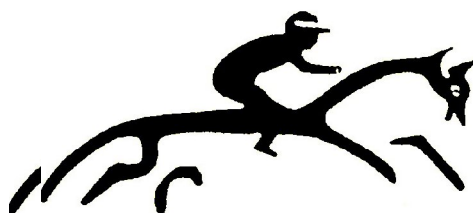

MEMBERS' ENCLOSURE

The Newsletter of the West Berkshire Racing Club



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WELCOME

Welcome to Ian Bath of Iver Heath who has joined the Club since the last newsletter, we hope he enjoys his membership of the club and look forward to meeting him at future events.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Welcome back after the summer break and we hope that those of you who have been on holiday have had a pleasant time as well as enjoying some good racing whilst the sun has shone.

Your committee has put together an autumn programme which is set out on page three and we hope you will find these of interest and be able to support them. We look forward to seeing everyone.

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OCTOBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

The October Newsletter will be published in early October. As always the Editor welcomes contributions from members and these should be sent to him by no later than 30 September.

TEN TO FOLLOW – FLAT SEASON 2013

The 2013 season is moving on fast and as we move into autumn Madeleine Thomas maintains her lead in the Ten to Follow competition. There has been some juggling of positions in the chasing pack and the leaders table after the York Summer Meeting is shown below.

The results from Doncaster's St Leger meeting plus the Newmarket Autumn meetings, Champions Day at Ascot, the Arc Meeting at Longchamp and the Breeders' Cup results will prove crucial in determining the final outcome.

The table will be updated in the next newsletter and also notified via e-mail (where available) and on the website.

SCORES AS AT 25 AUGUST 2013

Position	Name	Points
1	Madeleine Thomas	430
2	Roger Emberley	390
3	Mark Chapman	385
4	Allen Carding	370
5	Alan Richard	360
6	Violet Neale	350
7=	Tina Mitchell	345
7=	Bob Neale	345
9=	Pat Freeman	340
9=	Will Sayer	340
9=	Annette Waite	340
12=	Bob Neale (2 nd list)	335
12=	Annette Waite (2 nd list)	335
14=	Honor Kelly	325
14=	John Nash	325
16=	John Chilton	320
16=	Roger Emberley (2 nd list)	320
16=	Ann Peart	320
19=	Mark Chapman (2 nd list)	315
19=	Tina Mitchell (2 nd list)	315

Leading horses with points

Horse	Points	Horse	Points	Horse	Points
Dawn Approach	80	Telescope	35	Camelot	20
Sky Lantern	80	Havana Gold	30	Cap O'Rushes	20
Elusive Kate	60	Just The Judge	30	Gale Force Ten	20
Estimate	50	Morpheus	30	Ladies Are Forever	20
Farhh	50	St Nicholas Abbey	30	Leitir Mor	20
Montiridge	50	The Fugue	30	Liber Nauticus	20
Toronado	50	Aljamaaheer	25	Wild Coco	20
Trading Leather	45	Battle of Marengo	25	Dundonnell	15
Winsili	45	Hillstar	25	Secret Gesture	15
Brown Panther	40	Society Rock	25		

NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VISIT TO ALAN JARVIS'S STABLE MILL RACE STABLES AT TWYFORD BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER at 9.00 am.

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Due to circumstances beyond our control this stable visit has been postponed. Those who had booked have been notified of the cancellation. A new date is being sought.

SEPTEMBER SOCIAL EVENING – WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER, 8.00 PM IN THE COPPER KING BAR AT NEWBURY RACECOURSE.

NO ADVANCE BOOKING - MEMBERS GUESTS WELCOME

Our first indoor meeting of the autumn centres around the highlights of the flat season and the big races still to come at Longchamp, Newmarket and Champions Day at Ascot plus no doubt a nostalgic look back at some of the great races of the past. Our guests will include journalist and tipster Neil Morrice and recently retired commentator and presenter “Aussie” Jim McGrath.

As usual there will be a pay bar available and a raffle in support of the Injured Jockeys Fund.

VISIT TO PETER MAKIN'S, BONITA RACING STABLES at OGBOURNE MAISEY.

TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER at 9.00 am.

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Peter Makin has kindly invited the Club to visit his stables at Ogbourne Maisey near Marlborough where he has trained since 1971. The visit will include seeing second lot on the gallop followed by a tour of the yard. The visit will be followed by brunch at a nearby local pub.

The cost of the visit is £5 and bookings should be sent to Robert Watson using the form on page 14 of this newsletter. Please also indicate if you wish to take brunch (payment to be made on the day).

