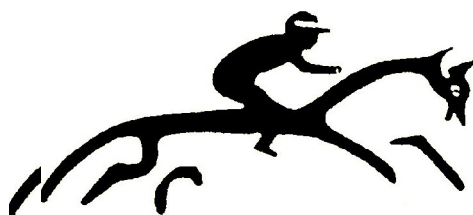

MEMBERS' ENCLOSURE

The Newsletter of the West Berkshire Racing Club



www.westberksrc.org.uk

Founded in 1982
February 2013

Edition No. 250
Editor: Stewart Nash

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WELCOME

Welcome to Caroline Roy of Burghfield Common who has re-joined the Club and we look forward to seeing her at Club events.

PAM LE MOTTEE (1947-2013)

I think everyone in the Club was shocked to hear of the death of Pam Le Mottee in January.

Pam had been a very active member of the West Berkshire Racing Club for 20 years and our Treasurer from 2000 until she decided to stand down at last year's AGM. A number of WBRC members attended the memorial service at St Mary's Church, Vernham Dean on 16 January and it was there that we learned a great deal about her very full life.



Brought up in Epsom, Pam sadly contracted polio whilst at her first school. Despite this she developed a keen love of animals and worked for Epsom trainer Peter Ashworth. Pam subsequently worked for the Highways, Waste Disposal and Grounds Maintenance operation of Surrey County Council before moving to Vernham Dean.

At Vernham Dean she was the village postmistress as well as being involved in many village activities.

Pam had a detailed knowledge and understanding of racing and pursued her interest with visits to several racecourses. She also had shares in horses in training with Toby Balding at Weyhill. She was involved with Riding for the Disabled and reached a high level in carriage driving which led to her being presented with a prize by the Duke of Edinburgh.

This obituary is all too short to do justice to Pam and her achievements and none of us will forget her enthusiasm and wonderful smile.

TEN TO FOLLOW – 2012/13 NATIONAL HUNT SEASON

Since the last newsletter there have been many significant races and this has resulted major shake-up of the Ten to Follow leader board. The table below includes the results from the Cheltenham Trials Day and we have a new leader in Tina Mitchell who has a 15 point margin over Terry Knight and Martin Withinshaw.

The leader board as at 27 January is set out below and further updates will periodically be published on our web site and included in future newsletter.

SCORES AS AT 27 JANUARY 2013

Position	Name	Points
1	Tina Mitchell	440
2=	Terry Knight	425
2=	Martin Withinshaw	425
4	John Nash	415
5	Shelly Good and Jan Biscoe	405
6=	Will Sayer	395
6=	Ken Unsworth	395
8	Allen Carding	380
9	Brian Harvey	375
10	Honor Kelly	370
11=	James Hagart	365
11=	Marilyn Hagart	365
13=	Ken Butters	360
13=	Michael Gowers	360
15	Anne Sawyer	350
16=	Tina Mitchell (2nd list)	345
16=	Andrew Sawyer	345
18=	Marilyn Hagart (2nd list)	340
18=	Stewart Nash	340
18=	Lester Whelpdale	340
18=	Martin Withinshaw (2nd list)	340

Leading horses with points

Horse	Points	Horse	Points	Horse	Points
Hurricane Fly	90	Countrywide Flame	30	Big Bucks	25
Sprinter Sacre	60	Darlan	30	Captain Chris	25
Al Ferof	50	Flemenstar	30	Menorah	25
Bobs Worth	50	Silviniaco Conti	30	Sanctuaire	25
Long Run	50	Sizing Europe	30	The New One	25
Oscar Whisky	50	Tidal Bay	30	Zarkandar	25
Simonsig	50	Zaidpour	30	Shutthefrontdoor	20

NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER

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MARCH 2013 NEWSLETTER

The February Newsletter will be published in the middle of March. As always the Editor welcomes contributions from members and these should be sent to him by no later than 25 February.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

REVISED DATE

ANNUAL TEAM QUIZ – 7.30 pm Monday, 18 FEBRUARY in the Copper King Bar at Newbury Racecourse.

Unfortunately we had to postpone the quiz as the date chosen was not suitable for a number of teams. We hope the revised date will be more suitable and look forward to a competitive evening. The quiz is designed in two levels to cater for varying levels of knowledge. We also hope to field at least two WBRC teams and would welcome anyone from the Club to join in so PLEASE let Stewart Nash know if you would like to take part. A cash bar will be in operation.

VISIT TO MICK CHANNON'S WEST ILSLEY STABLE – Wednesday, 27 February, 8:00 am. STRICTLY MEMBERS ONLY

Our February stable visit is an opportunity to visit the dual purpose stables of Mick Channon. We will have the opportunity to see second lot exercise on the gallops, followed by being shown Mick's N.H. horses which he now trains having taken over the jumping operations from Henrietta Knight. After the visit there will be an opportunity for breakfast at The Harrow in West Ilsley.

At the request of the trainer this visit is strictly limited to a maximum of twenty. If the number of applications for places exceeds twenty then the successful applications will be determined by ballot.

