crowd on and the viewing was excellent from the main stand. There is a separate building with a panoramic restaurant. There were far too few PMU windows open for the crowd size and I was glad to have brought some water with me as apart from a sweet stall there was nowhere to get any food or drink except the restaurant.

In the opening four-year-old maiden hurdle the favourite Vision du Rheu had only a three-kilo penalty for his placed efforts over hurdles but had won two chases as a three-year-old and run in listed chases. Geoffrey Re kept it simple and made virtually all and never got serious with him. He has a Racing Post chase rating of 122 to give the level of the race. The second horse Cimont was only having his second outing and will win before long.

A three-year-old novice followed with next to no form but Klovis just stood out so much in the parade ring he had to be backed. He had run twice at Auteuil on the second occasion falling but had James Reveley riding today. Settled off the pace he came through to lead two out and ran out a ready winner paying €9.70 on the machine. Runner up Demon Vert on debut ran a nice race while third home Karastic will find a race.

The feature of the three-year-old filly's novice hurdle was the three horses all home bred by Madam H Devlin and all by Doctor Dino whose progeny have been making big money at the French sales. He is of course the sire of State Man and Sharjah. One of them Duchesse De Dino was favourite but another Coquette carried the first colours. Coquette took it up turning in but between the last two Duchesse De Dino went on to win nicely. After dropping back to fifth Coquette then ran on like a stayer to take second and then the third Keep The Faith a 20/1 shot ran on to take third for the one two three. It may only have been a maiden hurdle but all three horses, jockeys, trainers, and the owner lined up for the photos in the parade ring after the race.

The four-year-old chase was a handicap and Sweet Rosetta was on a four timer for joint licence holders Guillaume Macaire and Hector de Langaneste. Two chases and then a win off a higher mark than today over hurdles and she was a strong favourite. It was all very easy and she hasn't stopped winning.

Tuesday August 15th Hippodrome de Breville- Longueville Granville

Monday was moving day on the train (changing in Caen) from Rouen to the small town of Avranches at the other end of Normandy. It is a hilltop town and from the viewing point in the park you can see out to Mont St Michel and the long sweep of the coast. There can't be too many towns that have a Sherman tank in the middle of a roundabout. It stands together with a monument to US General George Patton who led the liberation of the town in 1944. The town has a racecourse but it is for trotting.

S N C F the French railways also operates long distance buses so it was a bus for the half hour trip to Granville. It is a former fishing port which in the late nineteenth century reinvented itself as a tourist resort with direct trains from Paris. During the war it was liberated without a fight but it was recaptured for several hours in March 1945 by a raiding party from the still occupied Channel Islands. The town is the birthplace of renowned couturier Christian Dior and there is a museum dedicated to him. His sister was also famous as a member of the resistance. She was captured survived a concentration camp and forced labour camp to live to the age of 90.

The racecourse dates from the days when the town was becoming a tourist destination and was opened in 1878.



Although officially called Granville the local name is after the two villages it lies between which are about three kilometres north of the town. You could hardly get any closer to the beach with just a few sand dunes separating it. Just the five meetings a year with the other four also having some trotting races. One in May and two each in July and August it stages flat, chases, and cross country but no hurdles. €5 for admission and €2 for a proper racecard with all the form you could want.

The course has had a major makeover recently and the grandstand is very modern. It was packed for the afternoon but the enclosure gave excellent views of the course from ground level. A large barbecue for steaks, sausages, and chips at a reasonable charge kept everyone fed.

The flat course was 1,400 metres around with the chase course outside it. The cross country weaves its way all over the place. In the big race fences 22 and 23 are the same fence jumped in the same direction and fences 30 and 32 are the same fence jumped in different directions. Lots of bank fences similar to the Irish cross-country races.

Two cross country races, three chases, and three on the flat with the big race of the season here the Grand Cross de Granville as the highlight. The meeting was not on the main PMU schedule so it was a local tote and no need for the course to stick to scheduled race times. This was to cause me a problem later in the afternoon.

Certainly no stars in the first two flat races with the maiden three-year-olds in the first not having won €2,500 in any one run. The second was for horses rated on the UK scale less than 50. Concerto was top rated at 21.5 and had been running mainly at Longchamp before a place at Saint Malo and he just looked better than the others. It didn't look that way at halfway when he was last of the ten runners with jockey Cecelia Poirier looking unconcerned. Even leaving the back strait she seemed in an impossible position but threaded her way through and won cosily. All the connections were interviewed after the races and although my French is very poor in transpired this was her first win since turning professional.

The final flat race was a four-year-old bumper and as at Dieppe one horse stood head and shoulders above his rivals in King Dino. He had run fourth first time out but looked a chaser who would come on for that. Amateur jockey Guilain Bertrand who had ridden only one winner this year kept it simple sitting second and going on with just under a circuit left and powered away. The eight lengths could have been any distance. He was followed home from well off the pace by owner/trainer/ breeder Jean- Phillipe Dubois's second-string Triple Charm on debut.

