



## EDITORS NOTES – SUMMER 2025

On behalf of the NMRC committee we hope all members are enjoying the summer weather and the longer evenings and still finding time to follow some racing!

It does sometimes appear we have too much racing in the summer but for those who actually 'go racing' rather than just following on TV etc it does give us more chance to see the horses 'in the flesh' and its great to see that attendances in the UK & Ireland are on the rise this year!

For those members that follow racing 'from home' in the main part we should be thankful for the ITV coverage (free to air) although as an alternative it is worth listening to William Hill Racing Radio via the internet which has some great hosts including Tanya Stevenson & Gordon Brown and for big meetings Ken Pitterson 'paddock watching'.

## CATTERICK'S SUMMER RACE DAYS

Family days are among the most popular race days in Catterick Racecourse's fixture calendar, attracting both racing enthusiasts and families alike. This summer, the racecourse will host three Family Days during the school holidays, offering a mix of exciting racing and free entertainment for children – with something for everyone to enjoy!

Accompanied under 18's go free at all Catterick's race days, and on the family days and throughout the school holidays, there is much more than just racing action in store for the next generation of racing fans.

In August, the Salute Our Heroes Family Day takes place on Tuesday 5 August. In partnership with the ABF The Soldiers Charity and kindly sponsored by Hugh James Law, the racecourse is delighted to offer complimentary admission for military personnel and their families again this year. Military tickets can be collected from the Catterick Garrison Headquarters or from the Racecourse Office.

The afternoon is set to be full of action with six exciting races, starting at 2:20pm, and alongside the racing, there will be an array of free activities in the Course Enclosure including an assault course, face painting and laser battle zone!

Emma Stevenson, General Commercial Manager stated: "It is a pleasure to work with the ABF The Soldiers' Charity again this year. Whilst we provide discounted military admission at all our race days, this day serves as an opportunity for the whole community. We always look forward to the summer holidays and the chance to welcome the next generation of racegoers to a race day that the whole family will enjoy."

Finally, the Family Sports Day takes place on Monday 18 August with the opportunity for young racing fans to get involved in the first race of the day - the Egg & Spoon race - taking place approximately one hour before the first horse race, which is due off at 2:15pm.

Gates on the 18 August will open to the public from midday and there will be free activities for families in the Course Enclosure throughout the afternoon including crazy golf, a penalty shootout, face painting and inflatable darts! Picnics are welcome in the Course Enclosure and a free shuttle bus will run from Richmond Market Place to the racecourse each race day, leaving one hour prior to the first race.

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# COMPETITION NEWS

## NEW 'ITV 7' 'FREE TO ENTER' COMPETITION STARTS IN SEPTEMBER

### 59's DRAW RESULTS UPDATE

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

**June 7th – 56 – Maureen Dawson**

**July 5th – 15 – Helen Goodwill**

The £50 prizes will be sent out shortly.

The winning number is determined by the 'bonus ball' drawn in the UK Lottery on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month.

Thanks to all who continue to support the draw which helps cover some of the club's running costs.

**We currently have FOUR available numbers - please e mail [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com) for further details. It costs just £1pm to enter, payable yearly or quarterly.**

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### Heritage Handicaps Competition

As we reached the end of July the leaders in the main competition were:

**115.65 John McDonald**

**85.05 Diane Bates**

**82.05 Andy Harris**

**80.4 Cieran Cassidy**

**73.6 David Durham**

**73.45 Jim Flanagan**

**73.05 Jason Sandland**

**72.95 Harry Sandland**

**66.2 Brendan O'Meara**

**62.65 Alan Hill**

One thing we know about our members is that they love a good racing competition.

We have three feature tipping competitions already (Saturday Naps, Heritage Handicaps, Alex Bird) and whilst we didn't want to 'over egg the pudding' we thought that by linking to the existing ITV 7 competition, which many members enter already, we could add another string to our bow!

Essentially we have set up a 'mini league' which members can join via the ITV 7 website. <https://itv7.itv.com/>

All you have to do is click on the 'leagues' option on the ITV 7 home page then select 'join a league'.

**The league name is NMRC and the entry code is 1Z2PX4**

Members can join straight away but the first monthly prize is in September. Your entries are then scored via the ITV 7 website and you can track progress via the NMRC Mini League.

Initially we shall run as a 'free entry' competition with a monthly prize for the top entry (most winners each month then if a tie most placed horses. If still a tie then least unplaced horses will apply). The monthly prize will initially be a £10 'free entry' into any club competition or draw.

If we get enough response we will also run alongside the 'free version' a 'fee-paying' competition (£1pm) starting in January 2026 with a cash prize paid to the monthly 'fee paying' winner. So if there are 20 entrants in the 'fee paying' competition the monthly prize is £20

For all entrants there will also be a yearly competition with the winner receiving the 'Burgess Cup' named in memory of former life members Martin & Jennifer Burgess.

Join NOW via the website & contact Phil Evans via [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com) if you want details of the 'fee paying' entry system.

## ALEX BIRD COMPETITION – SPONSORED BY THE RACING POST

Congratulations to **Paul Walker & Tim Cogan** who dead-heated in Round 3 (Newmarket) of this year's competition with **Keith Dodd** taking 3<sup>rd</sup> spot.

In Round 4 (Ascot) the winner was **Keith Metcalf** with **Stuart Graham & Craig Howard** the nearest challengers.

The seasonal competition winner was **Craig Howard** who was followed home by **Paul Walker, David Allman, Giles Hague & Maureen Dawson**.

A big thanks to **Mark Banks** for all his hard work running this years competition with over 100 entrants for the first time. Mark will be sending all the winners their prizes asap.

Also, many thanks to **Racing Post** for supplying the valuable 'bonus prize' for the seasonal winner.

The wooden spoon this year went to **Paul Richardson** who gets a free entry next year!



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## Early Haydock Memories with Gordon Armistead

The Haydock meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> marked to the day fifty years since my first race meeting. Willie Carson rode a double that day and Henry Cecil took what is now the Silver Bowl. I can't remember how much it cost to get into Tatts that day but the racecard cost ten pence. Now getting on towards 700 meetings at the course I thought I would look back on some of the most memorable races and race days from the first few years of attendance. So in no particular order except for the first which is still my favourite.

### **Embassy Premier Chase Final 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1979**

The weather in early 1979 was very bad with snow and severe frosts and lots of the big meetings were abandoned. Haydock lost all its four days in January and February including the Embassy Final meeting.

Rescheduling of races was a great rarity at that time. The 1978 Cheltenham Gold Cup however was run at the April meeting after being called off in March due to snow. Most other races were usually just lost.

However, six weeks after the original date and only two weeks before Cheltenham the two best novice chasers of the season turned up on a Friday afternoon and produced as good a race as you would wish to see. There were eight runners but only two counted. Night Nurse ridden here by Ian Watkinson had won five chases after unseating on his chase debut at Market Rasen and was put in at 4/6. Silver Buck under Tommy Carmody had won his first five chases before being brought down in a race at Windsor and was 5/2.

From turning into the back straight with a circuit left the pair went at it hammer and tongs meeting each fence perfectly.

Turning in it looked like Silver Buck had taken Night Nurse's measure going two lengths up at the third last. The dual Champion Hurdler however would not give in and had it back to a neck at the second last and might just have nudged in front at the final fence. The old chase course had a decent run in and it was neck and neck as they went past the open ditch. Only in the last fifty yards did Silver Buck get on top and Watkinson dropped his hands leading to the two and a half length winning margin.

Both went on to Cheltenham and were beaten. Silver Buck was third in what was then the Sun Alliance while Night Nurse ran a shocker in the Gold Cup before winning twice more that season at Aintree and Ayr.

For some reason the Embassy Final first run in 1970 when L'Escargot won was later moved to Ascot and then Cheltenham. The last three runnings had 4, 4 and 5 runners with the tubed and long forgotten Al Hashimi taking the last renewal in 1991.