The cost of the visit is £5 per member. Bookings should be sent to Robert Watson using the booking form on page 14. If you wish to take breakfast after the visit please indicate on the booking form so that we can advise The Harrow of likely numbers. Payment for breakfast to be made at the time.

HOW TO GET THERE From Newbury take the A339 towards Oxford/M4 and join the A34 towards Oxford. After approximately six miles take the exit signed East Ilsley, West Ilsley and Compton. At the junction turn left and follow this road into West Ilsley. West Ilsley stables should be easily identified. (RG20 7AE)

SATURDAY, 2 MARCH – NEWBURY RACES

The Club is sponsoring the West Berkshire Racing Club Junior Bumper which is a national hunt flat race. Subject to confirmation from Newbury this year the race will be dedicated to Pam Le Mottee and we will be presenting the bronze which we gave to Pam at the Christmas Social to the owner of the winner as a Challenge Trophy in her memory.

Our trophy awarded to the stable of the best turned out horse series will be presented to the representatives of the winning stable at the final meeting of the Newbury 2012/13 jumps season on Saturday 23 March.

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL PREVIEW – WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH – 7.45 pm (DOORS OPEN 7.00 PM) in the Paddock View Room at Newbury Racecourse

MEMBERS AND MEMBERS GUESTS WELCOME

March wouldn't be March without our annual preview of the biggest Jump race meeting of the year. We are still in the process of finalising our guest panel which will be announced on our website and in future newsletters as soon as possible. In the meantime make a note of the date and time in your diary. Admission remains at £2 for members and £5 for members guests. A guide to the leading horses will be available but due to the cost of printing a charge will be made to cover costs.

SATURDAY, 9 MARCH – KINGSTON BLOUNT RACING CLUB POINT TO POINT at KINGSTON BLOUNT near Chinnor – First race 1pm

The Club is jointly sponsoring with The Racecourse Newbury the Ladies Open Race at this meeting at Kingston Blount Racecourse just off the B4009 a couple of miles from junction 6 of the M40.

Any members of the WBRC who would like come racing on that day may purchase a £20 car pass (admits driver and ALL car occupants) for the concessionary price of £15 provided the pass is purchased in advance. Please send cheques (payable to Kingston Blount Racing Club) to Stewart Nash at 14 Elland Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 3JT.

LADIES RIDERS EVENING – Tuesday 19 March – 8.00 pm – Copper King Bar at Newbury Racecourse.
MEMBERS AND MEMBERS GUESTS WELCOME

For this meeting our guest panel will comprise lady riders past and present and will provide an insight into the lives and experiences of ladies in the saddle. The panel will be confirmed as soon as possible but in the meantime make a note of the date in your diary. Admission - £2 for members and £5 for members guests. Pay bar available

VISIT TO WEATHERBYS, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. - Monday 25 March – Arrive by 10.15 am prompt.

This visit is being arranged by the Northern Racing Club who have kindly invited the WBRC to join them. Inevitably numbers are limited and will be allocated at the discretion of the NRC. Coffee will be served prior to the tour with lunch at 1.00 pm. There is racing at Towcester in the afternoon (2.30 pm first race) to which admission is free.

The cost of the visit is £5 to cover the cost of the sandwich lunch provided by Weatherbys.

Booking can be made via post to Helen Goodwill at 124 Lindsell Rd, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 5NZ
All cheques payable to NRC, £5 per person. Any queries by email to cheshirecherry@hotmail.co.uk.

VISIT TO CHRIS GORDON'S, MORESTEAD STABLES near Winchester – Tuesday 26 March - 09:00 am
MEMBERS ONLY

Chris Gordon trains a predominantly jumping string at Morestead stables on the outskirts of Winchester where his wife Jenny also has charge of some point to pointers. Chris has been a good friend to the WBRC and we are looking forward to a very enjoyable visit to the progressive yard. After the visit there will be the opportunity to visit a local pub for late breakfast. There is racing at Fontwell Park in the afternoon for which Chris can arrange reduced price admission if booked in advance (see booking form).

The cost of the visit is £5 per member. Bookings should be sent to Robert Watson using the booking form on page 14. If you wish to take breakfast after the visit please indicate on the booking form so that we can advise The Harrow of likely numbers. Payment for breakfast and Fontwell tickets to be made when requested.

HOW TO GET THERE From Newbury travel south A343 to join the A34 towards Winchester. After approximately 22 miles at the roundabout take the exit onto the A272 signed Southampton, Winchester Petersfield Alton Alresford. After one mile at another roundabout take the exit A31 towards Southampton, Winchester and Eastleigh. Turn left onto Morestead Road and Morestead stables are approximately 2 miles on the right. (SO21 3JD)

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

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Newbury Racecourse liaison: Joanne Dillon - 17 Sandford Close, Kingsclere, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 5LZ
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Joanna Percy - 01635 200604
Maurice Stringer - 07729 600180

David Lees - 07855 275588 or 01491 571299
Caroline Springfield - 01672 520086

Jamie Snowden Stable Visit – Tuesday, 8 January 2013

by Robert Watson

Working scenario for film – “Jamie Snowden...Part II”

Voice over – “ previously seen on Jamie Snowden..”

