

Course factfile: Wincanton

This jumps only track is essentially flat, with undulations, around a rectangle of 1½ miles with a run in of 200 yards. Races are usually run at a furious pace making it difficult to ride a tactical race.

Location: London 119, Bristol 37, Taunton 34 and Yeovil 16 miles

Telephone: (01963)32344

Trains: Waterloo to Gillingham

By Road: via M4, M3, A303 and A359

Celebrations: Clogs, 95 High St, Burton for Dutch Indonesian cuisine. Tel (01749) 812255

Le Radier at Donhead St Andrews. Tel (01747) 88324 for French food.



Will any of their first foals prove to be any good?

Which of the new boys on the block will produce the goods?

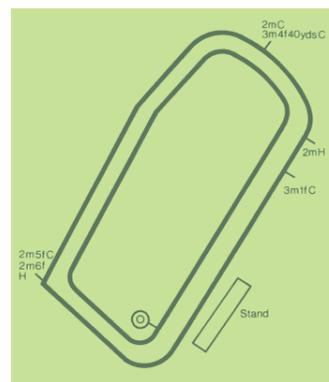
As is usual at this time of year, a number of last season's top flat horses have now moved on to join the existing band of stallions at stud. Some can boast top notch form and some top notch pedigrees - but only a few can claim to have both. Since the whole racing industry is founded upon hope over reality new stallions are sure to be over subscribed by breeders hoping that they get a bargain before he emerges as a 'galactico'.

Ireland at a fee of £40,000. Other well known names to join the ranks are Araafa (£15,000), Hurricane Run (£30,000), Iceman (£5,000), Librettist (£10,000), Norse Dancer (£4,000) and Shirocco (£10,000). Of the 30 or so new recruits many will slip into oblivion and it will not be until 2009 until we discover which, if any, are worthwhile stallions when their first runners appear as two year olds. One from the relative bargain



These freshman sires include the brilliant George Washington who's scintillating win in the 2000 Guineas he was never quite able to match again. He will stand at Coolmore in

basement, at a fee of £3,000, and likely to make an early impression is Galeota who's pedigree is all speed so he should produce some sharp juveniles. Watch this space!



Did you know?

Apprentice jockeys are allowed to claim a weight allowance on the following scale:

- 7lbs until riding 20 winners
 - 5lbs until riding 50 winners
 - 3lbs until riding 95 winners
- Apprentices automatically lose their status once reaching their 25th birthday

It's not cricket!

Racing was able to add an amusing footnote to England's sad display in the second test in Australia. On the same day that the the England captain's team slumped to defeat so too did his horse, Flintoff, at Fontwell Park where he had been expected to win. And just to add insult to injury, Warne's Way won earlier on the card having soon got his rivals in a bit of a spin!

WINNING P^{HOMEBRED}ST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

1/2007

Know your rules: Prizemoney

What happens to the prizemoney intended for all the placed horses in the event of a single finisher - or the others being disqualified for taking the wrong course, for instance? Rule 192 states: 'If a runner has walked over, or no horse has been placed second or in any lower place, the prizemoney shall all be paid to those connected with the winner. Prize monies specifically given for the trainer, rider, breeder or stable for horses finishing second or in any lower place, shall not be given at all'.

The trophy cost is actually deducted from prizemoney!



Snapshot

Our farrier, Oliver, trimming Pharly Green's feet whilst Divine White looks on!



Iffraaj (above) never won at the highest level but his pedigree will compensate. Araafa (left) beat George Washington in the Irish 2000 and retires to the Plantation Stud in Neumarket

Racecourses expected to improve results!

The Gold Standard award was introduced by the Racehorse Owners Association with the aim of acknowledging those racecourses which not only meet certain criteria of facilities for owners, but also ensure the needs of trainers and stable staff are properly catered for too. All racecourses were assessed in 2005, and asked for a wide range of information on their facilities for owners and trainers, their horses and stable staff. The results were analysed by the ROA's Gold Standard committee, taking into account the racecourse executive's and sponsorship contributions to prize-money which is expected to be at least 15% of the total prize-money.



Which course gets your vote?

Those racecourses which achieved the required criteria on paper were then shortlisted and visited by one of the Council members acting as a 'mystery owner'.



The results of these visits were considered by the Gold Standard committee, with feedback relayed to the racecourse executive, highlighting any areas where it was felt there was room for improvement. Those racecourses who responded positively and met the exacting standards were given a Gold Standard award. By the end of August 2006, Wincanton, Haydock and Beverley had been presented with Gold Standard Awards. Most recent course to receive the award is Newbury - making it a select band of just 4 tracks.

A right Royal row!

Ascot is set to announce its much awaited solution to viewing problems at the course, and it's forecast that the most likely change will see the famous lawn ripped up and its gradient made steeper.



Project director David Trench who walked out on Ascot's £200 million rebuilding scheme, described reports that the track would have to be lowered to improve viewing as "improbable". 3D models of sight lines are being produced and solutions could also include raising the seating of the concourse. The most likely change, will be to rip up the lawn and steepen its gradient from 1:20 to 1:10. The reason for the gentle slope was originally to allow wheelchairs to move around, as required by disability access laws.

Let us have your ideas and views...



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Did you know?