### **Vernon's Sprint Cup 4<sup>th</sup> November 1978**

It's easy to forget that the Sprint Cup used to be run in November around a bend and usually on soft/ heavy ground. This was the races last time before the date change and while it wasn't the greatest renewal of the race it was memorable from a financial point. I had seen and backed the winner Absalom when he defied ten stones in a handicap at the Ebor Meeting. He had been well beaten since in the Ayr Gold Cup under nine stone thirteen giving the winner fellow three-year-old Vaigly Great seven pounds. Here Vaigly Great was 2/1 second favourite while Absalom was sent off 20/1. Favourite was the French four-year-old filly Sanedtki who was better known as a miler but had also won the seven-furlong Prix de la Foret twice. Other runners included the previous year's winner Boldboy and the 1979 winner Double Form.

Taffy Thomas jumped out on Absalom to make all and swinging in he bagged the stand rail which was always the place to be on soft ground. Sanedtki came from off the pace and looked to be sure to win but she couldn't get by and was beaten three parts of a length.

I backed the winner on the Tote. Dividends were returned to 10p in those days and he paid £3.43. To make the day even better in the next race a seven-furlong nursery I backed the winner Town Sky who was returned at 12/1 but the nanny goat paid £4.32.

### **Royal Doulton Handicap Hurdle 1<sup>st</sup> May 1978**

Bank Holiday Monday and the fourth biggest prize of the season which of course finished in June at the time. Only the Grand National, the Gold Cup, and the Champion Hurdle were worth more. The biggest crowd I can remember at Haydock with cars parked all the way down to the bottom gates. The draw was the best field to grace any handicap. Joint top weights with twelve stone were Champion Hurdler Monksfield and Sea Pigeon who had picked up a six-pound penalty for winning the Scottish Champion Hurdle. Night Nurse third at Cheltenham had eleven stone nine. Birds Nest on eleven eight and Beacon Light had eleven six to round out the top five. Imperial Cup winner Winter Melody, Sweeps Hurdle third and future Champion Chase winner Drumgora, and the inform Narribinni were the only others over ten stone which left twelve others on the minimum weight. Night Nurse as per usual took them along at a strong pace which strung the field out. Three out he still led from Winter Melody and Irish runner Paddy Boulter but coming to two out Royal Gaye was coming with Colin Tinkler seemingly having a double handful. He took it up going to the last with Monksfield who was a good ten lengths down just before two out coming with a tremendous run. Tinkler never had to resort to the whip and held on by three parts of a length from Monksfield with Night Nurse two and a half back in third. Beacon Light and Sea Pigeon were seventh and eighth without ever getting involved while Birds Nest sulked out the back of the field. The winner had finished runner up in what is now the Pertemps final at Cheltenham before winning a two-and-a-half-mile handicap at Aintree. He returned 20/1. The winner went chasing but proved less than reliable. His half-brother Gaye Chance won the Royal Doulton three years later while another Gaye Brief won the 1983 Champion Hurdle.

Swinton Insurance took over the sponsorship in 1985 and even after that ceased the race continued to carry the Swinton name. It moved from the bank holiday as the BBC didn't want to interrupt coverage of the World Snooker and over the years its status has declined. The top weights today would have been miles out of the weights in 1978.

### **Cold Shield Windows Trophy May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1981**

Classic winners having a subsequent run at Haydock are nearly as rare as hen's teeth. He may only have got the 2,000 Guineas in the steward's room but Known Fact did come to Haydock for his seasonal debut as a four-year-old for what is now the Spring Trophy. At three, besides the Guineas his big win was the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes where he beat Kris who had won this race in 1980. This was his warm up for the Lockinge but it did not go to plan. Only the four runners and he was trying to give twelve pounds to the Aga Khan's Dalsaan who hadn't run since a fourth place in the St James Palace Stakes the previous June. Dalsaan was favourite at 8/11 against Known Fact's 5/4 with any price the other two. Known Fact hung to his right two furlongs out found nothing for pressure and trailed home a well beaten last of four behind Dalsaan. Nothing came to light to explain his poor run and by the middle of June his retirement was announced. He stood at first in the UK before heading to the USA. His best sons were Warning and Markofdistinction.

Dalsaan was tried again at a mile but didn't stay and it was back at seven he picked up a couple of Group 3s. His half-brother Doyoun won the Guineas and did well at stud. Dalsaan's time at stud did not produce anything of note.

### **Vernons Sprint Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1983**

Considering that nowadays it is all about speed and breeding sprinters it seems strange that there never seems to be an outstanding sprinter around. The Group 1's are shared out every season like they are handicaps. Take a look at the winners of the Sprint Cup in the 1980's and early 90's and you see some outstanding animals.

So to 1983 and Habibti. Unbeaten over six furlongs at two she was trained for the Guineas but failed to stay both at Newmarket and the Curragh and mile races were abandoned. She was a sprinter. First up was the July Cup and a two and a half length win. Then a first run at five in the William Hill Sprint Championship as the Nunthorpe was called that year and an eased down length and a half win. Then on to Haydock. She had been followed home by Soba on those two starts and again Soba finished second. The distance here was an incredible seven lengths. Timeform gave her a rating of 136 for that run and said it was one of the best performances ever likely to be seen at Haydock, or anywhere else. She went on to Paris to beat the course record in the l'Abbaye.

Not as good at four she still won the Kings Stand Stakes but that was her last win. She was almost a total failure at stud although a grandson won an Italian Derby,

### **The Chipmobile Maiden Stakes 6<sup>th</sup> June 1986**

Apart from the Sprint Cup the best chance of seeing an outstanding flat performer at Haydock is in the maidens. One of the best won his three-year-old ten-furlong maiden here on one of the Friday evening meetings that used to be well attended without the need for after race entertainment. Mtoto was taking on fourteen rivals and they were well spread out at the end and it was twenty lengths back to the sixth home. It wasn't a bad maiden and the second third and fourth all won races. Further back the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth home all won with the best maybe being State Jester who was a decent dual-purpose handicapper.

Mtoto didn't win again in four goes that season over a variety of distances and class of race. A second in a York handicap was followed by fourth place in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes. His improvement in his four-year-old season was immense as on his first three starts he won the Brigadier Gerard, the Prince of Wales and the Eclipse beating Derby winner Reference Point in the latter. The following season he again won the Prince of Wales and the Eclipse before I saw him in the flesh for the first time since Haydock as he followed up by taking the King George at Ascot. His only defeat was in the Arc when he finished second. The most bizarre "race" he took part in was his warm up for the season where some misplaced rails sent the entire field on the wrong course at Goodwood resulting in the race being over a furlong short and it was declared void.

At Stud he got Group 1 winners from six furlongs (Serious Attitude) to two and half miles (Celeric) and also the winner of the one Derby I have attended in Shaamit. His best produce however in the long term is probably Presenting who himself sired Denman, War of Attrition, and Ballabriggs amongst a whole host of top-class staying chasers.

His top official rating of 131 certainly makes him about the best non-sprinter to race at Haydock.

### **The Blackburn Handicap Chase 24<sup>th</sup> January 1987**

Forget Sprinter Sacre, Altior, and Master Minded. The best and only triple winner of the Champion Chase was Badsworth Boy and this race was his last win at the age of twelve. Start number sixty eight of seventy which included two wins as a two-year-old. He didn't win at three mainly running at a mile and was tried in blinkers. Switched to the Dickinsons it was a different story over hurdles winning for of his six starts as a juvenile but he was beaten into third when starting favourite for the Triumph Hurdle. One more hurdle win in the next season but he was soon sent chasing and won three novices. In the 80/81 season he was back over hurdles and after three more wins he ended the season behind Sea Pigeon in the Champion Hurdle. Three wins back chasing the next season and he would have won at Aintree but took a bad fall at the last. In the first Cheltenham success he took it up at halfway and just went away despite a bad mistake two out to win by a distance. He went to Aintree again for a handicap and took what looked like a fatal fall at the last but after several minutes he got up with no ill effects. The second Cheltenham win was by only seven lengths and followed three wins under twelve stone seven in

handicaps. He was on the downgrade the next season and was perhaps lucky at Cheltenham as Bobline fell when looking all over the winner. Injury prevented a warm up race before Cheltenham in 1986 and he was well beaten.