Run title sequence – scenes of Jamie at school (Radley), university (Newcastle), in uniform (Kings Royal Hussars), each cut with him riding, jumping fences, laughing. Scenes with Nicky Henderson and Paul Nicholls in cameo, many horses. Cut to country vista, wide angle, one horse in distance, gradually getting closer, cue hoof beats and hopeful music, Jamie rides by, smiling, patting horse generously. Then scenes of race days with excitement, flashing colours, cheers and celebrating owners. Music quietens. fade out.

Scene of dawn over Folly House ... jaunty music, sounds of chattering voices ... camera swings down from sky, through trees, to show large group of WBRC members, expectancy palpable, slight hush, and then, emerging from the crowd ... Jamie, striding into bustling yard, wife and child in background ... and dogs (yes, both dogs) playful ... scene ends with close up of Jamie ... confident smile ... our hero.

And “ACTION!” ... Well this may be the Hollywood version of a WBRC stable visit, but the truth is not quite as romanticised. We last saw “our hero” in March 2011 in Ebbesbourne Wake, deepest Wiltshire, but in the summer of that year he moved to Folly House in Upper Lambourn, and put down some roots. The yard is now full, with plans for more boxes, as success has created more demand. Nineteen winners last season, and nine more this, attest to this happy situation. *[Editors note – see report on Niki Royal's Towcester success on page 8]*

As second lot assembled one by one before us, we were introduced to old stalwarts and new stars to be. **MARODIMA** is now a 10-year old, has won 17 times, and placed a further 17 times. The owners must have had such fun, and there is more to come. At the other end of the scale is **STORMY OSCAR** a 5-year old yet to start his Rules career. He certainly looked the part as he circled the yard. Nominated as the Race Club horse for the stables, he carries the hopes of many. Already successful in that role is **MILLERS REEF**. He has won twice, and been placed twice, in his first year with Jamie.

With everything ready, it was off in convoy to the gallops. And, if we needed a reminder of how wet the weather has been, the short run through Upper Lambourn did the trick. Standing water, running water in the lanes, mud, mud and yet more mud, the village looked a mess. Thank heaven for all-weather gallops. Of the eight horses that left the yard, we watched six work up Manton Gallop, dropping two after each run, so the last pair did three turns. Marodima and his work companion were but a indistinct image on the horizon across the Downs, as he has his own ideas on exercising, and performing with others in front of a critical audience, was definitely not his way.



Pictured left: Jamie watching his horses preparing for exercise and right one of the stable ferrets.

Back in Folly House, wife Lucy and secretary Caroline had been busy preparing delicious hot pie and cooked sausages for our return. Thus fortified, Jamie took us on a tour of the yard. For some, this box-by-box

information on the horses is a required stable visit facet, with notes taken. My notes tend to be mental ones, as without visual images, bare facts can be very dry and confusing when communicated to others. I will mention however the rare sight of two ferrets – thankfully caged – who were part pets, and part workforce!

The yard has been very quiet in recent weeks. The exceptionally heavy going of late has precluded any runners, and the horses have been “let down” a bit over the holiday period – haven’t we all taken that line. But **SOUTINE** was due to have a run at Huntingdon 3 days after our visit (finished a very

creditable third). Once the going improves however, Jamie will have lots of ammunition to fire. Not least being the afore-mentioned **STORMY OSCAR**. If you fancy getting involved in horse ownership at an affordable level, check out Jamie's website - £700 all inclusive for one year – a January bargain if ever I saw one.

In the last couple of years, the Club has actively sought out stable visits to young up-and-coming trainers, both on the flat and over the jumps. It is always nice to put a face to a new name. In Jamie Snowden we have a young man who personifies this genre. He proved knowledgeable, informative, affable and entertaining. But his enthusiasm for the racing game was his chief, and infective, asset.

So, as the credits run, final scene of happy Members heading for the pub, horses heads looking out of their boxes, Jamie and family waving, dogs barking, ... fade, and close.

AND SO TO LEICESTER! –(a follow up to the Jamie Snowden visit by Stewart Nash). Forgoing the breakfast at the Maltshovel, Hilda and I set off for Leicester Races. It's always interesting starting a journey from other than your normal base and the cross country journey from Lambourn to join the M1 at Northampton proved interesting but just as long as travelling from home round the M25 to get to the M1 at Watford. With the roads mercifully clear of hold ups we arrived at Leicester just after the first of seven races. If you haven't been to Leicester it's another interesting venue and perhaps worthy of a WBRC visit should the occasion arise. Along with Nottingham, Leicester is a rare survivor of a provincial 'City' racecourse with Lincoln, Manchester and Birmingham having all disappeared for various reasons.