HOW TO GET THERE From Newbury take the A339 towards Oxford/M4 and join the M4 westwards towards South Wales/Swindon. Leave the M4 at Junction 15 and take the first exit towards Marlborough (A346). After approximately 3 miles follow sign for Ogbourne Maisey and on entering the village turn left into Rockley Road. Bonita Stables should be easily identified. (SN8 1RY)

TIM VAUGHAN STABLE VISIT AND CHEPSTOW RACES BY COACH FROM NEWBURY SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL

As reported in the previous newsletter Tim Vaughan won the Club's Best Turned-Out Horse Championship at Newbury last jumps season and Tim has very kindly invited the Club to visit his yard on Saturday 12 October which, very conveniently coincides with racing at nearby Chepstow which is 'Jump Legends Day' and is also a reciprocal day for Newbury Members.

Travel will be by a Mercedes Executive Coach leaving Newbury Racecourse at 7.30am prompt. The cost of the day will be £25 to include coach travel, Severn Crossing tolls, stable donations and driver's gratuity and bookings should be sent to Robert Watson using the form on page 14 of this newsletter. Those who are not Newbury Members or do not have alternative valid badges can pay racecourse admission on the day £25 Premier Enclosure / £20 Grandstand and paddock.

NATIONAL HUNT SEASON PREVIEW, – TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER AT 8.00 PM IN THE COPPER KING BAR AT NEWBURY RACECOURSE

NO ADVANCE BOOKING - MEMBERS GUESTS WELCOME

The National Hunt season preview is a firm favourite in the Club's annual calendar and although the full panel for this event has still to be finalised we hope that Lawney Hill and Gemma Gracey-Davison, who were unable to attend our 'Ladies in Racing' evening back in March, will join us. More details in the next Newsletter

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING AND DINNER – SATURDAY, 23 NOVEMBER AT OAKSEY HOUSE, LAMBOURN.

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Last year's social evening proved popular and we are repeating the event at Oaksey House, Lambourn. The format will be similar to before with a mixture of racing related games and quizzes, racing personalities and a buffet dinner and the opportunity to meet other members of the Club in the informal but charming setting of Oaksey House.

Tickets for this event are £20 per head which includes a drink on arrival and bookings should be sent to Caroline Springfield using the form on page 14 of this newsletter

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL PREVIEW, WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 2014 8pm

Please make a note of the date now – details to follow.

Lawney Hill Racing

OPEN DAY

Lawney Hill Racing Yard will be open to the public on Saturday 14th September 10am – 12:30.

See the yard and meet the horses before watching them on the gallops.

Horses for sale and shares available for the coming season.

Also,

Alan Hill Point to Point yard will be open so come and see the coming season's point to point hopefuls.



A fun morning out for the whole family

Light refreshments will be available

Woodway Farm
Aston Rowant
Watlington
Oxon
OX49 5SJ



RAFBF
THE HEART
OF THE RAF FAMILY

It was billed as Cup Final Day. So what better opportunity to dip one's toe into the world of Polo.

Newbury Racecourse Annual members have a range of reciprocal options, the majority being racedays at other courses, but in the small print, I noticed this invitation to Cirencester Park. Well, what else is a chap to do on a sunny Sunday afternoon, but to accept with eager curiosity.

I can liken the experience to attending a football match, but with some obvious, and some subtle, differences. The pitch was huge, a lawn on a grand scale, I mean double the size of Wembley; just four players per side, though thankfully they had been provided with horses (ponies) to cover the acreage; and when the game got going, no gentle tapping of the diminutive white ball, the idea seemed to be to whack it as hard as you could with the mallet (stick) in hand, and score in either of the distant goals. Forwards, backwards, sideways, it didn't seem to matter where the ball went. Then both teams charged after it, reminiscent of football in a junior school playground. So much for tactics. But the formation was initially confusing – no goalkeeper, no central defender, no attacking midfielder, not even a lone striker. In fact, give the rider of the grey horse a mask and he was a dead ringer for the Lone Ranger! Clearly though, playing polo required a unique set of skills, combining expertise in the saddle with extraordinary hand/eye coordination. These lads made it look easy.

The action, and there was plenty of it, flowed from end to end, and the two, yes two, referees did well to keep up. Just like in football, most of their decisions seemed unfathomable (to both sets of supporters oddly), except, that is, to our trusty commentator. He saw everything, or so he would have us believe. He read the game like, well like a polo match commentator should; a mixture of technical terms, flushed out with seemingly random praise, encouragement, awe and just the occasional "oh dear" of disappointment. By the enthusiasm of his tone, I felt he must be sitting on an active mechanical horse, sharing the danger of being thrown off just like the players on the field.

