



100/1 winner Homebred Star at Lingfield

The all weather's anniversary!

Lingfield played host to Britain's first all-weather race at 11am on Monday, October 30, 1989. No one could have forecast where this new-fangled branch of the sport would be heading over the next quarter of a century. If various comments made in the media, let alone those emanating from forums and blogs are to be believed, the very mention of all-weather racing conjures up images of low-grade horses, derisory prize-money, tiny crowds, betting markets open to manipulation and races at the mercy of integrity violations. By 2014, all-weather racing has extended to four venues - two operating floodlights - with another night-time attraction coming back into focus at Chelmsford City in January, plus Newcastle and Catterick waiting in the wings. The evidence of the last ten years is straightforward: while the total number of flat fixtures has increased by 86, or 9.7%, since 2004, those on turf have gone down by 17, and the difference is that all-weather racing, accounted for around one-third of this year's scheduled Flat programme. Concentrating criticism solely around prize-money levels is too simplistic, for the growth of all-weather racing is a story of increased opportunities in many areas: An opportunity for racing to generate extra income and an opportunity for owners to see their Flat horses running throughout the year, 20 or more times in some cases, and having the chance to earn prize-money that 25 years ago was non-existent from early-November to late-March. It also offers an opportunity for Flat-only trainers to build a business based on a full 12 months' activity.

And it's an opportunity for jockeys, stable staff and ancillary workers to share in the pursuit of year-round employment. The days when top jockeys would spend their winters in an Alpine ski resort or riding for one of the Indian maharajahs had largely disappeared when all-weather racing was introduced. India did remain a haunt for a few, and the opening of the UAE would soon provide a valuable off-season diversion for several more, but for the best part of five months the majority of journeymen jockeys had nothing competitive to occupy their time. Then along came all-weather racing, which has been the making of some jockeys and the saving of several more. It has certainly helped Richard Hughes to claim his third jockeys' championship. Although the rider has said he would like to see turf racing restored to Kempton, going into the last four weeks of the season over which the championship is decided, a dozen of his winners had come at the all-weather track - including Celestial Bay!



Snapshot

Season's greetings from all 2 legged and 4 legged friends at Homebred Racing!

Sales soar to record

As predicted in our last issue, prices at the bloodstock sales have reached new heights this autumn. Tattersalls three-day run with a catalogue that follows the alphabet, attempts to provide an even spread of quality. By the close on day three another bulging set of figures proved Book 1's appeal to the world's super rich. European record turnover of more than 79,000,000gns was a rise of 13% on 2013.



This yearling by Galileo fetched 2.6 million guineas

Average and median prices have more than doubled in the past five years and the clearance rate rose to 81%. Very rich players are drawn to racing and buying bloodstock, but even those who have set out their stall to play a long game fluctuate their buying habits and the price of 5,000,000gns paid for the Galileo filly Al Naamah at this sale 12 months earlier was never threatened. One of 2,600,000gns - for a Galileo colt - offered by Somerset's Ashbrittle Stud was still a world's best for a yearling in 2014.

Nice idea!

Sir - Thursday's online edition supplied Friday's Cryptic Crossword, thus giving me a head start over my wife, who completes the print version. I wonder if you would consider extending this feature to the racing results?

Stephen McWeeney,
Hartburn, Northumberland

This was a letter in the Daily Telegraph from a hopeful reader...

BHA moves on small fields

After a lengthy period of consultation, the BHA has announced a number of measures to address growing concerns about the competitiveness of British racing and, more specifically, the increasing number of races with small fields. The background to this issue is a simple one. The number of horses in training has been in steady decline since 2008, falling by over 1,600. During the same period, the number of races run has increased by over 650. Over jumps, there will be new restrictions on the number of races programmed and on the Flat, there will be a similar restriction to races programmed from January to March, although there will be an extra nine twilight fixtures in the autumn. The initiative causing greater concern is the removal of races at short notice. A trial will be staged on the all-weather between January and March, which will put races 'at risk' if they fail to attract more than ten entries and cancelling those races if they subsequently attract four or fewer declarations. It will apply to handicaps, claimers and sellers at Class 4 and below, and not extend to Saturdays. If this had been in place in 2014, 11 races would have been cancelled during the 13-week period, which illustrates only the very least attractive races would be lost in this way.

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THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOME BREED RACING

WINTER 2014/15



Delagoa Bay - all the way Kempton winner

Girl power - at the double!

The great run of form by Homebred's mares was continued by Delagoa Bay's Kempton success with an all-the-way win. Poppy had previously put in a couple of excellent runs at Wolverhampton where she was unlucky to be badly hampered on the final bend - but still finished second. But at Kempton, ridden by Martin Dwyer, Poppy made no mistake by making every yard of the running. As fate would have it her intended jockey was held up in traffic but Martin was keen to volunteer his services having previously won on our mare.



Martin Dwyer, winner on Delagoa Bay



Celestial Bay was a spectacular winner under champion jockey Richard Hughes at Kempton too!