This race was his twenty eighth win including his flat successes and it was by no means a poor race even if there were only four runners. He gave a stone and a pound and eight lengths beating to Sea Merchant who went on to win three of his next five starts including the big two-mile handicap at Aintree. Badsworth Boy was very quick at his fences if a bit low which resulted in a few falls and unseats and he ended his career with an unseat before a retirement which lasted until he was 27.

### **Greenall Whitley Breweries Handicap Chase 4<sup>th</sup> March 1978**

Red Rums last race and while everyone knew he was just having a warm up (he was a 33/1 shot) it was a poor effort sixth of the seven finishers beaten twenty-eight lengths. He also made a very bad mistake in the back straight on the second circuit. He was still favourite for Aintree despite the poor run but the evening before the race he was ruled out with an injury.

Favourite for this race was Rambling Jack trained by Ken Oliver. He was a real improver who had won his last five completed starts and was thought of as a possible Gold Cup challenger of the future. He had this race won as well leading by a dozen lengths coming to the last having gone on four out but ended up on the deck. That left Rambling Artist who had come from well off the pace to peg back Lucius close to the line. Rambling Jack was hard to keep sound in subsequent seasons and never fulfilled his potential. Red Run couldn't go on to Aintree but Lucius could and prevailed there in a super finish with less than a length covering the first three and the photo finish was used in the National for the first time.

In those days the Grand National Trial was run midweek in early February and the Greenalls in early March. The National Trial had an appalling record for abandonments and that early February fixture disappeared after 1984 and the National trial with it. The Greenalls was more a Gold Cup trial than a National one with both Royal Frolic and Alverton winning it before going on to win at Cheltenham. In 1991 the race was upped to three and a half miles and in 1996 the National Trial name was resurrected.

### **John Craig Victor Ludorum Hurdle 7<sup>th</sup> March 1987**

One of the best renewals of the Victor Ludorum. The easy winner by fifteen lengths was Cashew King on his second hurdle start after winning twice on the flat. Held up in midfield early on he moved alongside the leaders three out and went away to win by fifteen lengths. He was a half-brother to Mr Snugfit who placed twice in the Grand National so was bred to go on. He was evidently a sick horse when beaten at Cheltenham in the Triumph but returned the next year to win the County Hurdle. Sent chasing he won four of his five in his novice season including two Grade 2's

Second home giving the winner six pounds was Past Glories. He had already won three times and went on to finish second in the Triumph Hurdle. The following season he won the Welsh Champion Hurdle in April (Cheltenham winner Celtic Shot also ran but fell) and then the Swinton Hurdle beating his old foe Cashew King. He never won again but two seasons later he was placed third in the Champion Hurdle behind Kribensis. He wasn't finished then as he was still an entire and at stud he sired Grade 1 winner and Cheltenham Gold Cup third Forget the Past.

Back to the Victor Ludorum the even money favourite was Celtic Chief who was a well beaten fourth. The following season he won his first four starts before starting favourite for the Champion Hurdle. He could manage only third behind Celtic Shot but went on to Aintree to win the Aintree Hurdle from Sabin du Loir. He only won once more but ran second behind Beech Road in the Champion Hurdle. Sent chasing he picked up an injury and his career petered out with occasional poor runs.

The other three runners all won decent races and Merry Junior who was a 50/1 shot here won two renewals of the Wolverhampton Trial Hurdle.

Meanwhile back at Haydock the race which was first on the card had been run in a snow storm. When the horses were at the start for the second it came on heavier and racing had to be abandoned. That was half past one so out to the car and down to Springfield Park to see Wigan take on A F C Bournemouth in the third division. The snow kept on coming down and by early in the second half the pitch was totally white. On sixty-one minutes with the score 1- 1 the referee had no choice but to abandon the match. An abandoned race meeting and abandoned football game on the same day. Not bad going. Bournemouth won the rearranged game 2-0.

### **Embassy Handicap Hurdle 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1977**

Sea Pigeon was in his third season hurdling but this was the start of part two of his hurdling career and his first start after the switch to the Peter Easterby yard. Under twelve stone two and ridden by Ian Watkinson he jumped the last three lengths down but won by seven lengths. He was giving weight to Flash Imp who had placed in the last two Champion Hurdles, 1976 Triumph Hurdle winner Peterhof, and just short of two stones to True Lad who won the Schweppes Hurdle on his next start. He only finished fourth behind Night Nurse in the Champion Hurdle but went to Aintree back in a handicap where he swept past the field at the last under twelve stone six against seventeen opponents. Following a success in the Scottish Champion Hurdle he went on to the Chester Cup and the start of mopping up some of the top staying handicaps on the flat. It took another three years until he finally got his head in front in the Champion Hurdle.

His relationship with the Embassy Hurdle was not finished as he used the delayed 1979 race as his warm up for Cheltenham. On that occasion under twelve seven he failed by three parts of a length to give eighteen pounds to Decent Fellow.

# MATT RENNIE UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT WITH BRIAN GOODWILL

## **WHEN DID YOU FIRST DEVELOP AN INTEREST IN RACING?**

Everyone may have their classic tale of it being the Grand National or the Derby, but mine came at Wolverhampton. I can remember it being when the Scottish Grand National meeting was on the televisions across the track, but the sight, noises (and even smell!) of horses hooked me!

## **HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST WENT RACING?**

I properly started going regularly when I was about 11, but every year since I was born in 1999 my mum and dad would religiously take me and my brother to 1,000 Guineas day at Newmarket. It's still one of my favourite days in the calendar.

## **WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALISE YOU WANTED TO MAKE YOUR LIVING FROM RACING?**

Probably about a year after I got hooked. I remember sending in my first piece to what was my local newspaper, the Eastern Daily Press, on Dewhurst Stakes day in 2012 to see if it would get published (it didn't!). I made sure my A-Levels and University studies were all tailored to being a racing journalist.

## **ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SPORT?**

I'm not as pessimistic as others are, but fundamental changes are needed. We need an independent governance as there are far too many splinter groups fighting for self-interests. The sport being deadlocked and resistant to change is harmful, especially with the ludicrous threat of affordability checks hanging over the game.

## **DO YOU THINK THERE IS TOO MUCH RACING. IF SO, WHERE COULD CUTS BE MADE?**

Absolutely, it's at breaking point. Some of the standards of fixtures are awful and the product is completely diluted. Premier racing needs to be completely scaled back to Group 1 days only and I'm a big fan of having one blank day a week on a Monday. We work everyone in racing to the bone so why can't they be rewarded with a day off? It's almost draconian that we don't do this already.

## **WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN RACING?**

I was a part-time racing reporter for BBC Radio Norfolk at Yarmouth during my sixth form days.

## **WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT JOB?**

I'm a journalist for the Racing Post, based in York. I've been with them for five years.

## **WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEETING IN THE CALENDAR?**

The Ebor meeting, of course!

## **CAN YOU RECALL A MEMORABLE NEAR MISS BET?**

It still hurts thinking about it. Me and my Dad had been accumulating bets on Tarnawa to win the 2021 Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe after the Breeders' Cup Turf win 11 months before. I remember the sinking feeling we had when Torquator Tasso swooped by. Oh, and it was raining too to make my mood even better.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF RACING?**

I'm a massive Sunderland AFC fan, and I also follow Boston United too on my mum's side. I love cricket too and if not enjoying racing, I'll probably be obsessing over any other sport.

## **ARE THERE ANY OTHER RACING PROFESSIONALS SUPPORT SUNDERLAND TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE. DO YOU THINK THEY WILL SURVIVE IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE THIS COMING SEASON?**

Chris Hughes of Love Island fame is a massive lads fan, as well as trainer Adrian Nicholls - there must be a few more as we are a huge club! Everyone has already seemingly written us off, and I'd be thrilled if we get past Derby's record low points total, but I could've never predicted we'd get promoted and hold onto hope we can cause another shock again. We're in a really healthy position money-wise and have some of the best young players I've ever seen. We've got six guaranteed points against Newcastle too...