In play, the long ball was the order of the day, a style familiar to many Championship football teams, but there was an instance of Stanley Matthews-like dribble. Head down, having beaten all opponents and team mates alike with his mazy run, our Stan suddenly became disorientated and raced off leaving the ball behind, only for it to be clouted upfield by a very young looking Jack Charlton. Normal service resumed. Free kicks and penalties were awarded seemingly at random. A penalty is taken at a distance of 40 yards from an unguarded goal which was as big as a barn door. Our hapless player must have thought he was playing for England against Germany, and managed after a steady run up and full underarm swing, to miss the target by the proverbial mile.

As you can imagine, the little ponies were being asked a serious fitness question, and at the first hint of slowing, they were promptly substituted. Just like in football, this was done at the pitch side, and involved the rider expertly leaping from the saddle of his tiring steed to the saddle of the warmed-up sub. Not an easy feat, but usually accomplished with accuracy and elan. One poor chap, however misjudging his effort, literally landed between two stools before recovering his dignity with a trampoline-like bounce. The match proceeds with frequent such sideshows.

As in its soccer equivalent, scoring goals wins matches. Yet how did we know that such an event had occurred, given that we were watching from another county? Well, the answer was simple – a boy scout and his flag. At first I thought the flag waving was semaphore – G-O-A-L - spelt out, but on reflection the vigorous figure-of-eight movement was just the first letter repeated until arm fatigue set in. Goal celebrations themselves were more muted than I have become accustomed to; no unseemly pile of bodies on the ground or attempts at disco dance steps, just a sedate trot back to centre field with sticks held high. Halftime came out of the blue, and spawned a crowd reaction frowned upon in football - a pitch invasion! Seemingly encouraged by authority, we were all exhorted as a matter of honour to take to the pitch and replace divots and generally tread firmly on the disturbed turf – a scene ensued reminiscent of Wembley just after that famous Scottish victory over the "auld enemy", but with more finesse and many more dogs. Spotting a large divot, seemingly invisible to others, I strode

purposefully towards it, hoping for the Polo equivalent of Brownie points. The glory, however was illusory, for if disturbed, this divot would have led to brownie points alright but not the sort you would want, especially not on your shoe. With the second half looming, the throng of footstamperes wandered off, parents being implored to take with them the same number of children they brought on, but they needn't necessarily be their own!

A high scoring match ended with victory for the Whites over the Blues (one team was from Shrewsbury, but every time their name was mentioned by the commentator, a lady nearby loudly corrected his pronunciation, - I don't really want to enter that debate). After a brief pause for the excitement to settle, the players gathered for the presentations. First up, and quite rightly, was the Man of The Match winner. If I said it went to a good looking filly, you might be forgiven for assuming that guest of honour Lord Vestey was going to pin the rosette on his niece, of the winning team. But no, the MOTM was a pony – another curve ball that Polo is always throwing.

In some ways the awards ceremony was as interesting as the match. One of the victors was a mother, and as is modern day sporting custom, arrived on the podium with child in arms, a development I view with disfavour. Fortunately, the winning team's silver trophy was enormous, and accommodated the child with ease, and with lid refitted the photo call could proceed. No, No I jest; nanny appeared on cue, and with child off camera, the champagne went into said cup. The photo call was enlivened somewhat by the photographer calling out that the losing team should smile a bit more! Does he know nothing about the pain of defeat? You wouldn't catch Spurs looking happy while Arsenal cavorted with the FA Cup!

All over bar the tea, and cake for those whose Sunday lunch seemed an age ago. As with all sporting venues, we were obliged to leave via the "Club Store". But no numbered shirts on sale, no scarves, not even a miniature club mascot or fridge magnet; you could however arm yourself with a very hard ball, a stylish crash helmet and a mallet – items I've never seen at Chelsea. No mention of pies I hear you say? This is not pie country.

STARLIGHT SYMPHONY PLAYING OUR MUSIC AGAIN!

By Brian McNamee

When we bought an unnamed and unseen yearling filly from the Goffs sales in the Autumn of 2011 we had only read her pedigree which admittedly looked very good being by Oratorio out of an unraced Gallileo mare. Once we saw her in the flesh we were delighted with her and she also arrived with the opinion of our purchasing bloodstock agent Bobby O'Ryan that anything she achieved at two years old would be a bonus because she would come into her own as a three year old. Well we are always happy to be patient and were also able to make a different bonus become a reality earlier than expected.

We had sent her to Colin and Heidi Tinkler's to be broken in and were further heartened by Heidi Tinkler's words when the time came for Starlight to leave there, which were "If she isn't a racehorse I'll give up breaking in horses".