Situated in Oadby to the south of the city the enclosures are spacious with a Victorian members stand (painted in Leicester City Football Clubs royal blue) and a modern Tattersalls' stand combined into one enclosure for the winter meetings. The small crowd on 8 January meant there was ample room to see the horses in both the parade ring and the race. The circuit is a long one and although the viewing is good in this modern era you really miss a big screen. Another throwback to a past era is the black and white racecard with no jockeys colours (well there are but they are written in words not a colour picture) and (sin of all sins) they had sold out of racecards by the time we arrived.

Most of the big training stables were represented and with a double for Denis O'Regan riding for John Ferguson plus winners for Venetia Williams, Philip Hobbs, Tom George and Nigel Twiston-Davies it shouldn't have been too hard to back a winner but the nearest we got was thinking about Maccabees trained by Roger Curtis and ridden by Hadden Frost. Having seen Maccabees at Plumpton we should have known he was a certainty at 16/1 for the Selling Hurdle but coming to the second last it looked as if he was booked for second only for the leader Cool Touch ridden by Sam Twiston-Davies to capsize leaving Maccabees to come home in front.

Cheltenham Festival Trials Day - Saturday 26 January 2013

by Robert Watson

FAB -U- LOUS! I may sound like Craig from "Strictly...", but there is no other simple way of describing the best single days racing outside the Festival itself. Some may argue it is even better.

What a card on offer – eight races - six Class 1 and two Class 2. Top billing went to the Victor Chandler Chase, a Grade 1, equivalent to the Champions League in football. And yet the Grade 2 Argento Chase carried the greater prize money with over £43,000 to the winner. But at the end of the day, monetary values were a long way behind those of thrills and excitement.

A little scene setting. The weather had tried its hardest to scupper the meeting. Snowfalls and frosts are rated racing's worst enemies, but Cheltenham managed to rise to the challenge. It must have been a Herculean task to clear the track of snow on the frost covers, and to make the racecourse safe for the punters. But never has such an effort been so well rewarded. The Club's planned morning at Fergal O'Brien's yard, less than twenty miles away, was declared a non-runner (see picture on the next page of snow on Cleeve Hill) the day before.

Right – Robert Watson and Caroline Springfield arrive at Cheltenham



Deep snow and dangerous ice in and around the yard won, the predicted thaw arriving a day too late.

So it was straight to the course from Newbury, and Vince our regular driver ensured 20 members arrived in good time. The weather was perfect, the going understandably “heavy – soft in places”, and the expectations high. It took just the first race to set the tone for the day. A pulsating finish with ROLLING STAR just getting the better of odds-on IRISH SAINT in the JCB Triumph trial, with thirty lengths back to the third placed horse. Henderson v Nicholls, Geraghty v Walsh, their battles resumed.



Next up, a novices ‘chase. Always trappy, and so it proved as VINO GRIEGO at 25/1 ran out an easy winner. Clearly the heavy going was taking its toll, and turned out to be the key factor as events unfolded. KATENKO for Venetia Williams was a popular winner of the Murphy Group chase, its price of 4/1 favourite reflecting the openness of the race. Just two fallers, but seven “pulled up” in the first three races showed how tough the going was.

However, a class horse acts on any ground, is a received racing wisdom. Cue SPRINTER SACRE. The rising star of jumping was so, so impressive, as he usually is. The 1/5 fav. gave a demonstration to justify such cramped odds. Quite magnificent – in looks and in action – the next Champion Chaser for certain. Behind Nicky Henderson’s delighted smile, there was a certain measure of relief and he will enjoy a short respite from the pressure of handling such an exhilarating superstar.

With hands still warm from applauding Sprinter Sacre, it was on with the show. The Argento Chase saw the first run of previous Gold Cup winner IMPERIAL COMMANDER for nearly two years. It was probably the long lay-off that only just robbed him of a spectacular victory. As he and CAPE TRIBULATION battled it out up the famous Cheltenham finish, the noise of the crowd was deafening. Both had their supporters; it was not a time for reserve; just about everyone not holding a Cape Tribulation slip was cheering on the locally trained Commander, who in going down by just 1/2 length, was denied a fairy tale return to the course he has graced so often and so well.

Heartbreaking indeed for Nigel Twiston-Davies, but possibly worse was to follow. His highly impressive novice hurdler THE NEW ONE was backed down to odds-on favouritism. But no one had shown the script to A P McCoy, who got AT FISHERS CROSS, staying on under pressure, to lead on the line. A neck the official distance, another lung bursting screamer of a finish for the crowd. Surely that was enough excitement for one day. But no. We were treated to yet another “neck “ finish as REVE DE SIVOLA held on gamely to deny OSCAR WHISKY in the 3-mile hurdle. Nick Williams will surely go on to run his charge in the World Hurdle at the Festival, and with BIG BUCKS out of the reckoning, will do so with confidence. But where Oscar runs next is the subject of some debate – Cheltenham or Aintree, or both. Being beaten half a length cannot be interpreted as “not staying” in my book, but its Nicky’s call!