**Editors note** – According to Wikipedia the following famous people are named as supporters of the 'Mackems'. Kate Adie, James Herriott, Barry Glendenning, Kevin Maguire, Justin Welby, Alan Price, Tim Rice, Peter O'Toole, Steve Cram & John Lowe (darts player not the former jockey!). Optimistic fans can get 2000/1 to win the Premier League at the time of writing (remember Leicester at 5000/1?) whilst the pessemists can get 4-11 on relegation!

## JARGON BUSTER – BY MICHAEL WHEATER

**On the Bridle:** the horse is relaxed, travelling smoothly and has the bit between its teeth which connects to the bridle; it suggests the horse is in a good position within the race. The jockey is passive in the saddle ready to ask for more effort when needed, with the horse likely to quicken having travelled comfortably. A horse that wins on the bridle is regarded as having won easily. However a horse can find little response when it's asked for more effort and comes off the bridle and may be described as a 'bridle horse' e.g. Al Aasy trained by William Haggas.

**Off the Bridle:** the horse is not travelling smoothly and is losing contact with the bit in its mouth. The jockey is active in the saddle, pushing the horse forwards using the reins and possibly the whip. Being off the bridle could be a sign that a horse is running out of energy or struggling to keep up with the demands of the race. The earlier that a horse comes off the bridle, the less likely it will be able to challenge at end of a race.

**Behind the Bridle:** the horse is disengaged and not travelling at all; it's the opposite of having the bit between its teeth. This term would be used when the horse isn't making enough effort or possibly isn't concentrating as the bridle may not be far back enough in its mouth. Usually this has a negative outcome, with the horse likely to weaken and fade out of the race.

**Ridden/ridden along:** associated with coming off the bridle, it refers to when a horse is being pushed and urged on by the jockey, often using the whip. This will usually happen in the final furlongs of a race.

**Racing freely/keenly:** horses that are racing too freely are going quicker than the jockey wants them to, often in the early stages of a race. The outcome will be determined by how long it takes the jockey to get the horse to settle, but generally it's a negative because the horse is wasting energy and not running efficiently.

**Hanging:** a horse 'hangs' either left or right when it fails to run in a straight line or is not inclined to keep straight. This will often occur in the final stages of a race when horses are under pressure or feeling tired.

**Flat spot:** it's a slightly mysterious thing when a horse is said to 'hit a flat spot' during a race, with the reasons for it open to interpretation. It might be that a horse loses concentration or is caught out when the pace quickens before running on. Paisley Park was well-known for hitting his customary flat spot.

**One-paced:** describes a horse who cannot quicken when the tempo of the race increases, while a horse with a **Turn of foot** is able to accelerate markedly at the business end.

**Blow up:** a horse is said to 'blow up' in a race when it rapidly runs out of breath, a sign that the horse probably wasn't race fit and needed the run.

## SOUTH WEST NOTES – WITH GRAHAM ASHFORD

### Newton Abbot May 28<sup>th</sup>

Race 1 Novice Hurdle class 4. - A short one here Sharp Glance (4/9) (A.King) just getting home by a neck. Alan King in attendance, rare visitor to N.A. so was expected to win. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Jack N Jones (Jamie Snowden) looks sure to win a novice.

Race 2 Handicap Hurdle class 5 - My main bet on the card Sue Gardiner Stinginisstep who has improved a ton over the summer. Made all and just kept pulling out more May well follow up next time. Plenty 11.0 on Betfair so helped myself. These local trainers down here really know the time of day. The favourite Mr Le Philosophie (4/6) jumped poorly and weakened quickly.

Race 3 Nov. Handicap Chase class 5. - Never a N.A. meeting without a Tizzard winner Ryder's Rock a very lucky winner as Illogical Logic fell 2 out when well clear. A poor race and not much form value.

Race 4 Handicap Chase class 3 - Debra Hamer's Hold your Fort loves it round here jumped well and always had the others in trouble. The favourite Kick up a Storm (P. Nicholls) never travelled and finished lame.

Race 5 Handicap Hurdle class 4 - Best race of the day Al Sayah (5/2) followed up his last time victory with another easy success. Be disappointed if he did not get the hat trick next time out. Teorie (Daisy Hitchens) is one to follow next time ran a solid in 2<sup>nd</sup> but no match for the winner. A good form race.

Race 6 Hunters Chase class 5 - P. Nicholls trained Cap Du Mathan took this a lot more easily than the 2 ¼ winning distance. Ridden with a lot of confidence by Olive Nicholls leading on the run in. Should be capable of following up in this sphere.

### Newton Abbot June 4<sup>th</sup>

Race 1 Novice Hurdle class 4 - Major gamble of the day Paul Nicholls trained Keel Strand bet from all rates from 5/1 (overnight) to 1/1. Fit and ready on paddock inspection this Authorized gelding only just got home (1 length). He made all and always thought Cobden had everything covered.

Race 2 Nov. Handicap Chase class 5 - Illogical Logic (Christian Williams) who fell with the race at his mercy here a week ago. He made all jumped well and won very easily should follow up next time SP 9/4 thought he should have been a lot shorter very weak opposition. Moonlight Artist(Tizzard) was tailed off and not sure of his attitude.

Race 3 Handicap Chase class 4. - John O'Shea's Culligran looked spot on in the paddock and attracted some heavy bets in the ring and just got home on the post by a head. A big mention for Limerick Leader who looked far from ready ran a great race in 2<sup>nd</sup>. Alison Thorpe gelding should come on a ton and will be watching out for him next time out. He has had a few trainers over the years let's hope Allison Thorpe gets a race out of him.

Race 4 Mares H.H. class 5 - A very weak mares handicap Evan Williams Artic Angel another well supported in the ring wandered about a lot but got the job done. Mr B Stone the jockey held the mare together well. My Louise (Lydia Richards) headstrong in paddock and the race ran well in 3<sup>rd</sup> should be a Handicap in this mare.

Race 5 Handicap Chase class 3 - Without the best race of the day. The race named after him Clearance made an appearance here(bet him at 18.0 to small money) he planted himself at the start and nothing Cobden could do would budge him. My main bet of the day the Tizzard horse American Land led on the run in but still had a bit left (Betfair SP 7.56/3.38) amazing price happy days. This horse who by the way is a fantastic looker and looked amazingly fit in the paddock. This horse has won 5 of his last 6 races and I don't think the Tizzards have bottomed him yet.

Race 6 Handicap Hurdle class 5 - The winner Gore Point(A.Honeyball) won this by a nose on handicap debut and had just had a wind op. The Evan Williams horse For the Buzz was rattling home when nearly fell at the last.

Race 7 Bumper class 4 - 2or3 of these making a lot of noise in the paddock. Gamble of the race was the N.T.D. horse Usyk (3/1-11/8) but ran very green throughout. Very rare I bet in bumpers but was kicking myself for not betting the winner Alba Crus (W Greatrex) who looked outstanding in the paddock fit and ready he made all and found plenty.

### **Newton Abbot June 13<sup>th</sup>**

Plenty of rain forecast so not a meeting for punting.

Race 1 Mares H.Hurdle class 4- A 2 horse affair won very easily by Seeyouinmydreams (P. Nicholls) who jumped well and had the race won a long way out.

Race 2 Mares Nov. Hurdle class 4 - A short one here Belle Le Grand(2/9)(Skelton) tried to lead all the way but always thought Harry Skelton was waiting for his stablemate the winner Claim De Brizais not one of Skelton finest rides.

Race 3 Nov.H. Chase class 3 - Only a 4-runner affair but a great race non the less. The winner Act of Diplomacy (Mickey Bowen) bet from 4/1 to 15/8 overnight. Patiently ridden by Shane Fenelon led on the run in going away. This horse is not the easiest of rides and was given a super ride. The favourite Hugo's Nes Horse (Nicholls) made a few mistakes but never going to be a match for the winner.