Having made her debut at Goodwood where race tactics didn't quite go as planned we then raced on the AW at Lingfield. She was outpaced on the bend over six furlongs and then received one stroke of the whip from Tom Queally and absolutely took off coming from off the camera picture and flying past the post. We bounced down off the terracing with great excitement and our trainer Eve Johnson Houghton almost knocked over a couple of spectators in the rush to get to hear the jockey's feedback. We knew for certain on this day that she was going to be good and Tom was suitably very pleased and said we should step her up a furlong to seven.

Meantime we watched her Mick Channon trained three year old half-sister Naseem Alyasmeen's career progress with great interest. When she was second in a colts and fillies Group 3 at Newmarket (12 July 2012) we were absolutely delighted. These are the traditional signs that breeders and owners of young horses dream about and we were thrilled that everything was coming together.

Her next and third race was on 26 July when we went to Doncaster and had the lightning fast ground we needed as Starlight doesn't lift her knee when she walks or gallops. She duly showed great acceleration from a dropped out position and we shouted the house down as she hit the front 40 metres from the post to win her maiden going away and once she found top gear her jockey Ted Durcan had a job to pull her up.

As an aside this was my friend and co-owner Les Dawson's first venture into ownership as well as the first time he had ever been to the race track to see Starlight race. He was so excited, I thought he was going to burst. He has an OBE yet his immediate reaction that this was "the best day of my life" which gives you a feel for the passion that comes with your horse winning. Luckily his wife was not in earshot! When you think how often some owners have to wait for their first winner he was clearly charmed and also spoilt to have shared such success so early.

In terms of Bobby O'Ryan's prophecy we also picked up the Racing Post Yearling Bonus Scheme £10k Prize as well as helping ourselves to a very reasonable sized stake at 33/1 which Eve had thought was an insult, but we thought was a rare gift from those nice bookmaker people.

Next stop was a decent Class 2 at Newmarket, but unfortunately the draw was tricky and whilst our jockey's cv included a Derby winner we also knew that his native tongue was Spanish. What we hadn't realised was that he had very little English which made race tactics difficult to impart. What he did tell us post-race was "nice filly, further". Therefore we put her away for the season with the end of season report of "Mission Accomplished".



(Photo: left - Starlight at home on the downs at Blewbury)

The three year old season started extremely promisingly one early morning at Kempton Park with some fitness sharpening track work on the all-weather which was excellent and told us that she had certainly trained on.

We went back to Doncaster to replicate our course winning characteristics and to have our favoured fast ground. Having only got back that morning from a couple of days at the

Punchestown Festival we watched the rain clouds on the drive up to Doncaster and whilst we came through numerous showers before racing we were heartened by reports from the track that the rain had missed there.

However the second that we stopped at the hotel which was just a mile from the course there followed a hail and rain storm of biblical proportions. We were gutted. We discussed pulling out of the race but decided that because the horse had travelled to the course and that it was her first run back we should race. She actually travelled well in the race and was not knocked about to come fourth beaten one and three quarter lengths and so we were happy enough with our start back.

The next race back was at Newmarket, this time on the Rowley mile, and again we were on shower watching duty. We thankfully missed the showers which were falling all around Newmarket but were a bit frustrated by race riding tactics which were very relaxed and clearly our "encouragement" fell on deaf ears. We love to shout our horses on you know and Eve is not backward in that department either.

We decided on a roll of the dice at the next race as we were hunting for **Black type** in listed class and over an extra two furlongs at Goodwood. Yet again we were praying for 'good to firm' ground which the clerk of the course changed in the morning to our favoured ground. Unfortunately the weather did a repeat of the Doncaster antics again. No sooner had we arrived than down came the torrent and we were prisoners in the car for the next 30 minutes, whilst the rain & wind did its worst. Again we decided we might as well race but to no avail.

We knew that the summer had to arrive at some point and so we waited and ultimately our next race was planned for the same one mile and a quarter at Newbury which was perfect for us as we were still waiting to land our first ever winner here at our most local track. I walked the last half furlong of the straight on the evening and was delighted that the ground was fast. Starlight travelled nicely enough into contention but at the furlong pole wasn't able to get competitive and we ended up staying on one paced fifth. Still no Newbury winner and we were a little surprised by that run although shored up by Peacemaker, a two year old we part own with Eve, putting up a very good debut performance a couple of races earlier.