If ever there was a horse demanding of my backing it must have been MR WATSON in the last. Frightened of putting the mockers on it, I had but a modest investment, enough to finish the day ahead. Even had Mr Watson lost however, the day was a terrific success. Cheltenham provided an afternoon of top class fare – horses, finishes, drama and excitement. And to think this was only the warm up for the real event. Roll on The Festival.

Photographs in this section courtesy of Barbara Allen, Patrick Fagan and Stewart Nash

CORRECTION

The report in the Christmas Newsletter on the visit to Ben Case and Alex Hales omitted to mention the name of the author, David Lees. Apologies to David for this oversight.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL – RETROSPECT

At our Christmas Social at Oaksey House we handed over to John and Jackie Porter a cheque for the Injured Jockeys Fund raised by various Club raffles and events. We thought members would like to see the letter on the next page which we received from Lisa Hancock Chief Executive of the IJF.

THE INJURED JOCKEYS FUND

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21 December 2012

Caroline Springfield
West Berkshire Racing Club
14 Elland Road
WALTON-ON-THAMES
KT12 3JT

Dear Caroline

Jackie Porter has recently forwarded to us a cheque for £1,000 which I understand has been raised from raffles throughout 2012. The West Berks Racing Club is without doubt one of the most generous Clubs from which we benefit and we are enormously grateful to you and your Committee for your continued support.

As I write this the going throughout the whole of Great Britain is "heavy" and whilst the jockeys are coming back absolutely covered in mud at least the races are being run at a slower pace and as a consequence any falls seem to be less severe. Our fingers are crossed that all of our jockeys have a successful Christmas and New Year racing period.

With our thanks once again.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Hancock
Chief Executive

Majestic Niki Royal in 16-length Towcester romp! (or what Maurice Stringer gets up to on Thursday afternoon's) - To find out read the following report from the Daily Mirror

Towcester, Thursday 31 January - Out of the hundreds of applications we received, members **Maurice Stringer from Swindon**, John Summerfield from London and Lee Emmerson from Edgware were selected to represent the Daily Mirror Punters Club at Towcester Racecourse yesterday. After being greeted by their Club host, our owners enjoyed a four course lunch in the Empress Suite and were met by trainer Jamie Snowden who talked through tactics ahead of the race. Jamie said, 'She has been schooling beautifully so I'm hopeful of a good performance. Towcester is a tough track but she's very strong, today will be interesting.'

After enjoying the first race our trio of owners couldn't wait to head to the paddock to meet debutante eight-year-old Niki Royal and jockey Tom O'Brien, before settling down in the Owners & Trainers stand to watch the 1.50 race. Niki Royal travelled easily up with the leaders from the start, completing her first lap of the track composed and ahead of the field. Jamie commented, 'Her ears are pricked and she looks like she's having fun out there. We've got into a good rhythm, she looks comfortable.'

(picture right - left Niki Royal jumps the last) and right jockey Tom O'Brien



As the French-bred Irish-import kept jumping hurdle after hurdle, jockey Tom O'Brien decided to pick up the pace and from then on it was a glorious walk in the park. The 7-1 shot pulled away to win by a staggering 16 lengths - leaving 12 outclassed rivals in her wake.

After the impressive victory our owners were back in the Winners Enclosure to talk to both trainer and jockey about the race. Tom said, 'She's a decent mare and has excellent potential. 'She got into a fantastic rhythm and kept jumping. I was always going to take my time and she kept creeping forward, I didn't fight it as she felt strong. 'She jumped beautifully and I couldn't have asked for a better ride!'



Having been presented with the winner's prize, Maurice Stringer (*pictured far right in picture to the left*) said, 'I can't get over the value for money offered by the Daily Mirror Punters Club. 'I've been treated to lunch and a spot on the winner's podium. What could be better. This is my second year with the Club and nothing beats this feeling.' When asked about future plans for Niki Royal, Jamie Snowden said, 'We'll look ahead to a mares novice at Bangor or at penalties over hurdles, we'll see. 'The obvious target will be the mares novice hurdle final at Newbury which is a Listed race at the end of March. 'I think we have a very nice versatile horse and I'm looking forward to seeing how she performs.'

Article words and pictures reproduced from Daily Mirror

FOR MORE OF MAURICE'S RACING EXPLOITS SEE HIS REPORT ON PAGE 13

2012 Christmas Racing Quiz – The answers

Only three entries were received for this competition and all three entrants achieved an all correct set of answers. In order to determine the winner of the bottle of Champagne the three names will go into a hat with a draw being made at our quiz night on 18 February

Thank you to those who took the time to enter and also to Phil Evans at the Northern Racing Club for devising the quiz.