Race 4 H.Hurdle class 5 - Brendon Hill Dart(Sue Gardiner) took this low-grade handicap. The gelding ran a solid race here in April and the change to a claimer at last minute certainly helped (Ciaran O'Shea(7) not unsupported in the ring (11/2 sp).

Race 5 H.Chase class 4 - Jay Tidball(5) gave the Nicholls gelding Centra a wonderful front running ride in this jumping very well he had plenty in hand on the run in. Not a lot to say about the other 5.

Race 6 H.Hurdle class5 - The winner Sassified (Hobbs/White) just got home in this - not sure he wanted to win this as horse as always been quirky. Poor race no value in the form.

Race 7 Bumper class 4 - A lot of confidence behind the Honeyball horse Marhaba Prince(1/2) but found nothing when challenged. The winner Three Pikes(H. Oliver) looked super fit in the paddock. Sue Gardiner I'm Wide Awake ran a nice race in 2<sup>nd</sup> and looks to have plenty of scope going forward.

### **Newton Abbot June 24<sup>th</sup>**

Ladies evening so a very good crowd in attendance.

Race 1 A.J. Handicap H. class 5 - Never a type of race to get involved in betting wise. The winner Feel The Pinch(Robbie Llewellyn) always travelled well but only just got the better (hd) of N.A. regular Colonel Lesley. The favourite Juggernaut(Honeyball) travelled well but found nothing when asked.

Race 2 Juvenile Maiden H. class 4 - A rare runner here for Gary/Josh Moore. Silk and Steel always had things under control and landed some nice bets in the ring(10/1). A very cool Caplin Quinn led on the run in going away at the line. Looked very fit in the paddock and ready to go. The favourite Return with Gold weakened very quickly in the straight.

Race 3 Novice Hurdle class 4 - Just a steering job for Jay Tidball on Byzantium (Nicholls) this grey gelding as always had ability and is now finding his feet. Poor race but could not have won more easily the 2<sup>nd</sup> Time to Bite needs to go back chasing.

Race 4 Nov. Handicap H. class 5 - Was getting a little worried till the run in I had layed the favourite Privilege. Sean Bowen bringing Stiletto(Sophie Leech) with a nice timed run. Not much to say about the other runners.

Race 5 Handicap C. class 5 - The winner Limerick Leader (Alison Thorpe) my main bet of the card skinny price but managed to get 7/4 early. Leader made all jumped well and always had the race won.

He looked a lot fitter in the paddock when 2<sup>nd</sup> here on his last run. Alison should get a few more wins out of him.

Race 6 Handicap H. class 4 - Keel Strand took this for the Nicholls team think Paul will place him again for the hat trick.

Ridden with lots of confidence by Harry Cobden he had plenty in hand. Barry Brennan Gateau De Miel ran a sound race in 4<sup>th</sup> and should soon be winning.

Race 7 Handicap C. class 5 - A winner for Noel Williams with Lucky Rose this consistent mare is on the improve and has lots more to come. Sue Gardiner TestFlight finding one too good for him again very often the bridesmaid, needs a change of luck.

#### **Newton Abbot July 4<sup>th</sup>**

Race 1 Maiden Hurdle class 4 - A short one her for Tony Carrol Isle of Sark (4/9) never out of 2<sup>nd</sup> gear and won very easily. Cobden pushing him out for a very easy victory in a poor 3 runner affair. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rubys Legacy tried to make a race of it but was no match for the winner.

Race 2 H.Hurdle class 5 - The very progressive Keel Strand (Nicholls) took this more easily the winning distance (3/4) this was his hat-trick and should go on further only a 4-runner race but a good one to watch. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Impercunios (Chris Down) was unlucky to bump into Keel Strand be looking where he is entered next .

Race 3 M.H.Hurdle class 5. - The Skelton horse looked all over a winner here Kenyma but was out battled on the run in by Hurst Hill (S.Mullins) 15/2. The favourite Miss Popalong (Hobbs/White) travelled really well but found nothing .

Race 4 H.Chase class 4 - Nice easy winner for the Greatrex team Shillanavogy (6/5) jumping great and making all for a very easy win should follow up next time. Feel The Pinch(Robbie Llewellyn) lost ground at most fences jumping poorly.

Race 5 H.Hurdle class 3 - Ollie Pears coming a long way to strike here with Max of Stars landing some good bets in the ring. Sam Twiston Davies jumped the mare to the front and made all. Sam kept a bit back for the run in a nice ride.

Well handicapped and should go close again next time. The favourite Seeyouinmydreams (Nicholls) tried to go with the winner 2 out but was no match.

Race 6 H.Chase class 5 - Nice winner here for Grace Harris My Girl Katie (5/1) confidently ridden by Conor Ring landing some heavy bets for connections. The runner up TestFlight (S. Gardner) just seems to bump in to one every time needs a change of luck. The winner a nice mare who will win her share of races. Backinaction (E. Williams) ran a strange race never really going sure he will run better next time.

#### **Newton Abbot July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Race 1 - Never out of first gear Breaking Cover (A.Honeyball) landed this maiden without any fuss.

S.T.D. giving the gelding a confident ride to win very easily (very heavily bet). The last time out Bumper winner Three Pikes(H. Oliver) led at the 2nd last but had nothing to come.

Race 2 H. Chase class 3 - Hat-trick for Centra(P. Nicholls) jockey Jay Tidball(5) so cool under pressure this lad is going places. Centra always keeps finding when asked. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Jet of Dreams(W.Greatrex) came there but does not always go by.

Race 3 H.Hurdle class 4 - My only bet on the card never in any doubt Howth(T.Lacey) won this so easy. I knew Max of Stars would set a strong pace and was a sitting duck for the winner. Hope the handicapper does not clobber this Churchill gelding too much. One for the notebook. The favourite Get the Value (J. O'Shea) ran a poor race and I would give him another chance.

Race 4 H.Hurdle class 5A double here for the Honeyball/S.T.D. team Gore Point (9/4) just getting the better of Sassified (Hobbs/White) who is not the easy to win with. Gore Point landed some good bets at bigger prices. Stiletto I think the race came a bit quick for him but he is a thinker.

Race 5 H.Chase class 4 - Time to Bite (C.Honour) back chasing destroyed(5/1) this field of 4.Bryan Carver getting him in to a rhythm and jumping super. Some very big cheers from the Chris Honour Racing Club. Not a lot to say about the other 4.

Race 6 Bumper class 4 - A very short one here Queen Kate(1/8) did what she had to do with the minimum of effort. Poor bumper not sure the form will amount to much. Had a look at the other 4 in the paddock but nothing took my eye.

#### **Newton Abbot July 20<sup>th</sup>**

Race 1 H.Hurdle class 4 - Only a 2-runner affair Sergeant Fury(H. Derham) making all the running to complete a hat-trick at 1/1.Gore Point made favourite at 4/5.

Race 2 J.Hurdle class 4 - A very rare runner from the J. O'Brien stable here. Dig ham who is still a colt had no trouble landing the odds of 4/1on Using his flat speed and winning very easily some heavy bets laid in the ring at 1/2. Olly Murphy newcomer Lord got the hang of things late and is sure to win races.

Race 3 H.Chase class 5 - Well TestFlight (Sue Gardiner) today was the day Tabitha Worsley executed her orders to perfection leading on the line. Some nice bets(5/1) landed for myself and others.

The trainer certainly knows her job. The favourite My Girl Katie (G. Harris) was nabbed right on the post.

Race 4 H.Hurdle class 5 - Another winner here for the Sue Gardiner team Springinisstep making all Sean Houlihan getting the fractions spot on this gelding is on the up. Plenty of 8/1 early so helped ourselves.

As I have always said these local trainers know the time of day.

Race 5 H.Hurdle class 4 - The race we have been waiting for. Local trainer Chris Down who knows when he has one right. Impercunios (13/8) winning this very easily after his 2<sup>nd</sup> to Keel Strand at the last meeting. Today was the day brilliantly ridden by Bryn Carver a jockey I just love.