We again went back to the well to make best use of the prevailing fast ground at Beverley. This was a 406 mile round trip for us and Starlight had a set of open cup blinkers on for the first time to make sure she would be 100% focussed back over the shorter trip of 1m 67yards. She won the best turned out prize for the third time running and went off joint-favourite but didn't really get the run of the race and seemed to lug in on the uphill camber a few times before running on nicely but too late and took third place. We drove home happy as she had run on at the end of the race and that always gives you heart for the next time.

We had a great debate over what we had learned from the Beverley race in the office with Eve regarding which of our multiple entries to take up next. We concluded with the Windsor option due to the effectively four and a half furlong level home straight, in our belief that the most important factor was the configuration of the track. We also decided that the blinkers should stay on and that John Fahy should definitely keep the ride.



(Photo left: in the saddling box and below: in the parade ring pre-race)

This was a Newbury Racecourse members' reciprocal event at Windsor on 15 July so there were plenty of familiar faces and West Berks members present which was great. We met Barbara Allen, Maurice Stringer, David and Shirley Lees in the owners bar and were reviewing Starlight's performances over this season.

Our own conclusion with Eve had been that we needed to make the right decisions to get Starlight's season on track and to make Bobby's prediction



of Starlight being a three year old come true. We knew that on paper that this looked a very competitive race and that despite only having six opponents and were hopeful rather than confident that she might feature in the business end of the race.

The preliminaries went very well and Starlight looked ready yet relaxed and in great condition and she was coping perfectly again with the hot weather. She went to post nicely and loaded last of all. The stalls opened and our race was nearly over in an instant as she stumbled in her first step and her nose almost hit the ground. Fortunately she stayed straight and John was able to sit tight and help her regain her balance and soon had her travelling well close to the pace.

At the intersection she was a little tapped for toe for a moment and race course commentator Richard Hoiles made a comment that implied her race was over. I am reliably informed that at this moment in time she went out on the betting exchanges to 130/1 although I don't know if it was matched!

Starlight quickly began to find her feet again and started to travel into contention. As she got her momentum up John Fahy had to take avoiding action to save being bumped and pulled her out to maintain her clear challenge. At this stage she started to close hard on the lead and one furlong out myself and my son Liam were competing with Eve and her Mum Gaie for "most vocal supporters prize".

Starlight maintained her lead despite a gallant challenge from Ryan Moore and Easter Diva and even changed her legs on the line as she moved left to make that quick left hand turn for the pull up at Windsor. By this time Richard Hoiles had been very complimentary on a couple of occasions and we never had a doubt that we had landed the race. Quite frankly I was surprised that there was a photo finish and even further surprised to hear the winning distance was a short head!

We were especially delighted that Starlight had been able to show the true ability that we knew she had and were also so pleased that we had been able to further endorse her broodmare prospects for the future. That's not to mention that wonderful thrill of winning which just rises up inside you when the realisation dawns that you have won the race. The thrill alone is so great the PR lady couldn't believe we didn't want more champagne. It's honestly only afterwards you start adding up any winning betting money (16/1) usually followed by prize money in that order. Mind you nothing can better that thrill of winning, remember what Mick Fitzgerald said that time!

Thank you Starlight, you have rarely disappointed us and p.s could we do that all again real soon?

Update: Since writing the article Starlight Symphony has come second at Bath, beaten a head after taking it up over a furlong out, fifth at Yarmouth lacking her usual sparkle and then ran her best race yet to come second at Sandown on 31 August.

With the old Classic, the St Leger coming up at Doncaster on 14 September we thought members might be interested in the following which appeared in the Daily Mail on 14 August.

Doncaster's hot to trot...

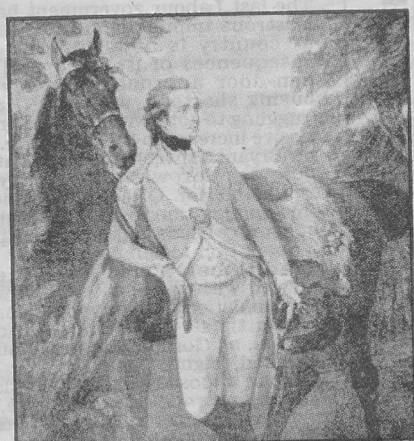
QUESTION How did one of the 'classics' of the English racing season come to be run at unfashionable Doncaster?

IN 1776, Colonel Anthony St Leger of Park Hill, Doncaster, suggested a sweepstake of 25 guineas for three-year-old colts and fillies, run on the old racecourse at Cantley Common. The winner of that first race was a filly owned by the second Marquess of Rockingham, which was subsequently named Allabaculia. The next year, the race was run on Town Moor, but it was not until 1778 that it acquired its title.