The answers were:

- 1 Voler La Vedette
- 2 Denman & Diamond Harry (one point for each correct answer).
- 3 Epsom (Duchess Stand).
- 4 The course had no PA system as a tree was about to fall on the Racetech truck which had to be moved!
- 5 Edward Woodward.
- 6 Davy Jones (The Monkees) and for the bonus point the horse was Digpast.
- 7 Hunt Ball.
- 8 Mahmood Al Zarooni.
- 9 Graham Lee
- 10 Peter Bowen won his third consecutive Topham Chase with *Always Waining*.
- 11 Mick Channon.
- 12 Red – the two feature races were won by *Red Merlin & Red Jazz*.
- 13 First father/son combination as trainer/jockey to win the race.
- 14 22
- 15 The owner's son Nathaniel Philip Rothschild.
- 16 Norway.
- 17 A greys only race.
- 18 Prior to 2012 Cartmel last lost a meeting 2001. The reason for bonus point was the foot and mouth outbreak.

- 19 The Daily Telegraph. (For bonus point John Francome).
- 20 Dvinsky made his 218th start (as an 11yo).
- 21 Three (four including Solemia).
- 22 13.5%.
- 23 La Estrella broke the record for consecutive course wins with his 13th run without defeat at Southwell.
- 24 Kauto Star and for the bonus point Wyn Evans Kauto's most avid fan scored 6 correct answers!

Farewell to Folkestone and Hereford

by Stewart Nash and Robert Watson

The problem with history is that most of the time you don't know what should be experienced and faithfully recorded in print or in pictures until it's too late.

Anyone who has read Chris Pitt's labour of love 'A Long Time Gone' that tells the story of the one hundred or so racecourses who closed their gates in the 20th Century will realise that Chris did a marvellous job unearthing stories about racecourses long vanished.

At a personal level I was conscientiously at school to witness *Anassa* ridden by Des Cullen becoming the last ever winner at Hurst Park in October 1962, too interested in jump racing to give any priority to go racing at Alexandra Park before its demise in September 1970. Similar crystal ball gazing would also have been needed to predict the exact date for the loss of Lanark in 1977 and Stockton in 1981 although both courses had balanced on a particularly thin financial tightrope for some years.

I did however get to Wye in Kent, four times in fact, but still managed to miss out on what was to be the final day, 2 May 1974 by virtue of having opted instead for the inaugural Hunter Chase Evening at Cheltenham. Only the regulars were there for the final day as the decision not to reopen Wye for the 1974/75 season was not taken until late in the summer as a result of the Executive being unable to finance required improvements to the tight little circuit.

We should therefore be grateful for one small mercy in that ARC (the new name for the Arena / Northern Racing merger) had the decency to announce the closure of Folkestone and Hereford at the end of July thereby giving the opportunity for those who wished to experience racing at these circuits before they vanished.

At the time the announcement to close Hereford came as a surprise to me as I thought being situated in a farming area with many locally based trainers and apparently always attracting decent fields. Recently released attendance figures however indicate that average crowds of a just over a thousand were going through the turnstile. I made two visits to pay homage to Hereford. The first at the beginning of September was an opportunity to go whilst the weather was decent just in case the final day fell to the weather and gave me the chance to take dozens of photos. In the event Hereford's final meeting on 16 December went ahead as planned.



Picture: left: David Pipe and jockeys leave the weighing room for the last race at Hereford and a final farewell at the exit gate. (photos on this and following pages courtesy of Robert Watson and Stewart Nash)

Two days later Folkestone held its final meeting. I have long been a fan of Folkestone and in particular the United Hunts (hunter chase) Meeting in May. I managed to get what turned out to be the final flat fixture on 26 September (the final planned day being abandoned due to waterlogging) and also to the three final jump meetings. In reality Folkestone has struggled for years. Opened in March 1898 the founding company went into liquidation just under 12 months later. The Tote Racing Annual for 1935 mentions that the course is poorly supported and the original Levy Board's funding plan in the 1960s proposed closure. Although the course survived these various threats the end has finally come.

I will now hand over to **Robert Watson** to describe his first and final visit to Folkestone along with a number of WBRC members who travelled down by minibus.

Some people said "it's all over". It is now. Folkestone racecourse held its last meeting today (18 December). And I was there to witness the closing of a second track within a few days – Hereford was the warm up act so to speak.

So, it was a first, and last, occasion for this race-goer. Why is that? You may well ask, but the trip from Newbury always seemed to be to a course too far. Three hours in a minibus, each way, is not ideal, and frankly I'm glad it is not to be repeated. Having said that though, Folkestone Racecourse proved most welcoming. Not in the Premier League, nor even of Championship status, but old fashionedly quaint, and I mean that as a compliment. The tree-lined paddock looked attractive, and I would imagine even more so in full summer leaf. A Victorian fish pond of some size was sited nearby, its white railings attesting to a visit by Health & Safety. Beside the main brick building, housing the usual racecourse amenities, sat a self-contained stand. Grandstand may be too misleading a description – more an open shed with steppings. But giving a good view of the course, opposite the winning post, and when full of race-goers, it exuded bonhomie and camaraderie. This brings me to the nature of the Folkestone punter. Locals made up the majority, not surprising when you consider it is too far from London, too far from anywhere really. Calais in France is nearer than the next English town of any size.