The Grand Cross de Granville was over 5,800 metres with 42 obstacles with €52K in prize money. Seven runners of which four were for cross country specialist trainer Patrice Quinton. The race was run at a crawl early on with the twelve-year-old Bolero De Kerker setting the pace. His main rival Gymtonic De Kerker pulled up lame just as he upped the pace and he was clear with four to jump. Disaster almost struck at the second last- ironically called Le Petit Fence- which he hit hard and jockey Antoine Moriceau had to hang on. He had enough in hand to hold a late challenge. There are three days when they run cross country races at the course each year and apart from 2019 when he missed the entire season Bolero De Kerker has missed just one meeting since his first cross race here in June 2017. He has won six including the Grand Cross in 2021 but also fallen four times. The Grand Cross was round eleven of fifteen for the Trophy National du Cross which runs from Pau in January to Saumur in October with classes for horse, trainer, and jockey.

There was supposedly half an hour between the eight races all afternoon with the final race scheduled for six o'clock. I hadn't really noticed till after the big race that was fourth on the card (when the presentations and interviews were going on) that it was seeming a long time between races. The fifth should have been off at 4.30 and by 5.00 the horses were just entering the parade ring. The sixth the 5.00 was off at 5.45. I guess the reason was the course needed all the tote bets and six tote sellers for the big crowd wasn't enough. The races didn't start till everyone was on. All that didn't help me as I had a bus to catch three kilometres away at 7.03 so I set off on the walk back to the station missing the last two races.

I actually met someone I knew in Peter Stephens who wrote a history of the National Hunt Chase and has lived in France for a few years. He recommended a couple of courses in Brittany that would be worth a visit.

A super place to race on a proper summer's day. Oh, and we had a female commentator. It seems the last bastion of inequality in British and Irish racing that is to be breached. If only someone could persuade Tommo we have had enough of him to make room.

Thursday August 17th Hippodrome de la Cote d'Emeraude Saint Malo

Over the border from Normandy today to the port of Saint Malo in Brittany. It was once famous for its corsairs and explorers. The former hounded English ships in the channel while the latter included Jacques Cartier the first European to visit the sites of Montreal and Quebec City, and Louis-Antoine de Bougainville who founded the first settlement in what is now the Falkland Islands. Nowadays the port runs ferries to the Channel Islands and Portsmouth in the UK.

During World War 2 the town was almost totally destroyed in a month-long siege before the German garrison surrendered after running out of water. It took until 1960 to finish the rebuild.

The racing company in Saint Malo was created in 1842 but it wasn't until 1904 that the racecourse on the site at Marville was created and the course has been known as the Hippodrome de Marville. Back in a car today and when I came across two horseboxes on the road into the town I just followed them in. The racecourse didn't have a car park so I had to use the nearby park and ride for visitors to the town. €5 for entry and €1 for the racecard with form. It's a compact site and while the stand looks like it has been around for a while there has been some recent work on it. It's a good view from the lower steps and above is an enclosed area which has been refurbished and could be used as a panoramic restaurant but which was empty today. There was also another restaurant in a separate building and refreshments at the back of the main stand. The weighing room looked like it had been built very recently.

Just the five gallop meetings at the course, three mixed hurdle and flat and one each all flat and one all hurdles. The hurdles are run on the same course as the flat races with the hurdles swinging out from the rails. There is a separate trotting course inside the turf track. The race card said the track is 1471 metres around and I am not going to argue. It is right-handed.

A 11.40 start and the smallest crowd of the trip.

Two 1,600 metre two-year-old maidens with a long odds on shot in the colts and geldings race.

Clavus had had two runs but he was small and not the sort who would improve for time so it was no

surprise to see him turned over by Timber Light. Moderate stuff. The filly's race saw half the field making their debuts. It was Vive La Reine who was thought good enough to run in a listed race on her third start who ran out a very easy winner.



Female jockeys continue to get a 1.5 kilo allowance and while non-have threatened to become involved in the flat title battle Marie Velon is a regular in the top ten- and this-year Delphine Santiago is also going well in twelfth place. Marline Eon was one of the first to get a chance at Group 1 level in 2017. While she has not made the breakthrough she usually rides forty to fifty winners a year. She made all on the six-year-old Get Set under top weight in the first division of the 2,500-metre handicap. She tried to repeat in division two but was passed 200 metres out by Sagalycat and Margot Romary. The winner opened at over 10.0 on the PMU but returned 4.4 so despite not having won for two years he was expected today.

Felix de Giles is well clear in the jump jockeys championship this year and he had the long odds-on favourite in the 3,900 metre four-year-old AQPS maiden hurdle with Joyeuse Mome. 1.4 looked a very poor price leaving the back straight but she outstayed her rivals to win easily in the end. In the three-year-old fillies maiden hurdle Madam Devin had another Doctor Dino in Kings Diamond who ran an excellent race in second looking like a stayer. The winner on debut Mina Tanenbaum won very nicely despite being seemingly unfancied at 16/1 and looked useful. Her sire Choeur du Nord ran only three times winning two Auteuil hurdles but is starting to make a name for himself with some of his three-year-olds making good money at the store horse sales this summer.

Wednesday August 23rd York

The three main races looked like they could be good renewals at the five-day entry stage but really cut up. Derby winner Desert Crown's seemingly career ending injury certainly robbed the Juddmonte of a star performer. Paddington came here after a tough season and it looked like that all caught up with him. He never stopped trying but the spark wasn't there and he never looked like passing the front runner Mustahab and in the end couldn't hold the filly Nashwa. She usually runs her race so it is probably best to rate the other two from her. Mostahdof's official rating of 128 looks too high coming from a Prince of Wales Stakes that doesn't look as good now as it did at the time.