It was first proposed that the three-year-old sweepstakes should be called the Rockingham Stakes, but the Marquess intervened and declared that as his friend Anthony St Leger had suggested the race, it should be named after him.

Thus the world's first classic race was seen on Town Moor. It was initially run over two miles, but in 1826 was reduced to its current distance of one mile, six furlongs and 132 yards.

Town Moor is arguably the finest and fairest racecourse in the world. It is large, its turns are gradual, it has great width and a long run in.



Betting man: Anthony St Leger

As for 'unfashionable Doncaster', the town certainly lost its way in the 20th century, but in his 1812 History Of Yorkshire John Bigland wrote: 'Doncaster is a town of great antiquity having been a Roman station. [...] It is one of genteel towns between London and Edinburgh.'

'The St Leger meeting is now considered the chief racing fixture in the north of England, and the town is crowded with families of the first distinction.'

Dr Miller, organist at the parish church in the late 18th century, tells us of the social importance of the meeting: 'More distinguished folk forgathered at Doncaster than at any other place, fashionable watering places included, in the whole kingdom.'

The town's demise in the second half of the 20th century was exacerbated by the Heath government's 1974 local reforms which included Doncaster in the 'Socialist Republic' of South Yorkshire, hardly a recipe for success. This was followed by a period of extensive corruption among its political leaders, culminating in the infamous Donnygate scandal of the 1990s.

Fortunately the town is now experiencing a renaissance. Last year it had more day visitors than either Blackpool or Bath. This year the St Leger Festival, which is now an 11-day celebration, will include more than 200 cultural activities from September 6 to 15, with the racing as its centrepiece.

Peter Davies, Doncaster.

DIRECTIONS Please note that directions for stable visits and other events are provided based on the information available to us but cannot be guaranteed to be correct. Similarly post codes provided for navigation purposes cannot be certain to pin point the precise location of the stables. Members are advised to leave ample time for their journey and be prepared to ask locally for directions

Although there are around 250 provincial racecourses in France a significant number only stage trotting races, whilst the majority of the remainder stage a mixture of flat, jumping and trotting in varying proportions.

As one of only a handful of provincial racecourses in France that stage only flat and jump racing Pompadour racecourse makes it somewhere that particularly fits the British taste. Coupled with the fact that the racecourse is probably one of the most picturesque in Europe, if not the world, makes it a particular delight.

It was the above mentioned credentials, plus our desire to visit as many racecourses in France as possible that drew us to Pompadour in August 2012. Although the closure of Folkestone Racecourse (twinned with Pompadour since 2007) had been announced at the end of July it never crossed our minds at the time that we would be returning to Pompadour so soon and as representatives of Plumpton Racecourse through the newly formed twinning association.

So where is Pompadour? Well it's in the Corrèze Department within the Limousin Region of Central France around forty miles south of Limoges. If you try searching for it under 'P for Pompadour' you may be disappointed, as its more usually indexed under 'A as Arnac-Pompadour' the names of two adjacent communities that are joined for administrative purposes. Arnac which is little more than a hamlet dates back to Gallo-Roman times when the land was owned by Artonacus or Artonos. Pompadour belonged to one of the oldest lordships in the Limousin, the Lastours, Vicomtes of Pompadour. Guy de Lastours built the first castle in 1026 to defend his possessions and he also rebuilt Arnac church. Geoffroi Hélie de Pompadour rebuilt the castle to a higher standard in the 15th century. By the early years of the 18th century the family had died out, and following a long period of dispute the estate eventually transferred to the Crown. In 1745, King Louis XV gave it to his favourite, Madame Jeanne Antoinette d'Etiolles, who became the Marquise de Pompadour although there is no evidence that 'Madame de Pompadour' ever visited her estate preferring to remain nearer to the seats of Royal power around Paris. After her death in 1764 the estate returned to the Crown and became a Royal Stud of which more later on.

Pompadour today is a small town dominated by the Chateau which overlooks both the racecourse and the National Stud. The racecourse was founded in 1837 which makes it one of the oldest racecourses in France.



Above left – The Chateau de Pompadour and right part of the racecourse viewed from the chateau.

Francis Delord, the President of Pompadour, and Pierre Lachaud together with colleagues came to Plumpton on 3 December 2012 to discuss the prospect of twinning Pompadour with Plumpton and Francis saddled *Always Spring* ridden by Dr Cyril Coste in the opening Novices' Hurdle. The following day the final twinning meeting with Folkestone took place with Francis Delord saddling *Splendid Life* in the Amateur Riders' Hurdle. *Splendid Life* had won at the 2011 twinning meeting but this time could finish only fifth.