Conditional jockeys riding over jumps are able to claim a weight allowance in the following scale:

7lbs until winning 15 races

5lbs until winning 35 races

3lbs until winning 65 races

Conditional jockeys automatically lose their status once reaching their 26th birthday

Flashback to 1957

It's fifty years since he cruised past Ballymoss about a furlong from home in the Derby and went on to win by a length and a half. Crepello showed himself to be one of the most impressive Derby winners since the war, especially considering what a great horse Ballymoss subsequently proved himself to be. Crepello's victory like his earlier success in the Two Thousand Guineas - was a tribute to the riding skills of Lester Piggott and the training skills of Noel Murless, for despite being a big, strong horse, he was choosy about the ground he ran on and there was always a niggler of doubt in Murless's mind about his legs. It was with this background (not all public knowledge) and the vivid memory of the style of his Derby win in mind that he was prepared for his next race, the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, surrounded by enormous public anticipation. Rain during the days before the race had softened the going at Ascot but despite misgivings Murless announced on the morning of the race that Crepello would run only to withdraw him at the last minute causing a near riot by ante-post punters.



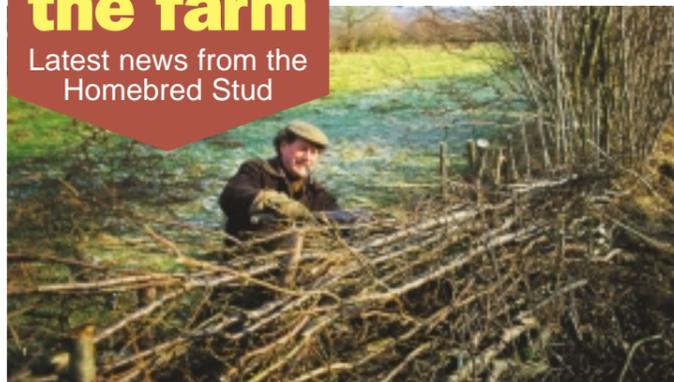
The favourite, Crepello, taken a few days before becoming a Superstar in the 1957 Derby

Update on 48hr declarations

Although racing's regulators plan to review the new 48 hour declaration system, syndicate boss Julian Wilson gives it as one of his reasons for pulling out of racehorse ownership in 2007. He says: "My views on 48 hour declaration are well known - 858 non runners in August alone told its own story". It's certainly a frustration with so many horses being prevented from running by ballot that a system of reserves, similar to that in Ireland, may need to be introduced to ensure that all available opportunities are always taken up.

Down on the farm

Latest news from the Homebred Stud



Maintaining hedges, fences and ditches at the Homebred Stud is a bit like painting the Forth Bridge - it's a job that's never finished. This is the time of year when we've been busy restoring old hedges by 'laying' them. This involves partially cutting overgrown elements close to the ground, bending them horizontally and weaving them between upright 'pleaches' to create a living

screen which will burst into life in the spring. This process is at last complete and during the years here over 6km of hedges have now been restored. Hedges are ideal for horses for the shelter they provide and because they are much safer than wire fences. We like them for their amenity and wildlife value too and a well maintained hedge will outlive a fence many times over.

Sprinter Les Arcs gives hope to us all...

Around this time last year an unremarkable bay horse was plying his lowly handicap mark around the all weather tracks. But by the end of summer, Les Arcs had improved beyond all recognition to become a Group 1 winner when beating Europe's best in the July Cup at Newmarket. Along the way he'd previously also won the Golden Jubilee Stakes. His pedigree never suggested he would ever be a speedball - so his sudden emergence gives hope to all owners - everywhere!



Les Arcs wins the July Cup

Memorable Quotes

"It proves that light travels faster than sound - jockeys appear bright until you hear their post race excuses!"

Anonymous Trainer

Homebred campaign pays off

Although run on the level, NH flat races are statistically the most dangerous for horses. So after injury to Sweep Home and Home Rule Homebred Racing has been campaigning to get racecourses to always run their bumper races first on the card. We want young horses, often setting foot on a track for the first time, to run on optimum going before it's churned up by other races. NH flat races are also usually the biggest field of the day requiring a full complement of jockeys to be available before their numbers are depleted by possible injury in later races over jumps. Newcastle has now shown the way by running their bumper first on the card - and an added bonus was that the Homebred website tipped the winner Wipe Your Eye. So congratulations to Newcastle - and let's now hope that other jump courses follow their shining example.

Snapshot

Sweep Home, who'll soon be back with Peter Bowen, sets off on roadwork around the local lanes ridden by Sheena Hill



Did you know?

Irrespective of the actual day or month it's born all racehorses are deemed to have a single birthdate of 1st January in the year of foaling.



New rules are to be brought in restricting the number of rides jockeys can take in the busy summer period. The Jockey's Association balloted their members of whom 62% voted in favour of a compulsory rule restricting them to ride at only one race meeting per day. But others strongly felt that this was imposing a restriction on their earnings. So a compromise has been agreed limiting jockeys to ride at a maximum of 10 meetings within a 7 day period for a 4 month trial starting in April. The ever expanding fixture list, which now includes earlier starts and evening racing in

addition to traditional afternoon meetings, has put huge pressure on jockeys who many of whom also have to ride work at crack of dawn. The BHB has been concerned that this has all been leading towards potential accidents on the track as well as on the roads. Although it sounds complex to police the BHB's computer software will simply prevent jockeys being booked at additional meetings. This new ruling will also be good news for the lower ranks and apprentice jockeys who will inevitably benefit from greater opportunity. So stand by for some names you've never seen before in the racecard!

Snapshot

The green, green grass of home being appreciated by Pharly Green (L) and Divine White (R) on a well earned break at Homebred's West Wales stud.



Can you tell what it is, yet?

Pinny, the filly companion to our Hamas yearling Sam, has hidden talents. These graphics suddenly appeared on a small (5ft x 3ft) section of wall in her box. The medium is definitely mud which looks to have been applied by brush! We can't believe she's created it with her feet. Her tail perhaps? In Rolf Harris's immortal words "Can you see what it is yet?" Answers on a postcard please.