Plenty of 3/1 overnight landed some very heavy bets for us. This Imperial Monarch gelding is only 6 and hid progressing nicely.

Race 6 H.Chase class 5 - Not a race I was interested in but was kicking myself for not having a 20/80 on Believe Jack who looked razor fit in the paddock for Alison Thorpe. Beaten a long way(36/1) by the favourite La Quarite (Mickey Bowen) but plugged on well for 2<sup>nd</sup> at 25/1.

# POINT TO POINT END OF SEASON REPORT BY ANDY WHITE

## National Awards

After a successful 2024-2025 season, awards were handed out to the leading jockeys and trainers both Nationally and in the regions.

For the National Jockeys Championship, James King kept his men's title with 57 wins with Joshua Newman, a worthy runner up with 45 winners. This was King's fourth men's title. Back in third place with 23 wins was promising Devon based novice Rian Corcoran, gaining him the men's title novice in his first season. Corcoran, son of former jockey Liam is a product of the Pony racing circuit who plans to turn conditional later this year. He rides out three days a week for David Pipe and two days for Dean Summersby another who recently moved from pointing to train in the professional ranks.

In the lady's championship Gina Andrews claimed her eleventh title with 29 wins, winning back the title she lost last year to Izzie Hill (nee Marshall) the runner up this time with 18 winners.

In the Novice championship it was a close-run thing with Clara Blewitt beating Marina Bealby on second places as both riders had Seven winners in the season.

In the trainer's championship (for trainers with 15 horses or more), another close-run competition saw Joshua Newman claim the title with 43 winners ahead of Gina Andrews with 40.

In the leading trainer in the '6 to 14 horses' category was Jenny Owen, Newmarket Vet and wife of trainer James Owen with 13 wins.

In the category for trainers with '5 or fewer horses', North Yorkshire based Alice Dawson claimed the title with 10 winners.

## Yorkshire Area

In the Yorkshire area, the awards were based on points for wins and placing throughout the season and were handed out at a presentation evening at Jack Berry House in Malton.

The leading men's rider was Thomas Easterby with runner up John Dawson and in third place Joe Wright.

The leading lady rider was Rosie Howarth with Pippa Brown as runner up and Isla John third.

In the Novice category, Pippa Brown was the top novice lady and Felix Foster the top man.

There was national success for Felix Foster as he won the 'Champagne Moment of the year' at the National awards. Felix, son of West Yorkshire trainer and Yorkshire post Saturday columnist Jo Foster won on his fourth point to point ride, just two years after learning to ride and collected the award at the National awards evening. Having had no interest in the sport he shadowed journalists Marcus Armytage and David Carr for days at the races to get an insight into possible a career in the sport as a journalist. Having been a keen cricketer but taking no interest in his mother's racing stable, he suddenly fancied having a go as a point-to-point jockey so learnt all the skills involved as a trainer and jockey and ended up having quite a good first season with his horses.

To continue to develop his skills he rode under rules at Catterick on 16 July in a flat race for amateur jockeys with less than 3 wins. It did not go to plan as he finished third on Micky Hammond's Stellarmasterpiece but unseated after the winning line and had to wait whilst the horse was caught before retrieving the saddle to weigh-in.

Hammonds other runner Irv ridden by Nell Biker finished second despite a slipping saddle. The star of the race was Rebecca Hitchin from the Sam England yard who came fast and late to claim her first win on the stables, Made All. A composed first winning ride from a jockey to look out for in Amateur rider's races and she also plans to give pointing a go next season.

Another eventful pointing season came to close with jockeys, trainers, owners, and spectators all looking forward to the colder days of the autumn and start of the next pointing season.

## GORDON ARMISTEAD'S RACING DIARY

### **Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup> Auteuil**

A good few years since I attended the Grand Steeple meeting. In those days the Grande Course De Haies D'Auteuil (French Champion Hurdle) was run on a separate weekend but the two days were combined in 2018. It

is also no longer the same weekend that the Roland Garros tennis starts and as both locations share the same Metro station it makes travel easier.

General admission was €5 a day or €8 for a two-day pass but we decided to go for the Tribune Panoramique which cost the princely sum of €25 for a two-day ticket. For the extra we got a super seated view from the top of the stands, a lounge with plenty of tables, and a small bar/ snack bar. There was also a free proper racecard against the single sheet available at the entrance.

Bryony Frost is not the only female English jockey riding in France and waiting for the gates to open we got talking to the parents of Charlotte Prichard who is in her tenth-year riding here. Her best year was 2020 with 47 wins but injuries have restricted her to four wins from twenty-five rides this year. Having told us about her injuries which included a separated shoulder they said she wasn't expecting much from her three rides today.

Nine races on the opening day and things kicked off with a four-year-old chase with four of the six having already won over fences. Levoilatiep should have been giving weight away having won more prize money but with the female jockey allowance he wasn't and taking it up at the last Mme, Prichard had her first winner since February. She was back to earth literally in the second with a fall in the three-year-old fillies' hurdle. The winner Olga De Kiev was a first winner for Irish St Leger winner Latrobe who stands in France.

Some well related runners in the four-year-old hurdle for horses that had run three times or less. There was also form with a recognisable name as Lancer had finished third to Lulamba here in October and had had five months off after a moderate next outing. In a strongly run race he took it up before the second last and soon had it won. Looking beforehand at the stats for Jockey/Trainer combinations at the course veteran rider Johnie Charron for trainer Daniela Mele had a 36% strike rate. This was not there only winner of the day and I of course ignored the stat. Second in the race on jumping debut was L'Outback a half-brother to Delta Work and Jazzy Matty. He had won his bumper at Moulins and it was sixteen lengths back to the third here so he looks a good candidate for somebody to buy. Last to finish was Semper Fortis a half-brother to El Fabiolo. He ran on his debut for the double green but he finished last on that run as well and had already been transferred.

The only two equine challengers from the UK and Ireland over the weekend were both in the Grande Course. Hewick who ran second here last year never looked happy jumping slowly and was never a factor. Monmiral raced handily but when push came to shove he was found wanting. Last year's winner Losange Bleu looked the class act of the race and was long odds on to follow up. Johnie Charron sent him right to the front and tried to make all and by the home turn he had seen off all but El Clavel. James Reveley brought the challenger right to the stands rails while the favourite was right on the inside. The challenger probably only led in the final fifty metres but had a length in hand at the end. In the final trial race Losange Bleu had beaten El Cavel by eight lengths giving him eight kilos. The extra 800 metres must have made the difference. It was a second win for James Reveley ten years after Un Temps Pour Tout won for David Pipe and a first Grade 1 in France for Noel George and Amanda Zellerholm. They are the growing new force in the French trainers ranks and sat second in the table after the weekend. It will be interesting to see if El Clavel ventures to the UK and also if he goes chasing.

### **Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup> Auteuil**

It had been a decent crowd on the Saturday but was bigger today although not uncomfortable. Both days there were lots of families in attendance.

Three Grade 1's on day two but only eight races instead of nine. No horses from the U K or Ireland but Patrick Mullins and Harry Swan both had rides in the amateur chase although neither threatened to be involved in the finish.

The first graded race was a Grade 3 three-year-old hurdle. Favourite was Matin Midi et Soir for the double green with Bryony Frost on board. He had won his only outing but the form looked suspect and he was short at even money. He set off to make all but jumped to his right at many jumps and had no answer to the debutante Leopard Du Berlais. The winner of this race has often been a colt who has gone on to stand as a stallion and Coolmore would have liked that option with their runner Wild Bill Hickok. They have started a project to find a son of Walk in the Park to stand at stud after winning over hurdles and have purchased several foals and yearlings. Wild Bill Hickok had looked the most promising to date with two wins including a listed hurdle. Some of the Walk in the Park geldings can be hard work and Wild Bill Hickok pulls like mad. Felix de Giles tried to settle him at the back but he took off down the straight the first time and had nothing left at the business end of the race.