And so to 2013.

Pompadour Racecourse stages 11 days racing each year between May and September, all of which take place on a Sunday except for the first Saturday in August and the Assumption Bank Holiday on 15 August.

The day chosen for the first twinning meeting with Plumpton was 14 July, which is the Bastille Day public holiday, although this year it happened to fall on a Sunday. We arrived on Saturday afternoon and the town was bustling with a fairground being assembled in the town square for the Bastille Day celebrations. We were welcomed with a reception in the grounds of the Chateau from which you get the most magnificent view of the racecourse laid out in front of you.



Sunday morning dawned bright and clear with temperatures forecast to rise to the mid 30's by the middle of the day. With the first race due off at 2.30 pm there was time before lunch to walk the course and have a short conducted tour of the chateau.

The racecard headlined the twinning with the logos of both courses being reproduced on the front cover. The seven race programme consisted of four flat races, a hurdle race, a steeplechase and a cross country. Four of the races were for amateur riders, one for apprentices and two open races.

The enclosures are compact neat and tidy and a good view can be obtained from the stand which has a panoramic restaurant on the top floor.

The flat races are run on a right handed sand course of approximately 2,000 metres (10 furlongs) whilst the jump races are run on turf over a varying range of obstacles.



Above the grandstand, *right* the sand track showing moveable hurdle (foreground) and chateau in the distance.

The first race a Claimer run over 2,200 metres (1 mile 3 furlongs approx.) on the flat had nine runners and was won by *Marlinas* a six year old by the German Stallion *Malinas*. This was followed by a lady amateurs' race on the flat over 1,700 metres (1m 1f) which went to *Arrieta* ridden by Hélène Corcoral.

The third race, the Three Nations Cup an amateur riders' hurdle race over 3,400 metres (2 miles 1 furlong) was won by the Fabien Lagarde trained *Catstone* ridden by Cyril Coste. After the race Plumpton's Chief Executive, Claire Sheppard presented the Plumpton trophy to the winning connections surrounded by the British visitors. Unfortunately there were no British or Irish riders taking part this year but hopefully they will be back in 2014.



Above – *left* : Claire Shepherd presents the Plumpton Trophy to winning rider Dr Cyril Coste, with Pierre Lachaud (white trilby) and Francis Delord (with Champagne) looking on. *Right* :: Representatives of Plumpton with dog and others on the weighing room steps.

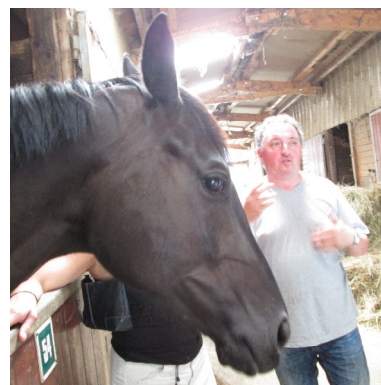
A gentlemen amateurs flat race followed, which went to *Swinging Tiger* a son of *Tiger Hill* ridden by Etienn-e Merle. The fifth race, a steeplechase was run over 3,600 metres (2¼miles). Whilst the steeplechase course is more or less a regular oval, the jumps are far more varied than for steeplechase fences in Britain. The race went to *Toile D'Auteuil* ridden by Mr Edouard Monfort. The apprentices flat race attracted eleven runners with William Smit being victorious on the four year old *Fantomas Du Pecos*.

This brought us nicely to the concluding Cross Country Steeplechase run over 4,500 metres (2¾miles) on a true cross country course that winds its way around the racecourse and takes a wide variety of gradients and obstacles including a water splash, drop bank, oxer, bullfinch and two in and out crossings of the flat course. On our visit last year we watched the cross country from the stands but this year we went onto a raised mound in the centre of the course which gave us an entirely different perspective. The race provided plenty of exciting moments not least when a loose horse emerged from the side of the course and collided with the leaders causing two falls. Fortunately there were no serious injuries to horse or rider but only four of the eleven runners got round with one being pulled up and the other six either falling or being brought down. At the business end the winner was *Beuillac* trained by Guillaume Macaire and ridden by James Reveley son of UK trainer Keith and grandson of former leading trainer Mary Reveley. James who has spent several spells riding for Macaire seems to have really tuned in to the style of French racing and has considerable success in the cross country races.

During the afternoon we met up with two other pairs of Plumpton Members who had made the trip and a surprise was meeting former jockey Ron Atkins and his wife Elaine who had come to Pompadour with friends not realising that it was the twinning day. This was particularly poignant as Ron rode his first ever winner at Plumpton, *Tudor Meteor* on 15 February 1964.