So, therein lays Folkestone's problem. Summer attendances may be bolstered by

holidaymakers from along the Kentish coast, but in the other seasons only the locals and the committed make it to the track. Some might say they all need committing for doing so! However, I liked the place. It had character, a good track, and an excellent Thai food outlet. Scanning the racecard I was amazed at how far some of the horses had travelled to get there. There were entries from Newmarket, the Midlands, the West Country and even South Wales. What persuaded the trainers to support this last day at Folkestone, or even any other day for that matter? Certainly not the prize money, nor the kudos of having "Folkestone winner" on your CV. Maybe it was to be part of an historic event, a sad one admittedly, but showing support even at this late stage, perhaps the phoenix might rise from the ashes.

There were seven races to be won. So no surprise in seeing AP McCoy among the jockeys listed, though he drew a blank on the day. But he was only one of a long list of top NH jockeys to turn up. Maybe even for them it was a case of "I was there when ...". Who had the honour of winning the last race? It was more than apt that it went to an eight-year old called QUARTZ DU MONTCEAU. Trained by Diana Grissell in nearby East Sussex, QUARTZ had run the majority of his races at Plumpton, Fontwell, and Folkestone,



winning just the once in 37 attempts. In a pulsating finish he prevailed over MR VALENTINO by just ½ a length.

As the sun set over the giant screen on the course, the scenes in the winner's enclosure were as so many times before. But we all knew, the like wouldn't be seen again.



Pictured previous page top - the parade ring and fishpond and below the grandstand on the final.

Left: A banner is unfurled as the last race takes place and the entrance gates closed for ever.

So which racecourse will close next? Casual conversations with friends at both Hereford and Folkestone came up with a shortlist of 'possibles'. I will certainly not tempt fate by mentioning the most popular nominees in this column, but with 'high-street' collapses seeming to grab the headlines with alarming regularity these days, much as I hate the thought I suspect that there may be others currently balancing on that tightrope and not all will make it to the other side.

POINT TO POINT SEASON UPDATE

by Stewart Nash

When I wrote my point to point report for the Christmas newsletter I was bemoaning the impact on the pre-season programme because of what seemed like never ending rain. The bad news was that the Ratcheugh Racing Club meeting at Alnwick on 16 December was washed away but somehow the Harkaway Club at Chaddesley Corbett (Worcestershire) on 28 December kept its head above water in a way that would have made Noah proud. There was a huge entry for this meeting and with the organisers anticipating having to make multiple divisions on the day the first race time was brought forward to 10.30am. It was a day for mudlarks and with those for whom such conditions don't suit staying away no divisions were needed so that the last race was completed shortly after 1pm. Zara Phillips saddled two runners owned by her mother The Princess Royal and demonstrated an endearingly human side when 'told off' by the paddock steward for having her horse late into the parade ring.

Sadly the South Devon Hunt Club meeting at Ideford Arch on 30 December did not survive and was abandoned for the season. Waterlogging also claimed the South Devon Hunt Meeting on the same course on 27 January and the meeting has been rearranged for 25 May.

Larkhill one course that can be guaranteed to withstand any amount of rain successfully completed its meeting on 6 January where there was a treble for Will Biddick on Certain Flight and Mendip Express in the two divisions of the Club Members' Conditions Race and Champagne Flight in the first division of the Open Maiden. Emily Macmahon also completed a double with Master Medic in the AGA sponsored Ladies' Open and Alskamatic in the Open Maiden (Div 2). It seems that these days one positive is always followed by a negative with Larkhill's Royal Artillery meeting on 26 January lost due to frost along with the whole of the point to point programme for a second week running. The loss of the Royal Artillery brought the number of abandoned meetings this season to five with a further eleven having to be postponed to a later date.

Thankfully the programme for the weekend of 2/3 February was completed in its entirety and fingers are firmly crossed that we may have seen the last of wholesale cancellations.

Local point to points in the next few weeks include:

17 February	Vine and Craven at Barbury Castle
24 February	Countryside Alliance (Wessex) at Badbury Rings
24 February	South East Hunts Club at Charing (Kent)
2 March	Duke of Beaufort's at Didmarton

9 MARCH KINGSTON BLOUNT RACING CLUB at Kingston Blount – featuring the West Berkshire Racing Club and The Racecourse Newbury, Ladies Open Steeplechase.

Course is situated two miles from the M40 Junction off the B4009 towards Chinnor – follow black and gold signs – Car parks £15, £20 and £25 includes all occupants – single person £5 discount of these prices.

For more information on point to pointing the Racing Plus each Saturday has a Pointing Plus section or go to the national website www.pointtopoint.co.uk or for South Midlands area www.pointingsm.co.uk

A FIFTEEN RACE MARATHON at WOLVES WITH FREE ADMISSION *by Maurice Stringer*

The usual post-Christmas boredom had set in by Jan.2nd, so I looked at the forthcoming racing fixtures to see which meeting could interest me over the next few days particularly as the weather had suddenly taken a turn for the better.