The last time I was here for the Grand Steeple Long Run won the Grade 1 4,400 metre Four-Year-Old Chase. This time it didn't look a great renewal beforehand. The first two in the betting Altura and Legolas Tek and both won their two chases but here Altura made most to two out and then went out like a light and Legolas Tek never got involved. Winner Lanivtsi had only won one of his three chases and runner up Martha Canary is a twelve raced maiden and this was only her second placed effort.

Fourteen in the Grand Steeple including two previous winners but it wasn't hard to pick holes in the form of most of them. Last year's winner Gran Diöse was favourite having won his warm up race but at nine was old by French standards. Second favourite Goliath Du Rheu was going 1,600 metres further than he had gone before while 2022 winner Sel Jem who had only run three times since that success was third in. The start has been moved away from the front of the stands and the distance upped to 6,000 metres with a long run now to the first jump. Goliath Du Rheu refused to settle in behind and while he was better when taken to the front he was always going faster than his jockey wanted. From turning down the back straight for the last time he, Grand Dios, and the five-year-old Kolokico went for home. Coming from well of the pace was Diamond Carl and champion jockey Clement Lefebvre and as Goliath Du Rath and Grand Dios faded he loomed upside Kolokico two out and just had to jump the last two. Lefebvre who had won on Grand Dios twelve months earlier only got the ride after Bertrand Lestrade had a fall the day before. It was a first Grand Steeple for multiple champion trainer Francois Nichole. Kolokico ran a great race in second and was the only one who ran up with the pace to be placed.

The final Grade 1 was the four-year-old hurdle race and again Lestrade was replaced on the winner this time by Felix De Giles on Kivala Du Berlais. It was a tremendous finish with a nose and a neck covering the first three but again probably not a great renewal.

The card finished off with divisions two and three of the 3,900 metre handicap hurdle and the only criticism of the weekend was the Sunday card was dragged out. There were fifty-minute gaps either side of the big race and three forty-minute gaps so with the first at 2 o'clock the last race wasn't until 6.45.

Monday May 19<sup>th</sup> Saint Cloud

My companions departed on the Monday morning but I had a new course to go to on the Tuesday so took the opportunity for a second visit to Saint Cloud. The metro is no good for getting to the course and while I could have taken the bus I decided to walk from the hotel. This brought me across the Passerelle de l'Avre a super pedestrian bridge across the Seine designed by Gustav Eiffel. Once over the river the bridge starts to climb and it was all uphill for the last kilometre. It was more expensive than on my last visit and cost €3 for admission with the usual single sheet racecard thrown in,

I didn't expect to see an Arc runner up on a Monday at Saint Cloud but Aventure was having her second run of the season in the Group 2 Prix Corrida. She was long odds on with the main opposition coming from Survie who was seventh in the Arc. Aventure won without doing very much and you would imagine she will have a break before being trained for October.

She ran in the fourth race and her owners Wertheimer and Frere had also had the first three favourites of the day. Tyra won the big handicap which unusually started the card. The next two races were over 1,200 metres for unraced two-year-olds. In the one for the males Nighttime a Wootton Bassett grandson of multiple Group 1 winner Midday was odds on. When they came out of the stalls he looked clueless about what was expected and it was only when they swung into the straight that he seemed to get the idea. It was too late but he managed to get himself up to second beaten two and a half lengths behind Ulymine. The winner had a visor on for his first run so is obviously not a straightforward animal.

In the fillies race the betting was more open with Green Spirit just favoured over the Godolphin runner My Highness. Both showed signs of greenness but put their heads down and there was just a nose in Green Spirit's favour at the end. She is a Kingman half-sister to dual Grade 3 winner Ecrivain. What either race is worth we will not know until later in the season. The 2,400 metre three-year-old maiden went on debut to a Godolphin son of Frankel in Hotheaded. His dam is a half-sister to Prix de Jockey Club winner Anabaa Blue. He was a big sort who just looked a galloper and I doubt he is group class.

Tuesday May 20<sup>th</sup> Nancy- Brabois

Nancy the old capital of the Duchy of Lorraine is about 175 miles east of Paris and on the nonstop train it took just over an hour and a half from Paris Gare de l'est. Greater Nancy has a population of about half a million and is a university city with over 50,000 students.

The centre of the city is dominated by the Place Stanislas a huge square built by the ex-King Stanislas of Poland in the 1750's. He was made Duke of Lorraine by his son in law Louis XV after two spells as King of Poland and he completely redesigned the centre of Nancy. His statue dominates the square. The other main tourist attraction of the city is the Palace of the Dukes of Lorraine which houses the Museum of the area but it was closed for refurbishment.

The only person on the list of famous people born in Nancy that I had heard of was Jean-Louis Schlesser. He drove in one Grand Prix where he collided with Ayrton Senna but later on he built his own car that won the Dakar rally twice in the days when it actually went to Dakar. Michelle Platini was from the other main city of the area Metz but won his first trophy with A S Nancy Lorraine in the 1978 French Cup.

The city is also famous for Macarons de Nancy. The recipe was invented by two nuns at the time of the French Revolution when religious establishments were closed and they had to make a living. The shop they founded still operates near the square.

While there were races in the area in the 1800's the current site dates from 1933 when a farm in the Brabois area was purchased by Societe des Courses de Nancy. The course was destroyed in World War 2 and reconstruction began in 1954. The grandstand dates from 1977, the trotting track from 1995 and the steeplechase course from 2016. From the centre of the city the easiest way to get to the course is on Tramline 1 which isn't a tram at all but a trolleybus. (It's a long story why this is the case but they have already ripped out one tramway and supposedly intend to build another sometime in the future). It takes about half an hour till the next to last stop at Technopole. It's a five-minute walk after that. The course must have been in a rural setting originally but now sits beside one of the campuses of the University and the Technopole business centre hence the name of the tram stop.

The course is pan flat and hosts all disciplines including a cross-country course. The flat/ hurdle course is right-handed triangular in shape and about 1,600 metres per circuit. The chase track runs inside the flat track but there is also an inner oval course more of which later. Inside all that is the trotting track. The cross-country track weaves its way all over the place crossing the trotting track several times with all variety of obstacles and banks. Nine gallop meetings per year all of which are mixed jumping and flat plus five trotting fixtures. €5 for entry plus €2 for a racecard which included all the form for the evening meeting. A fair crowd and a few places to get a snack. The stand was good and there is a panoramic restaurant which was closed for refurbishment but is open every day of the week for lunches and evening meals.

Eight races with a hurdle, the feature Grand Steeple-Chase de Nancy and six flat races. The hurdle over 3,800 metres was for horses that had not won a race value €9,000. The one hurdle winner in the race Miss Anastassia had taken it up just before the last when she came down hampering her main pursuer and leaving outsider Noubaka to win on his tenth outing.

The Grand Steeple was a conditions race over 4,700 metres for horses with a handicap rating under 59K or roughly 130 on the UK scale. Seven runners and it was hard to rule out anything. While the hurdle course was straightforward the chase course in true French fashion was not. They set off the opposite way around the course and did a circuit and a half left-handed of the oval course. At the end of the back straight instead of swinging back into the home straight they swung right-handed on to the triangular course which brought them back into the straight going the right direction. They then did a circuit on this outer track before finishing on the flat/ hurdle track. They set off at a crawl but after the first circuit Felix de Giles came from ten lengths off the lead on King d'Alene to inject some pace. He made the best of his way home and while the margin was just over a length he always looked to be the winner.

No stars in any of the flat races. Golden Thread probably would have won the 2,500 metre three-year-old maiden but was hung out wide from his draw. He looked the sort to make a hurdler. Being up with the pace was important and Fabien Lefebvre rode the perfect race in the all aged 2,000 metre handicap. He got to the front, stacked them up and kicked on entering the straight. He was the second of three winners I found on the night. The 2,000-metre four-year maiden winner Al Ameen was trained by Amy Murphy who recently moved to train in France.