While Frankie rode an excellent race on Mostahdaf he was not at his best in the Voltigeur. On a stayer in Gregory he went too fast early on taking on the rags of the field. The two who lay off the pace Continuous and Castle Way came through two out but it was soon a one-horse race as Continuous went clear. Ryan Moore rode him right out. He will no doubt head to the Leger with a good chance. His Japanese sire Heart's Cry beat the mighty Deep Impact over a mile and a half and has got winners at two miles so he should stay. Gregory will obviously be a cup horse next season.

The Acomb produced a Guineas winner last season but this year's renewal looked substandard and was run at a crawl early on as well.

Thursday September 7th Haydock

A strange card with four two-year-old races. Elmonjed defied a seven-pound penalty in the six-furlong colts and geldings novice race without looking anything out of the ordinary. He certainly didn't stand out in the parade ring and his Group race entries look optimistic.

The seven-furlong novice race was also for the males and it went to Godolphin with Legend of Love. He is a small dipped backed animal and it would be no surprise if a couple of the other debutantes improve passed him. Runner up Wafei and fourth placed Victorious Street were the paddock picks and should improve. Back in seventh the £575K Kodiak colt Odin Legacy has to make incredible improvement to justify that price and it doesn't look promising.

Saturday September 9th Haydock

With the one potential star in the field Shaquille running no sort of race the Sprint Cup was a very poor renewal with the first three having official ratings below 110. Still it was an excellent result for trainer Ed Bethell who is operating at a very good 25% strike rate this season. As for the favourite the stables runners only beat 4 of their 59 opponents over the weekend so you have to think they have some sort of bug.

Connections have been trying to make Chindit into a Group 1 horse since his two-year-old days and he just isn't. Back into a Group 3 in the Superior Mile he easily saw off Light Infantry another dropping in class. Chindit is off to India after he finishes racing and no doubt will be given another stab at a top prize before then.

Al Musmak took the listed Ascendent Stakes with a bit in hand. He had been well seen off in a similar race at Ascot so it is hard to see him stepping up much in class. Aiden O'Brien sent over Nursery winner Portland who got no sort of run in fourth.

He also sent over Melbourne Cup entry Denmark for the mile six three-year-old handicap. The horse is more likely to be facing eight flights than getting an airline ticket after he refused to make any effort in the last two furlongs. Winner Nageeb a half-brother to Baaeed and Hukum is improving with every race and could move into graded company soon.

The Munir/ Souede runner French Invasion ran OK in fourth and he has the size to do the winter job for the pair.

Monday September 11th Perth

My first visit here since 1987 so it was like visiting a new course. Free entry as part of the Racing TV Scottish September Season Ticket and a free racecard as well. I couldn't remember anything about the enclosures but it has a decent parade ring and the viewing is better from the stand than the head on pictures on TV. No roof over the steppings so it can't rain in Perth.

Gordon Elliot has an outstanding record at the course and he had two of the three in the juvenile hurdle. The 3/10 favourite Doctor Nightingale even on her fourth start backed off several hurdles and was in trouble a long way out. It was her stable mate Kyogo who won despite hanging on the run in. A poor race.

Patrick Neville had a super first official British season and has been quiet over the summer. He had Haribo Collonges making his chase debut in the two four novice handicap from eighteen pounds out of the handicap. Only three runners and he can hardly go up for being beaten twenty-four lengths in second but he looked a decent sort and jumped well. With sights lowered he will win.

Peter Kavanagh had a double the first on Prince Nino for Lizzie Quinlan. He is a big sort who was overpriced at 9/2 and is now two for two here with moderate runs at Cartmel. An excellent buy for £3K out of Harry Derham's yard he can go on and jump a fence in time. Kavanagh completed the double for Lisa Harrison who also later doubled up. His win percentage halved last season but he is a third of the way to last season's wins already. Lisa Harrison's second winner was her fourth of the season equalling the last four season's totals combined. Let's hope she can get back to her double figure totals of a few years ago.

Tuesday September 12th Kelso

Not quite as long since I was here but still over ten years. I would come more but on decent winter days they invariably miss out the jumps in the straight because of the sun.

Plenty of work since my last visit with a complete makeover for the parade ring area which is much improved. Maybe because the trees are still in leaf on the golf course the view from the Tweedie stand wasn't as good as I remember. I therefore went on the roof of the ancient stand which gives a great view but would not be a place to be in poor weather.

Caithness was well backed and made all in the maiden two-mile hurdle for Lucinda Russell. Already seven he is a solid looking beast and while it was a poor race he will win more at a level.

Fusain was pitched in against Jonbon at Aintree in April but scraped into the 0-120 two-mile handicap chase here. He looked in need of it and didn't lead like he usually does but ran well enough. I fancy Patrick Neville will pitch him into a better race off a low weight next time.

My winner on the afternoon was Imperial Data at 5/1 for Rebecca Menzies who outstayed his rivals in a fast paced two five maiden hurdle. His wind up has obviously worked and while once again it was a moderate race he can go on.