In the evening we were invited to dinner at the racecourse and later were able to watch the Bastille Day celebratory fireworks against the back drop of the chateau. A huge crowd turned out for the fireworks which were a free show with many watching from the centre of the racecourse.

I mentioned earlier that Pompadour is also the home of a branch of the Haras Nationaux (National Stud). Originally set up as the Royal Stud it was revived by Napoleon in 1806 as part of a network of 20 studs across France designed to ensure that the breeding of horses was maintained. Unfortunately the stud which normally offers tours to visitors is currently closed for renovation works. Instead we had the opportunity to visit the nearby stables of trainer Fabien Lagarde whose yard is owned by Francis Delord his principal patron.



Above Pictures from our visit to the stables of Francis Delord and trainer Fabien Lagarde, *Left*: Emma Santer, former Manager of Folkestone Racecourse, makes friends with one of the stables' inmates. *Centre*: cooling down after exercise *Right*: Francis talks about his horses.

From my perspective the first twinning was a great success and it is impossible to adequately express in words the tremendous hospitality we were offered by Pierre Lachaud and Francis Delord and their associates who looked after us all the way.

We are very much looking forward to the 'return leg' Pompadour Day at Plumpton which will take place on 18 November and, of course, a return visit to Pompadour in 2014.

This article was first written for the annual members blog on the Plumpton Racecourse website – <http://plumptonracecourse.co.uk/category/blogs/annual-members/> and more photos from the visit can be seen on the Plumpton Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.620567457974965.1073741828.152016768163372&type=1>

WBRC Tote Ten To Follow 2013/14 Syndicate– Any interest?

A year ago I asked if anyone was interested in forming a syndicate to enter the NH Tote Ten to Follow competition, which starts at the Open meeting in November.

As a result we were able to put together a syndicate of five, of whom four were active and one was passive – by that I mean that the active members picked the horses and the passive one didn't.

It would be good to do this again for the 2013/14 season and given that we managed to stay in contention until pretty much the end of the competition, I would be hopeful that most of the original five will return for more.

If anybody else is interested in forming a syndicate then please let me know and we can try to sort something out. It's helpful if you have internet access, as putting together entries can involve quite a lot of passing around of information and selections.

At this point in time I have very little recollection of the last jumps season so it is time to pick up the form book and start refreshing the memory.

The Ten To Follow is a fun way of enjoying the build-up to the season as well as the racing itself. 'Who will be running where' is a big part of compiling the entries and at this time of year there is plenty of news on running plans.

After such a glorious summer it seems a shame to be looking forward to cold, wet afternoons and dark evenings, but I guess that all good things have to come to an end, and a cracking looking jumping season will provide some quality compensation.

Please do get in touch with me if you are interested.

Terry Knight

BOOKING FORM

VISIT TO PETER MAKIN'S STABLES – 1 OCTOBER 2013

I wish to reserve ____ places for the visit to Peter Makin's. This application is in respect of the following members:

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

I enclose a cheque for £ ____ (£5 per person) made payable to West Berkshire Racing Club.

I/we wish to have brunch after the visit - YES /NO

Please send this application to **Robert Watson at 1 The Courtway, Bone Mill Lane, Enborne, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 0EU**

Contact details in case we need to contact you to advise of a change to the visit arrangements:

Telephone (home) _____ and Mobile _____

E-mail _____ (please write clearly)

VISIT TO TIM VAUGHAN'S STABLES AND CHEPSTOW RACES – 12 OCTOBER 2013

I wish to reserve ____ places for the visit to Tim Vaughan's Stables and Chepstow Races. This application is in respect of the following members:

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

I enclose a cheque for £ ____ (£25 per person) made payable to West Berkshire Racing Club.

I/we wish to have brunch after the visit - YES /NO

Please send this application to **Robert Watson at 1 The Courtway, Bone Mill Lane, Enborne, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 0EU**

Contact details in case we need to contact you to advise of a change to the visit arrangements:

Telephone (home) _____ and Mobile _____

E-mail _____ (please write clearly)

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AND DINNER – 23 NOVEMBER 2013

I wish to reserve ____ places for the Christmas Social and Dinner, This application is in respect of the following members/guests:

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

I enclose a cheque for £ ____ (£20 per person) made payable to West Berkshire Racing Club.

Please state any dietary requirements i.e. vegetarian/vegan etc. _____

Please send this application to **Caroline Springfield at Catharine House, Whittonditch Road, Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 2PX**

Contact details in case we need to contact you regarding a query or change to arrangements:

Telephone (home) _____ and Mobile _____

E-mail _____ (please write clearly)