### **Saturday May 24<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

There has been talk of the Temple Stakes moving to Epsom to add to a three-day Derby meeting spread over a week but it is still here for the moment. It didn't look a good renewal with only one runner rated above 106.

Mgheera stepped up from a Goup 3 at Longchamp but this was probably no better than a Group 3. Runner up She's Quality was away from the action in the centre of the course but she has only won one listed race in twelve goes in stakes company,

The Sandy Lane might be a Commonwealth Stakes trial but Symbol of Honour won't be going there as he is a gelding. The two fillies in second and third Arabian Dusk and First Instinct have only shown listed form before so it didn't look a good race.

The transferred (from Ayr) listed fillies one mile two race went to Diamond Rain who stood out in the parade ring but also looked like she would improve for the run. She is a very big girl and will stay a mile and a half with no problem. She will be upped in class after this and the Lancashire Oaks looks an obvious target.

### **Friday May 30<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

Three maiden races starting with the all-aged mile and a half race. It was probably just an ordinary affair with the odds-on Pole Star who at one stage looked like he was going to be swamped holding off Valiancy. The runner up who improved a huge amount for his first run will probably turn out to be the best of these and could find a decent handicap later in the season.

The seven furlongs two-year-old novice saw a first success as a stallion for Palace Pier with Morris Dancer. Well backed from 6/1 to 7/4 favourite he wasn't the biggest. Four of the five previous winners of this race have gone on

to win or be placed in Group 1 company but he didn't strike me as that good. Another big gamble in the mile older horse's maiden with Mister Winston but he was run down by Love Beach. The pair were clear but they will be in handicaps next time.

### **Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> Haydock**

We might just have seen a very good horse in the Group 3 Lester Piggott Stakes winner Estrange. She cruised through the race and went four lengths clear without being asked very much. I imagine the Yorkshire Oaks will be the main target but she has been given an Arc entry so who knows. Shaha started favourite but she got herself in a real mess beforehand. She should find a Group 3 falling her way.

Audience favourite for the John of Gaunt isn't one to trust too much and he faded away tamely here. Ten Bob Tony gelded since last season battled on well to hold old timer Kinross. The third and fourth Volterra and Room Service looked like the run would do them good so they should have good seasons.

Balmoral Lady was gifted a run up the favoured stand rails in the Achilles Stakes but took it well. The five-furlong Group 1 at Ascot is evidently the target but that looks a tough ask. With the draw again important in the sprints Sergeant Wilko's fourth in the six-furlong handicap was a super effort and he should take a decent sprint handicap somewhere.

### **Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup> Cartmel**

Jolie Coeur Allen was turned over six times as a favourite when at Willie Mullins notably when a 2/9 shot at Tramore. She was favourite again today and led happily until the last hurdle when she was asked to go and close it out. The response was instant as she turned it in and Bittalemon swept by to win easily. It was a country mile back to the rest so she might fall in one day but this was a very poor race.

Fiveonefive has won five of his twenty-nine starts but took the feature two-mile handicap hurdle for the third year running. He was only up one pound from last year and four from two years ago and will no doubt be back next year.

Charlie Uberalles was another follow up winner from last year in the feature two-mile five handicap chase this time off a fourteen-pound higher rating. He is going to be up nearly 140 after this but if he stays under that there is a three-mile race here at the August meeting.

### **Thursday July 3<sup>rd</sup> Haydock**

The two-year-old maidens were the two interesting races on the card and both had decent winners. American Queen had cost £180K at the breeze ups but she wasn't a looker in the parade ring before the six-furlong filly's race. She wasn't very big and also looked like the run would bring her on. She missed the break but was soon in a good position and simply scooted clear in the last furlong to win by twelve lengths. What she beat is anybody's guess so we will see. The two best in the parade ring Lady Gomire and Maw Can finished second and third and should win somewhere down the line.

In the seven-furlong colts race the Godolphin newcomer Look at the Stars was easy to back but came through to look the winner a furlong out only to be mowed down by another newcomer in Protection Act. Probably not group class animals but both should have a future.

### **Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup> Haydock**

When you hear all the moaning about prize money how do we get a Group 2 Lancashire Oaks with four runners including a maiden and a horse rated 85. Estrange might be being talked up as an Arc possible but she isn't a superstar yet so her frightening the opposition away is hardly likely. Not surprisingly with a small field it wasn't a strong pace and they only quickened half a mile out. Estrange never really looked like being beaten but she will find it much harder in the Yorkshire Oaks.

In the six handicaps all the favourites were well turned over some running very poorly.

## **HEXHAM NEWS**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August - Sy Sports Racing Family Evening - Free entertainment for the children!

Retired Racehorse and former Scottish Grand National winner Takingrisks will be doing a meet and greet in the Parade Ring before racing.

# PATRICK NEVILLE RACING OPEN MORNING

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025 - 9am till 1pm.  
FREE ENTRY!!



Brecongill Stables, DL8 5TJ  
what3words //revived.limiting.clinking

Website: [patricknevilleracing.co.uk](http://patricknevilleracing.co.uk)

 Patrick Neville Racing



The stables will be open to the public in conjunction with National Racehorse week - a nationwide annual celebration of the racehorse.

Come see the horses, have photographs with 'The Real Whacker' Grade 1 winner at Cheltenham and meet Paddy and the team.

\*\*\* Derek Thompson hosting the event \*\*\*

Refreshments available / Meet National Hunt jockeys / Ownership opportunities



# CAN YOU HELP SPONSOR A NEW AMATEUR JOCKEY?

Thank you for allowing me to post this speculative request!

My son, Harvey James, is currently in the final stages of acquiring an amateur jockey licence and is looking for a sponsor.

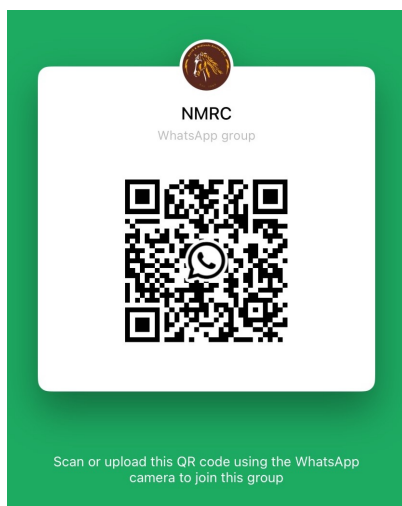
His back story is quite interesting, coming from a non-racing background and only learning to ride a few short years ago. He is now riding work and schooling horses for one of the top national hunt trainers in the North of England.

If you have your own business/company which has the capacity to spare a few hundred pounds to support an up-and-coming young jockey on his quest to become a professional please get in touch for further information, we would be delighted to have your backing.

Dad, Phil James, can be contacted at [Phil.james002@gmail.com](mailto:Phil.james002@gmail.com)

Thank you.





**NMRC WhatsApp Group** – Not everyone uses Facebook so this group will compliment/add to the information shared there. Keith Dodd has already started adding content and you can join the group by scanning the QR code on the left (if any problems contact Keith Dodd via the contact details below).

### **NMRC 2025 COMMITTEE**

Phil Evans	Chairman & Satnaps
Helen Goodwill	Membership & HH Comp
Ken Unsworth	Magazine printing
Dave Bates	Stable Visits
Richard Mattinson	Treasurer
Mark Banks	Alex Bird Competition
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Andy White	Yorkshire Area & P.T.P.
Keith Dodd	WhatsApp Group
Judith Bradley	Social Media
Michael Wheeler	General Assistant
Charles Rear	General Assistant
Kieran Rowbottom	Hon Club President

As some committee members have been the subject of phishing emails in recent months we have decided not to share individual contact details in the magazine any more. With immediate effect, please direct all emails to [info@northernracingclub.com](mailto:info@northernracingclub.com) and general postal correspondence to NMRC at 53 Dalebrook Rd, Sale, Greater Manchester M33 3LB. Competition entries and membership subscriptions can still be sent directly to those names on the competition entry forms and membership renewals forms etc.

**Next Racin' Deadline is Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September**