The two-mile five handicap hurdle was only a 0-110 but there was plenty of betting activity as first Call Me Harry was backed into favourite and then I Am Spider Man came into 5/4 for Irish trainer Charles Byrnes. All the money stayed with the books as Darkest Day made all jumping very well and the well backed pair came from too far back for second and third. The winner is hardly consistent and you wouldn't back him to follow up. Of the beaten pair Call Me Harry needs to jump better.

JOHN BLANCE UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT – COMPILED BY BRIAN GOODWILL

WHAT FIRST PIQUED YOUR INTEREST IN RACING?

To be honest, I cannot recall a time when racing did not play some sort of part in my life. My father loved a bet. He was a school teacher who worked hard all week and for whom Saturdays were therefore sacrosanct. I spent many a happy smoke-filled afternoon alongside him in the living room, much to my mother's despair, watching Channel Four Racing and Grandstand next to dad's ashtray, a packet of Embassy fags and a pile of 10p each-way Heinz betting slips. Social services would probably be called in now!

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST PAID ROLE IN THE SPORT?

My first job out of university was as an editorial writer in the marketing department at Weatherbys. My role was to produce copy for their publications - I wrote all the horse profiles for the 2003 Aintree Grand National day racecard - as well as muck in with some of the other day to day tasks. It was a terrific grounding in both racing and writing concise articles often to pretty tight deadlines.

DID YOU ENJOY YOUR TIME IN HONG KONG, HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?

Racing-wise yes. It was hard work and I needed to learn a lot on the job, but after a tough settling in period I think I did ok. Others may disagree, mind! I had the privilege to work with some of the most knowledgeable people I have ever encountered in the game and it improved me in all facets of the job. Personally, it was hard. Lying awake at night worrying about finding a school for my eldest daughter is not an experience I am desperately keen to repeat. My enduring memory though is just how popular racing is with the general public in that part of the world. I used to love catching the 263 bus from my apartment in New Territories to Sha Tin races on a Sunday morning. It was jam-packed with punters all with their broadsheet racing papers pressed up against their noses.

DO YOU THINK ANDREA ATZENI WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN HONG KONG?

To be honest, I don't know. He had a rather low-key stint there back in 2014 during which time I think he found the diplomatic side of things difficult. Jockeys out there need to be able to ingratiate themselves with owners and trainers in order to compete for rides instead of relying on agents like they do here. Those with a hard edge do well - Zac Purton being the perfect example - whilst less assertive types, however good they are in the saddle, can struggle. I wish him well, though. I got rather defensive when European jockeys were criticised by my Antipodean friends and colleagues.



WHAT WOULD YOU PUT IN RACING'S ROOM 101?

Brown cheek-pieces! Any little visual aid you get as a commentator helps so when a bay horse is listed as having sideburns you assume that they will be white and you will be able to see them. Clearly not one of the big issues facing the UK today, but one that irks me a bit!

CAN YOU RELATE A PARTICULARLY FUNNY STORY FROM YOUR MEDIA CAREER?

Nothing that stands out as such, but I always find myself chuckling away whenever I have the pleasure of working with Robert Cooper, though. He has the right mix of plenty of research, journalistic enquiry and a sense of humour.

WHO ARE YOUR RACING HEROES, EQUINE AND HUMAN?

Richard Dunwoody was a jockey I admired a lot. He was tactically brilliant and had nerves of steel. His languid tug of the reins on Miinnehomia just as they were coming to the elbow in the 1994 Grand National was just about the coolest piece of race-riding you'll ever see. It was not a coincidence at all that he won virtually any big race you can think of.

I don't know if you can call him a hero, but my favourite horse of all time is Harchibald. He was not un-genuine, you can't win the Grade One races he did if you are a wrong'un, he was just a bit one-dimensional. He needed a strong end-to-end gallop to be seen at his best. Conor O'Dwyer knew this. That is why he made sure he set tepid fractions on Hardy Eustace in that unforgettable 2005 Champion Hurdle, so that when Harchibald cruised upsides he still had plenty left in the tank. Paul Carberry's ride has attained infamy over the years, but O'Dwyer's was

tactically perfect.

Harchibald was all class, though. Poetry in motion over his hurdles and to watch him loping alongside top-class horses with Carberry motionless in the saddle still gets the hairs up on the back of my neck. He also connects me to my childhood. One of the last meetings I ever attended with my late father was the 2004 Fighting Fifth at Newcastle. Harchibald laughed at them that day and myself and the old man thought we had seen something special. We also thought he would hose up in the Champion Hurdle. We were almost right!

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE CAREER AMBITIONS?

To still be in the game a further twenty-one years down the line! There are big races I would like to call, obviously, but there are plenty of experienced, high-quality commentators on the UK roster so I have to be patient and realistic.

WHAT CAN THE BHA DO BETTER?