Martin said "I've been waiting for this for a year - or more!" The plan was to give Poppy a positive ride - and despite her outside draw Martin managed to steal pole position on the rail and steadily increased the pace until the rest of the runners were soon in trouble. Celestial Bay then kept the Homebred flag flying in a photo finish when stepping up to 12 furlongs for the first time at Lingfield.

Champagne and Black Caviar



Black Caviar and her first foal, a bay filly by Exceed And Excel

Black Caviar remains the queen of the Australian turf. The champion sprinter, unbeaten in 25 starts, including 15 Group 1s, gave birth to her Exceed And Excel filly at a Hunter Valley stud in New South Wales. The newborn is a bay with a small white mark on her forehead and small front white socks. 'Black Caviar was the people's horse and we are looking forward to sharing this filly's journey with the people of Australia,' said her owners. The birth was in New South Wales but Victorians regard Black Caviar as their own, because she was Victorian-bred, trained and ridden, and eight of her owners are Victorian-based. Plus she had 19 of her 25 wins in Victoria.

The Racing Centre opens in Newmarket

Top Flat jockey Ryan Moore opened The Racing Centre in Newmarket in mid-September, which replaces the The New Astley Club.



Ryan Moore opens The Racing Centre with Peter Stanley and Matt Mancini

The Racing Centre will offer a state-of-the-art fitness and rehabilitation service to the industry's workforce, who can use the extensive facilities for a subsidised fee. Over £600,000 was raised to support the revamp. It will also provide a base for the National Association of Stable Staff, Racing Chaplain service, Injured Jockeys Fund Almoners and Racing Welfare officers. Peter Stanley, Chairman of The Racing Centre, said: "This has been an incredibly exciting project and I am absolutely thrilled to have had the support of so many local trainers, breeders and indeed the entire racing community. "The centre is the culmination of a far-fetched plan that we hatched three years ago and I am eternally grateful to everyone who has helped us bring this dream to fruition."

Did you know?

Ascot contributes more prize-money than any other UK racecourse - £245,000 per fixture. Towcester the least at £9,800.



The voice of racing

Sir Peter O'Sullivan, now 96, missed this year's Arc de Triomphe for the first time in 70 years. O'Sullivan had thoroughbred racing just about sewn up. A broadcaster, journalist, punter and owner, who raced two stars in his own colours: Be Friendly and Attivo. Less robust these days - he needs regular blood transfusion 'top-ups' - he is nevertheless the proud owner of an almost perfect memory, which he employs to entertain himself now that he can no longer go racing. His book, *Calling the Horses*, has just been republished to help his charitable trust, which has raised more than £3.5 million, mainly for animal welfare charities. He was the 'Voice of Racing' in a golden age of commentating. Golf's Henry Longhurst, whom he cites as an influence, John Arlott and Dan Maskell were all in that bracket. His own delivery floated over the action, reinforcing its rhythms, teasing out its drama without overstatement. Beyond the human voice itself, it was what the end of a race actually felt like, especially if you were 'on' one of the contenders. "When you get behind a mic you make your own b---- mistakes," he says. "They're down to you. A bit like skiing. I've always thought

that was one of the most gratifying sports because it's entirely down to you. You can't say your horse put a foot in a hole. You either get it right or you get it wrong. When you get it right it's smooth and lovely." "At the same time it's a fraught one. I always knew the only thing you'd be remembered for was the cock-up. And in the end there wasn't a major cock-up. I didn't call the Derby by some other name or anything." Throughout his life he has been propelled by acute curiosity - the need to find out and understand - and an engaging nature that persuaded jockeys, trainers and owners to confide in him. Piggott - unknowable to most on the Turf - is the best example. Asked the question, O'Sullivan immediately sets about explaining Piggott's drive and energy. "I don't think sufficient allowance is made for the fact that here was the most effective athlete in sport operating at 21lb below his normal bodily weight, come hell or high water, in freezing cold, with the wind blowing straight through him." "That helped to make him fairly dismissive of light conversation. He was always on his toes. He was brought up in a way that naturally affected his outlook, in that

his mother was a Rickaby, and she had seen jockeys with plenty of talent and plenty of patronage end up on the floor, because they would order cases of champagne when they won a Classic, and that sort of thing." "She would impress upon Lester the need for frugality, whereas dad was a jump jockey who had this compulsion that if he were coming to the last lying 13th in a 14-runner hurdle race - and 14th was within a length of him - he would put him (the other jockey) through the wing. He had that devilment. And he was terrified that mum would extinguish the fire in the boy. The boy had it naturally - he inherited it from dad." "It's incredible to think that in my long lifetime racing has been absolutely transformed. In my time for example starting stalls didn't exist, the photo-finish didn't exist, nor the film patrol camera. Sponsorship didn't exist. There was no night racing or Sunday racing." Peter O'Sullivan was the BBC's leading horse racing commentator from 1947 to 1997, during which time he described some of the greatest moments in the history of the sport, most notably the Grand National when Red Rum won the race for a record third time. Truly, the voice of racing.

Did you know?

Yorkshire's jump track, Wetherby, has 4 flat fixtures in 2015.

Stars on the comeback trail

Champion chaser Sprinter Sacre, the highest-rated horse in the land, did not make it past the Desert Orchid Chase owing to a heart condition, while Simonsig developed a splint on his near-fore after winning last year's Arkle.



