

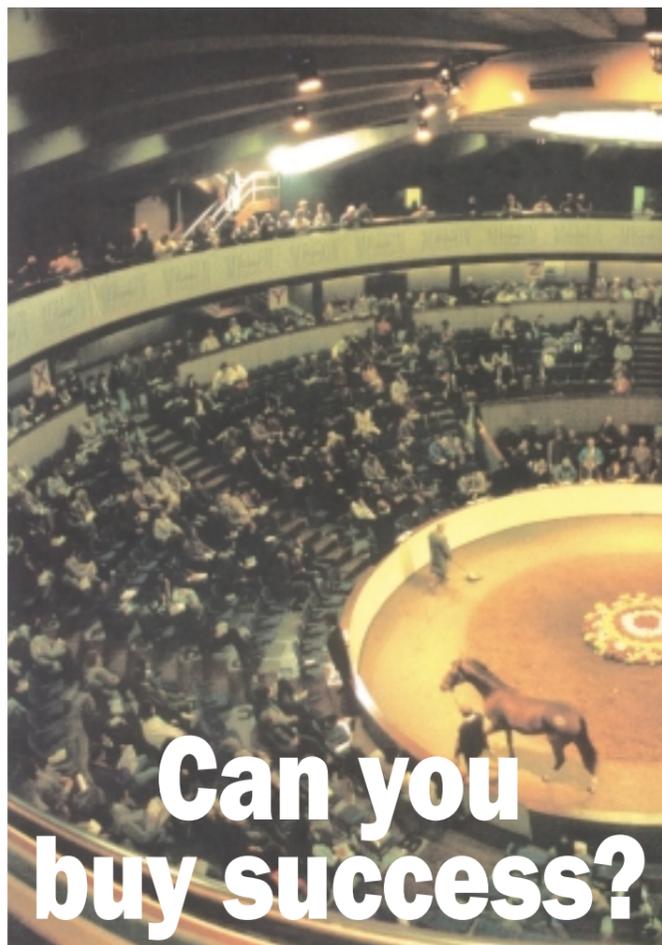
## Why the bookies always win...

Betting is often said to be a mugs' game, this is because in the long run the intelligent bookmaker is bound to win over the average punter, as he is controlling the maths and constructs the odds (or the 'book') for each race in such a way that, in the long term, he will make a profit. He does this by dictating that the total of the percentage probability chances for each race exceeds 100 per cent. Mathematically the chances must come to exactly 100 per cent if all the true probabilities are added up. A book in which the probability chances add up to over 100 per cent is described as 'over-round'. Very occasionally the punter can beat the bookies by choosing the lowest price for each horse from a variety of bookmakers whose prices vary considerably, but this takes great alertness and remarkable powers of mental arithmetic. Bookmakers do not of course win on every race, but by maintaining the over-roundness of the book they are ensuring that in the long term they will come out on top, for favourites win only around two out of every 5 races,

prices on the morning of the race and punters may back at the prices - subject to fluctuations dictated by weight of money - until a proper book is formed before the race itself. (A 'steamer' is a horse which has been heavily backed off course before the actual pre-race market has been formed.) A form expert in the bookmakers' employ constructs the 'tissued' forecast of how the betting on the race will open on the course. The course bookmakers (whose activities dictate the officially returning starting price) will probably bet to these prices. Thereafter each course bookmaker will adjust his prices according to public demand and to how he sees the probable outcome of the race. If he takes a large amount of money for one horse he will shorten its price in order to dissuade other punters from backing it. If he thinks that a horse will not win he will lengthen the price in order to encourage punters to back it and swell his coffers. Throughout all these transactions he will be aware of his own liabilities, and if his potential payout on one horse is more than he can comfortably cover from losing bets on the other horses he may decide to 'lay off' by passing on some of the money he has taken on that horse on to other bookmakers. That is, by betting on that horse himself. Course bookies communicate such bets among themselves by



means of the sign language of 'tic tac', now so familiar to Channel Four viewers through the antics of John McCririck. As the on-course betting market determines the returned starting prices, it is important that money wagered off course in betting shops and through credit accounts with the large bookmakers can be transferred to the course in order for that weight of money to be reflected in the betting market. Representatives of the off-course bookmakers will bet on the course to put their off-course money into the market.



A check on the performances of the highest priced youngsters at the bloodstock sales makes fascinating reading. Taking the ten most expensive purchases from Tattersalls, Newmarket and the Doncaster breeze up sales shows that the more you pay actually lessens the chance of buying a winner! Only 2 of Tattersalls top 10 managed a win whilst the other 8 never even reached the frame. The top priced winner fetched 625,000 guineas and the other was sold for 230,000 guineas. Combined spend on the the other 8 unplaced also-rans was over £2 million.