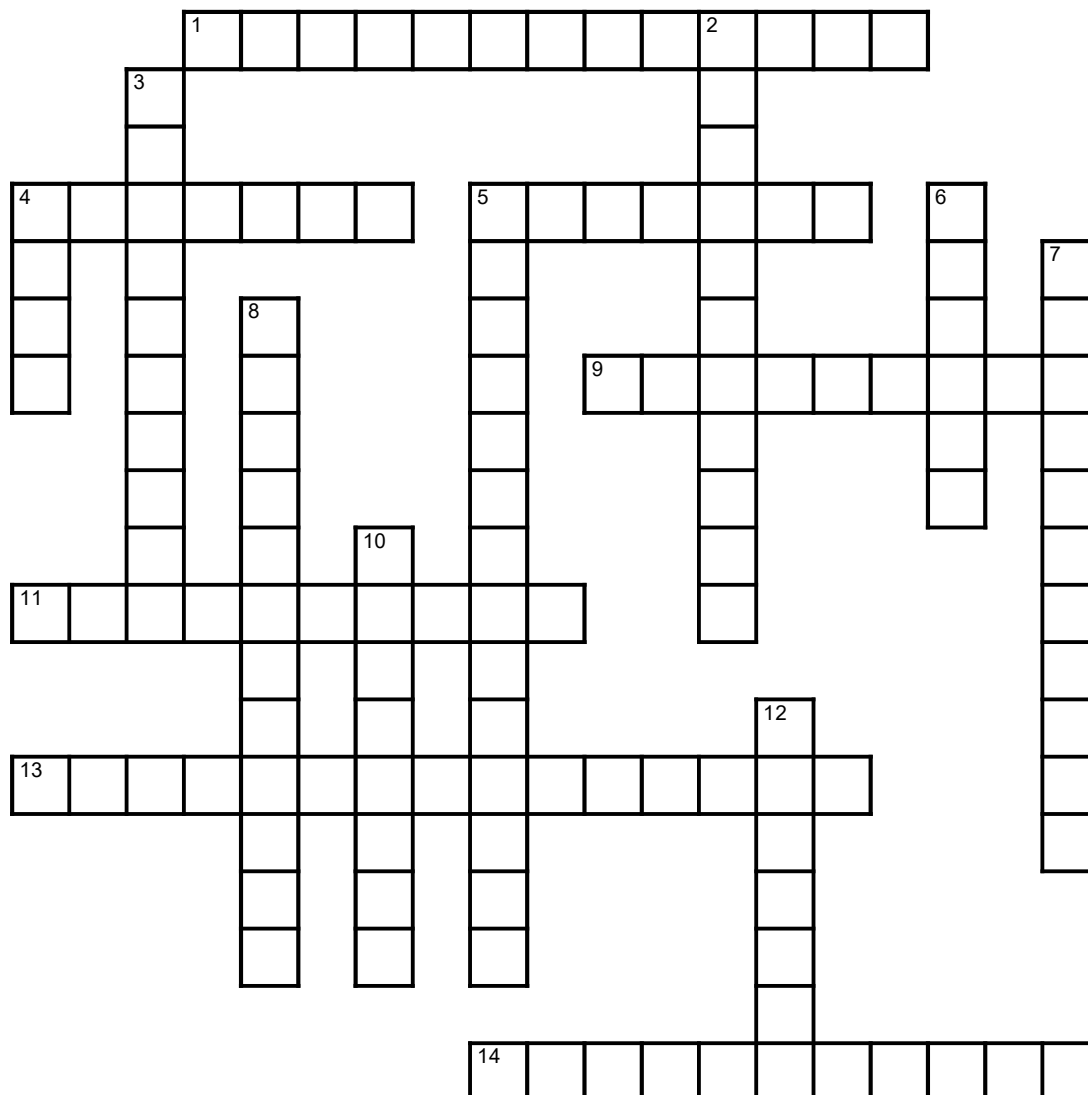
We need to make racing an affordable day out. It is just too expensive. I know our funding model is different to the parts of the world where racecourse admission is much cheaper, but it really is imperative, when people have so many other leisure options, that we entice them in. Relieving them of twenty to thirty quid before they even cross the threshold is not going to do that. We also need to work out a way of getting more and better tote betting options. Every time I mention this I get told that the ship sailed years ago and there is no alternative to what we have now. Maybe, but we have to concede that the best funded models are either tote monopolies like North America, France or Hong Kong, or places like Australia where the dear old nanny goat is given much greater prominence. The World Pool, for whom I work, is a start, but we need much more.

MAL BOYLE'S CESAREWITCH PUZZLE

NAME AND FRAME THE LAST 16 INDIVIDUAL WINNERS OF THE CESAREWITCH.

JUST ONE CLUE TO OFFER TO GET YOU STARTED WHICH RELATES TO

1 ACROSS – THE ONLY HORSE TO HAVE WON THE RACE TWICE DURING THE RELEVANT YEARS –
TAKE CARE WITH THE SPELLING THOUGH!



Once you have solved the puzzle please send entries to NMRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, Cheshire M33 3LB to arrive by Saturday 25th November. 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

We are feeling generous this month and have awarded **five** prizes to the winners of the last puzzle who were: Phil Doyle, Guy Weaver, Rob Paterson, Brendan O'Meara & Mike Campbell. Prize details will be forwarded to the winners shortly.

Bowen down to 4-1 on for NH jockeys' title

BY HAROLD HEYS

WE ARE closing in on the half-way stage in the race for the NH Jockey's Championship. But the bookies reckon it's all over with. Sean Bowen is 4-1 ON with Sky Bet – and Harry Cobden has taken over second place in the list from Northern favourite Brian Hughes. Cobden is 7-2 and Hughes has slipped to 6/1.