I looked on the Racing Post website and noticed Dunstall Park at Wolverhampton were putting on a 15 race card on Friday the 4th, split into an afternoon and evening session, furthermore on checking the Wolverhampton Racecourse website I noticed they were putting on the entire card completely free of charge unless you wanted to go into members which was a fiver (which at Wolves is a complete waste of money).

I set off for Wolves at 8.30 a.m. from my home near Swindon as the first race was at 12 noon. The journey normally takes approx.2 hours but I allowed extra time for the traffic around Birmingham which happened to be non-existent that day as probably most people were having an extended Christmas holiday so I arrived at the course with plenty of time to spare. For anyone who has never been to Dunstall Park it is a very straightforward journey, M5, M6 then M54 which takes you North of the city, then along the A449 turning off about a half mile before Wolverhampton Wanderers football ground at Molineux.

The Racecourse itself is very compact and has within its complex a very pleasant Holiday Inn, which can get quite busy particularly for the floodlit meetings at a weekend. The Paddock is at the back of the grandstand with the winners enclosure at the front, the action on the track can be seen quite clearly at ground level as the track is less than a mile round. One particularly nice feature at the course is the paddock view bar where spectators have a ringside view of the weighing room which is a great spectacle watching the jockeys weighing in and out particularly when the likes of Kirsty Milczarek, Leonna Mayor and Racheal Kneller are in action as they were that day.

The weather that day was almost bordering on the tropical for January at about 12C. I therefore thought that the Kevin Ryan trained Beautiful Day ridden by holdup specialist Jamie Spencer would be a fitting winner of the first, I however fancied Dream Win. Spencer made all on Beautiful Day to win at 8/1, not a good start by me. The fifth race was won by the veteran Kames Park who was having his 115th race and his fourteenth victory.

By the time of the seventh race all was not going well as I had not managed to back a winner, it was however pointed out to me that Ed Dunlop had his only runner at the meeting in this forthcoming race and scanning the form I noticed that this race represented a slight drop in class plus with only five previous races under his belt, was a likely improver, which so it proved where under a very confident ride from Stevie Donohoe the horse, Flying Tempo improved from last at the two furlong pole to get up quite comfortably at the line.

Seven races down with eight to go and a one hour break before the evening session it was now time for some refreshment, the hand carved pork baguette appealed as did a cup of coffee which at £4.60 and £1.50 respectively puts most racecourses to shame.

The evening session started at 4 pm with the racecourse starting to fill up more, there was a total attendance of some 1,200 punters which is large by Wolverhampton standards, the floodlights were now on, which gives the track a completely different complexion and as dusk settled the distant red sky was indeed a shepherd's delight.

Ryan and Spencer were teaming up again in the eighth with Le Toreador who was dropped in class and was my fancy so I backed him to win and had a straight forecast to beat the Jamie Osborne trained former Royal Ascot winner Drawnfromthepast, in a thrilling finish it was Drawnfromthepast who prevailed by a short head from Le Toreador, (my game plan going slightly awry). I was however back on track in the next when I backed both Sohcahtoa and Sherman McCoy and had a reverse forecast on the two who both fought out the finish with the former coming out on top. Sohcahtoa's trainer David

Barron had a quick-fire double in the next with Profile Star who won at the very rewarding odds of 14/1 and paid a staggering £28.70 on the tote. The best bet of the evening for me was in the 6pm in Cockney Dancer the only runner from the Charlie Hills yard and only ride of Robert Winston, however he never got into the race at any stage and it was the David Evans trained Verse of Love who was the 16/1 winner. The penultimate race of the 15 race marathon was at 7pm and this was won by the Jamie Goldstein ridden Sinchiroka who as he passed the finishing post promptly deposited his jockey and did a lap of honour around the track (obviously thrilled in having won his first race in eleven attempts). Sinchiroka was obviously so full of himself that he extended his laps of honour to four, probably prompting his connections to think about a Grand National entry in the future. It was a somewhat relieved Jamie Goldstein (better known for his national hunt exploits) who finally weighed in some fifteen minutes later.

By the time of the last at 7.30 it was survival of the fittest and after another cup of coffee to keep my concentration levels up managed to back the winner Rano Pano who beat the Jamie Spencer ridden odds on favourite Story Writer and had a straight forecast on the two, then it was straight home in the car as soon as the horses passed the finishing post getting home in less than two hours and cashing in my last race winnings on the Tote at Sandown next day.

From the start to finish my day at Wolverhampton was truly a BEAUTIFUL DAY.

BOOKING FORMS

VISIT TO MICK CHANNON'S STABLES – 27 FEBRUARY 2013

I wish to reserve ____ places for the visit to Mick Channon'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 breakfast at The Harrow 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 _____

VISIT TO CHRIS GORDON'S STABLES – 26 MARCH 2013

I wish to reserve ____ places for the visit to Chris Gordon'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 breakfast after the visit - YES /NO

I/we require ____ discount tickets for Fontwell Park races in the afternoon (please state number) – Payment to be made when requested.

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 provide as many means of contact as possible to ensure prompt communication of urgent information