Sprinter Sacre - champion chaser

Sprinter Sacre's aim is to regain his Champion Chase crown, while the King George is on Simonsig's agenda, giving Geraghty a week of Gold Cup clues as 2013 winner Bobs Worth is bound for the Lexus Chase at Leopardstown two days later. Geraghty said: "Bobs Worth won the Lexus, but he did disappoint in the Gold Cup (fifth) after that. It's difficult because the race programme isn't brilliant for him. The ground for the Betfair Chase is generally soft and the track at Haydock is a bit sharp, but top-weight in the Hennessy Gold Cup isn't ideal either". In the Lexus he would meet Ireland's top Gold Cup prospects and Geraghty feels chief among them is the Willie Mullins trained youngster Djakadam and returning Sir Des Champs. He said: "You have to respect the Gold Cup winner Lord Windermere and Sir Des Champs, if he can come back. I don't think we have seen the best of him yet. Djakadam is only five and was travelling well when he fell at Cheltenham. He's definitely a player as well".

Top slot for low cost stallions...



Zebedee - top new stallion

This year's flat season has been an eye-opener in that top honours for new stallions have been won by those from the bargain basement. The top 4 places have all been filled by stallions standing at fees well below some more blue blooded rivals. The grey Zebedee, with 38 winners, has topped the list mainly through the exploits of his top juvenile Ivawood.

Did you know?

Australia, the brilliant son of Galileo and Ouija board who completed the Epsom/Irish Derby double - has retired to Coolmore Stud.

A day in the life of a valet



Chris Maude, Valet



Repeat prescription?

Dr Richard Newland's ambition is to win back-to-back Grand Nationals with Pineau De Re - that wouldn't be bad going for a 12-horse trainer who only took out his professional licence seven years ago. Someone at the races said recently that 'you can win a Gold Cup and a Champion Hurdle but you'll always be the Grand National-winning trainer'. The National does seem to transcend any other race and when you consider 600 million people watch it there must be some who know nothing about racing but have heard of the Grand National. "I am always very happy to look for new owners and to improve the quality of the yard. We may be expanding, but only on a very small scale. I work full-time and am Chief Executive of a growing business, which takes up a lot

of my time. I enjoy the stable at this level with 12 horses; it's manageable with a small team of people doing all the work. As soon as it becomes 25-30 horses in training it will be too much with my other work. Pineau De Re took the National extremely well. Afterwards, when I was parading him before the Bet365 Gold Cup at Sandown, he was bouncing. He could have run in the race without a penalty and hosed up, he was in such good form. He's had a nice long break and did so well out in the field he was getting fatter and fatter. He's been doing road work for over two months and the plan is to have him in top shape for another crack at the National. He'll go handicap hurdling and hopefully run in the Pertemps Final like he did last year, and then Aintree.

These older horses can go wrong very easily, so my job is to deliver him there for that one big day. We have a bit of a joke because when the horses walk through the door here I say: "Welcome to holiday camp, lads!" And when they're not doing very well we have a word in their ear: "Listen lad, buck your ideas up otherwise you're going back to a proper yard!" We're very small with just 12 horses at a time based at the house, but we rotate them and have a total of 25 around the place. The 12 in training are turned out in paddocks all day long as soon as they've completed their interval training, which totals three miles a day. Our horses spend at least eight hours a day walking round the fields - we call it 'free taining' and I'm sure it's key to our success".

Mine is the only firm of valets that does both codes; among my jump jockeys are AP McCoy, Richard Johnson, Sam Twiston-Davies, Nick Schofield and Daryl Jacob; on the Flat, Frankie Dettori, Jamie Spencer, Adam Kirby and Joseph O'Brien are on my list. Breakfast is usually Costa coffee and a croissant in a garage on the way to the races, followed by a couple of cigarettes. The aim is to arrive at the course four hours before the first race with all the saddles, breeches, back pads etc. Half past ten is a crucial time when we get the runners for the next two days. That's when I do all the planning for where the gear has to go the next day and

who travels to which meeting and in which van. I have five people working for me, and four vans. For lunch I snatch a sandwich in the jockeys' room, where the food is usually very good. I was 9st 10lb when I retired from riding and shot straight up to 12st 4lb. Now I'm normally about 11st 7lb, though when I came back from riding in the Mongol Derby in August I was 10st 7lb after surviving eight days on sour Yak's milk and lumps of goat fat! The time we leave the racecourse depends entirely on the weather. If it has been dry it takes about an hour to clean all the gear, pack it into the relevant bags and

hopefully into the right vans for the next day. If it's been a filthy, muddy day it could take us two hours to get cleaned up. We soap all the leather and clean all the boots on arrival at the next meeting. My holiday is ski-ing with a bunch of retired jump jockeys. I'll try and steal a day's hunting with the North Cotswold and love watching rugby on TV. Occasionally I might even make it to Gloucester Rugby Club to see some live action. For my evening meal I'll cook something easy like pasta with a huge salad and a large glass of wine. I fall into bed between half nine and ten, though after night racing it's around midnight.