In the past couple of years Hughes has raced away and held on comfortably. But this season Bowen has been setting a strong pace and as we near the half to the half-way stage – the championship runs from May 1 to April 27 – the Welshman is about 30 in front of Hughes with Cobden about ten adrift in third.

I've been asking around racing pals and none of them seem to know much about Bowen except that he's been banging in quite a few winners for Irish trainers, especially Gordon Elliott, and rides a lot for his dad, trainer Peter Bowen. Guesses at his age varied. He's 26.

Sean isn't afraid of putting in the hard miles travelling. Inside a few days recently he was up at Perth, down at Newton Abbott and had taken in most courses in between. So, yes, he is making a determined bid for the NH Championship.

The new Injured Jockeys' Fund newsletter has an interesting interview with Bowen and I've borrowed a few lines. He was born in Wales and, with his brother James, grew up around horses. Pointing was a logical step but his hero as a lad was Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard before he got into racing and looked up to Tom O'Brien and Jamie Moore who rode "plenty of winners for mum and dad."

Favourite racecourses? Ffos Las, his local course, followed by Aintree and Sandown.

And he was full of praise for the IJF. He's been using the gym at Oaksey House quite a lot. He says: Going in there makes you realise how good a job they do looking after everyone. They help all different sorts of people from those who have had major injuries and can't walk to those with less severe injuries as well as people like me who go in to keep fit. They help everyone. I think it's a great charity.

The Champion Jockey title is bestowed on the rider who has the most wins during a racing season. From its inception in 1900 to 1925, the award was given to the jockey who had the most winners during a calendar year. Beginning in 1926, this changed to most winners ridden during a campaign season; the 1926 winner was rewarded for the 1925–26 season, for example.

Tony McCoy was champion jockey a record 20 times. He also recorded the most wins in a season, with 289 in 2001–02. The title has been shared on three occasions: in 1944–45, in 1968–69 and in 1981–82. Three amateurs have won the title, though none more recently than 1919. One of them, Jack Anthony won both as an amateur (1914) and as a professional (1922).



In the 2015–16 season, for the first time the championship was rewarded with prize money. The champion received £15,000 and smaller prizes were awarded down to fifth place. From 2016 onwards, the champion jockey receives a trophy designed by Asprey.

It looks as though young Sean will be picking it up next April.

Editor's Note: I seem to recall the recently retired Cartmel raceday presenter *John Sexton* saying that both Sean and James (Bowen) rode their first winners (under rules) at Cartmel after both had excellent point to point careers. Sean has benefitted from the retirement of Richard Johnson in 2021 in that 'Dickie' rode many winners for Irish trainers 'up North' that are now coming his way. As regards the 'NH Jockeys Championship' maybe it's time to follow the flat system and have both a summer and winter championship race? I've nothing against Brian Hughes but when you scan the list of past champions they would all have been 'in demand' at Cheltenham and Aintree whilst Brian would be more likely be seen riding at smaller tracks during the big festivals. If Sean still lives in South Wales he may be reflecting that most of the horses he rides travel faster than cars in the principality following their new 20mph limits (replacing most of the old 30mph limits!)

Day at the races - with a difference! By PATRICK BROWN

A DAY'S racing can be a great day out. It doesn't really matter if you win or lose a few quid, after all an afternoon supporting your local football team never gets an enquiry on your return along the lines of "Did ti mek eawt?"

No, a question is likely to be more along the lines of "Good game?"

However, my enjoyment of weekend visits to UK racecourses waned several years ago. My nearest track, Headache, sorry Haydock, Park, is now a write off, Cheltenham or Cartmel are too busy, parking nearly everywhere is a nightmare, and punters are continuously deprived of value for money on course. Refreshments and a couple of jars are a rip-off. How much is a bag of chips or an ice cream cone these days?

Small things annoy you after a while. You want a race card? Expensive, but often there's no point in offering up a fiver. It's often hi-tech to pay or forget it. The cut and thrust with the bookies is sanitized beyond recovery now that chalk and boards have disappeared.

Last time I went to York it had been raining in the late morning. But there had been no effort to wipe the wet tables and chairs dotted around. So, we stood up.

Too many punters are interested in how many pints they can knock back or how much powder they can shove up their noses or how much of a racket they can make.

So, having tired of 'big meetings' across the UK, I decided to look elsewhere and explore what opportunities are available by air to find something a bit different. I decided early this year that I was happy to share an aircraft with a hundred others to get me to a race meeting.



Myself and a couple of pals decided on a day's racing with a difference – across the Irish Sea for an afternoon at the Leopardstown Festival.

We left East Lancs soon after dawn and went down the M6 to arrive at John Lennon airport not much over an hour later to catch the first flight out at about 8.30am. We dropped into Dublin some 50 minutes later. A 20-minute coach ride from the airport costs 8.30 euro return. A short shuttle bus journey at the end, allows you to get from security clearance to on course in just over an hour.

The express coach to the city center was 8.30 euro return. We stopped off in the city for a couple of jars. It was a few years since I'd been to Dublin but I hadn't forgotten the Black Stuff! It really is a different gravy over there.

Bus out to the racecourse was just over 4 euro return followed by a short free ride to the track. As we drew closer to the course, a couple on the tram approached us and the usual pleasantries were exchanged – and we discovered we had a mutual friend!

Leopardstown was wonderful! There was a wholly different atmosphere. Perhaps it's the folk that make it, I suppose. So welcoming and so engaging. Perhaps it's because they all have an interest in racing as opposed to simply wanting to get blathered and blanked?

There seemed to be a lost more respect by the authorities for the punter, something that British racing should take notice of. Perhaps it's just that most small racecourses here could manage quite well without any punters; perhaps we are just an added complication.

The travelling over was quite enjoyable. On the plane out I found myself sitting next to a chap who had a few shares in racehorses dotted around the country. "With a hat like that you *must* be going racing!" I'd told him as I settled in. He sure was! We chatted most of the way over.

On a personal note, the less said about the return flight, the better. I have never, ever, seen as many intoxicated people stagger aboard a plane in my life. It was a first-class exhibition in swaying, staggering and giggling. But good fun!

It all went rather well. Long day but enjoyable. And before you ask: Did wi mek eawt? Let's say we managed to cover expenses which is all anyone can ask of a day's racing.

In fact, we enjoyed it so much that we went over in September for a day at the Galway Festival. Another great day out in the middle of a large, knowledgeable crowd. Pity the airport, just a few miles from the course, had closed last time I looked.

And as for next year, we're planning a return to the Leopardstown Festival and thinking of trying the Czech Republic for the Pardubice or Nice for Cagnes-sur-Mer. Planning a day at the races with a difference is, we have discovered, half the fun.

Editor's Note: First of all thanks to Patrick as a first-time contributor to our magazine! I am sure many of our readers will still enjoy going to Cheltenham, Cartmel, York & Haydock so let's not dwell on those aspects! As regards Leopardstown I visited that meeting several years back and really enjoyed it too! Prices have gone up a bit since my last visit but €35 or €25 for concessions for a festival meeting still sounds reasonable to me – with live music available on the day for those that want to make a day of it!

NEWS FROM CATTERICK – FLAT SEASON FINALE ON OCT 21st

A busy Flat season is coming to a climax at Catterick Races with their richest race day of the season, The William Hill Catterick Dash taking place on Saturday 21 October.

The first of seven races is scheduled to take place at 1:45pm with gates opening to the public two hours prior at 11:45am. The feature race of the afternoon – and Catterick's richest race of the season – The William Hill Catterick Dash Handicap will take place at 3:40pm. The minimum distance five-furlong sprint should attract plenty of good sprinters and has a total of £40,000 prize money up for grabs.

Alongside all the action on the track, the course will also be showing live coverage from Champions Day at Ascot on the big screens and TV's around the course.

The final race on the card, scheduled for 5:30pm, is the penultimate round of the Go Racing in Yorkshire Future Stars Apprentice Series. The series final will take place at Doncaster Racecourse three weeks later. The William Hill Catterick Dash meeting is the penultimate fixture on the 2023 Flat season calendar for Catterick, with the final meeting taking place on Tuesday 31 October.

Tickets are available to book [online](#) and over the phone by calling the racecourse office on 01748 811478, with advanced booking discounts available up until 48 hours prior to the raceday.

Go Racing In Yorkshire Update

National Racehorse Week

The third National Racehorse Week took place in September and a whole host of yards across the country opened their stable doors to give visitors some behind the scenes insight. It included Malton Open Day, where more than 1,000 racing fans flocked to the market town, steeped in racing history, before heading on to the family fun day at York Racecourse.

Gold Ream, York's equine ambassador took a trip to Clifton Green Primary School, along with a team from the racecourse and New Beginnings, where he lives, to meet more school children!

It was also the week of the St Leger meeting and we were delighted to see Their Royal Highnesses the King and Queen at Doncaster Racecourse as they attended to watch Desert Hero run in the St Leger - what a week!

The Yorkshire Beacon

The pilot year of the Yorkshire Beacon Programme has engaged nearly 4,000 people through its activities. Set up to showcase the already great work that racecourses do within their local community, as well as to foster and grow new relationships, activity has included racecourse-led events, such as Wetherby working with 'Wetherby in Support of the Elderly'; Pontefract hosting local 'Into The Sky Theatre Group' for young adults with disabilities; Racing to School education days and much more.

All nine Yorkshire racecourses installed Sunflower benches to provide a calm and quiet space for anyone who needs it during a raceday.

The vision of the Go Racing In Yorkshire Community Beacon, supported by Racing Together, is to strengthen the connections between a varied and world-class horseracing region and its communities for mutual long-term benefit.

This programme was introduced through a year-long pilot scheme in March 2022 and aligned with racing's recovery from COVID-19 as the sport reconnected with the public, partner organisations and investors.

The video round up showcases just some of this activity across the region.

Key performance indicators were created at the outset of the Yorkshire Beacon programme pilot year to allow stakeholders to measure and benchmark activity over multiple years and identify areas for improvement. Initial targets included hosting 10 events and engaging 300 people across areas of Education and Employability, Health and Wellbeing and Community Engagement.

British Horseracing Right To Bet Survey

British horseracing has launched a national survey for the betting public to share their views on the Gambling Commission's proposals for affordability checks.

Why Your Opinion Matters; The Gambling Commission's proposals for affordability checks have the potential to shape the future of betting in the UK. These checks are designed to ensure responsible gambling and protect vulnerable individuals.

You can complete the online survey here

Go Racing In Yorkshire Season Ticket

The popular Go Racing In Yorkshire season ticket will be on sale again in November. Offering exceptional value for money a single season ticket works out at approximately £2.20 per meeting or if you go racing once a week in Yorkshire, it's about £8 per meeting.

Two season ticket holders reported that by the end of the St Leger meeting, the ticket had paid for itself and they've still got all the racing between September and the end of March to enjoy!

Editors Note: For readers viewing the online version, most of the words underlined (above) will usually contain website links where further information on the topics can be found.

2023/24 NATIONAL HUNT 'SATNAPS PLUS' CHALLENGE

The winter NH tipping challenge is back for another year! We will again be running over 21 dates (split into three rounds of seven weeks each) covering the main jumps season in the UK and finishing on Scottish Grand National Day in 2024. Generally entries will take place on Saturdays but in late December I will add a mid-week date so we can include the Welsh Grand National and the same applies at Easter in 2024 when the Irish Grand National day (Easter Monday) will be added. There will be no competition on December 30th, 6th January & 6th April to allow us to include all four UK/Irish Grand National dates this time.

This means that we shall be starting on 18th November this year with the big jumps meeting at Cheltenham that weekend. The final day will be 20th April when Ayr hosts the Scottish Grand National.

As last winter, entrants will need to make **TWO** selections on each date. **Selection one** is the 'nap' and will have a notional 2pts win staked on any runner at a UK/Irish jumps meeting. **Selection two** is on the feature handicap race of the day and will have a notional 1pt each way staked. (The feature handicap race will be confirmed via e-mail on a weekly basis).

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.

If entrants fail to enter on any date they will be allocated a 'default selection' per the revised rules but only one default selection per round will be allowed this time. Similarly, default rules will apply for any non-runners.

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 (2023-24) 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.....

.....

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

CARTMEL REFLECTIONS - 2023 SEASON

My overall reflection on the 2023 season at Cartmel was that it rained much more than usual! So much so that we lost the Monday 24th July meeting after heavy rain on the Saturday. Whilst the weather improved significantly on the Monday, the damage done to the track on Saturday's heavy ground could not be repaired in time to get the track fit for racing again two days later.

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 nearly did it again in 2023. Jimmy was again champion trainer although Charlotte had a quieter season which was dogged by injuries/suspensions. As such Sean Bowen took the jockey's title this season. Jimmy also had a slow start but made rapid progress as the season went on.

It was farewell to raceday presenter John Sexton in August, after 16 years-service at the track, including a lot of charitable work with the BTRC and the local hospice. John has now moved to East Yorkshire. Not many people will know the name but Richard Repton also retired at the course in August after an amazing 58 years-service on the race day team – one of the many unsung heroes that keeps the track going!

In past reports I have mentioned that Cartmel is a specialist track that attracts several multiple winners most seasons – well 2023 was largely the exception to the rule with only *Jelski Titanium Moon*, *Calevade*, *Our Sam* and *Pyramid Place* notching up two wins this year.

Notable past winners to win again in 2023 were *Dee Star* & *Tonto Spirit*. *Tonto Spirit* (below) is now an 11yo and



has won nine races at Cartmel dating back to 2016 with all wins coming in either the May or August fixtures. It has been getting tougher in recent years though and having peaked at a rating of 136 (in late 2019) was racing off a mark of 97 in August so at early morning odds of 25/1, I thought it must be worth another try with a battling win at eventual odds of 14/1 the end result.

My other highlight of the year was when a family member managed to find 80/1 winner *Smart Connection* on the last day of the season winning nearly

£200 (or a new pair of trainers in my grandson's mind!). I was asked for my opinion before the race and replied 'its top rated in my newspaper but the trainer (Michael Chapman) hasn't had a winner for several years' which I thought was a suitable 'get out' clause!

I am lucky to have a reserved 'Hill & Stream' parking spot and have made good friends with several of our 'neighbours' there. One of them (Derek & wife from Barrow) were not seen in 2023 and I do hope all is well with them. On our other side we had new 'neighbours' from the Hexham area and I do hope they will be back next year.

Whilst not usually a fan of the music nights, I did find the Abba tribute act in June to be excellent although the attendance seemed lower than some of the recent years when 'big name' acts were present. It will be interesting to see whether these 'music nights' remain viable at the smaller tracks such as Cartmel in future I cannot wait to be back again next year. Roll on Whit Week 2024! I don't want scorching weather next year but good safe racing ground and a little less rain on the race days please. Also, I hope Charlotte Jones is back on top form again with no silly repeats of riding a finish with a circuit still to run as in May!



2024 Fixture List

Thursday 14th March

Tuesday 9th April

Monday 22nd April

Saturday 4th May (Evening)

Saturday 11th May

Tuesday 21st May (Evening)

Saturday 1st June

Saturday 15th June

Sunday 23rd June (Ladies Day)

Friday 4th October

Saturday 12th October

Friday 8th November

Wednesday 20th November

Wednesday 11th December

www.hexham-racecourse.co.uk
admin@hexham-racecourse.co.uk or 01434 606881

N & M RACING CLUB COMMITTEE/OFFICIALS 2023/24

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Next copy deadline for Racin' will be Sunday 26th November