**Bargain basement!**  
The 2000 Guineas provided a breath of fresh air in confirming that success really can't always be bought. The first 3 home in this season's classic were bought at auction for a combined total of less than £70,000 - petty cash compared to the millions laid out by the big guns. And on the back of victories last season by Speciosa and Sir Percy (both also cheap buys) there's hope that the wheel of fortune has now turned for the smaller owner and that more successful but unfashionable bloodlines will come to the fore.

But purchases at the the less fashionable, and much less expensive, Doncaster Breeze Up fared a lot better. Their top 10 included 5 individual winners - all at a fraction of the cost of Tattersall's purchases - with prices ranging from 110,000 guineas to 60,000 guineas. But still a lot of money to which some £25,000 needs to be added to cover training costs. As these statistics show picking winners is a bit hit and miss even for experienced professionals and bears little relation to the size of your wallet!

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and in each race the bookmaker will try to contrive the odds so that he has to pay out less than he takes in. A set of odds in which the agreed percentages total under 100 is described as 'overbroke'. So how does a book work? For big races the betting will begin weeks even months in advance; for other key races the major bookmakers advertise

## Did you know?

The longest priced winner ever in Britain was Equinoctial at 250/1, winner of the Grants Whisky Novices Hurdle at Kelso on 21 November 1990. It's a record we'd like to break!

# WINNING POST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

JUNE/2007



Divine White is already back in work

## Memorable Quotes

Of all the Lester Piggott stories, one which combines his deafness and his carefulness with money concerns a stable lad who was still waiting for the customary 'present' from Piggott after leading up a winner he had ridden. After waiting some weeks he encountered the jockey at the racecourse.

**"How about a pound for that winner I did you?"**

"Uhhh?"

**"How about a pound for that winner I did you?"**

"I can't hear you - that's my bad ear. Try the other side."

The stable lad goes to the other ear.

**"How about a couple of quid for that winner I did you?"**

"Still can't hear you. Go back to the one-pound ear!"

## Recovery mission

Divine White has undergone laser treatment to her soft palate and is already back in work. Peter had felt sure that there was a minor physical reason for her working so brilliantly at home but seeming to run out of petrol when put under pressure on the track.

Specialist equine vet John Edwards gave her a thorough examination under anaesthetic after her disappointing run at Catterick and confirmed that it was likely that her soft palate was obstructing her airway when she comes under pressure. He was able to perform laser treatment whilst Annie was sedated and is hopeful that this will result in a significant improvement in her performance. Peter has recently given another horse in the yard, Iron Man, the same treatment. He had also frequently appeared to be cruising in his races only to be repeatedly run out of it in the closing stages. Iron Man was a comfortable



Peter Bowen says "I'm very hopeful we've solved the problem"

winner of his first race back since his treatment. We are hopeful that Divine White will also be back on the track before the end of June.

## Did you know?

Europe's winning most trainer is Jean-Claude Roget from the French provinces whose 4,184 winners even eclipse the success of Martin Pipe.

## In foal... at last!

We are pleased to report that Snowy Mantle, dam of Divine White and Polarity, is in foal to Group 1 stallion Septieme Ciel. She failed to take last year but is the first mare confirmed in foal to Dairy House's stallion this year. Septieme Ciel was a top class miler winning 5 Group races including the Group 1 Prix de la Foret and is the product of two of the best racehorses of the era - by Seattle Slew out of Maximova. Both were multiple



Septieme Ciel

Group 1 winners and since Septieme Ciel has already sired Group 1 winners himself we're hopeful that Snowy Mantle's foal will also prove to have an engine!

**Open Day**  
**Sun 15 July**  
Don't miss it





A horse which consumes its food enthusiastically and shows the benefit is known as a 'good doer', and any horse's intake of food is carefully adjusted according to its individual needs and tastes and to its racing and training programme. The traditional basic diet is corn - oats (too much of which can get a horse over-excited) and bran (what is left when the flour is milled from wheat) - and hay. Many trainers now feed their charges on 'racehorse cubes', manufactured compounds which ensure a balanced diet of high-quality feed. The drawback of cubes is that they can be contaminated by prohibited substances, and the trainer feeding cubes has less control over exactly what he is giving his horses. Other common foodstuffs are dried sugar beet, maize, boiled barley, linseed, molasses, and carrots and apples. A bran mash is a sort of porridge in which the bran is supplemented by oats, treacle or other ingredients to make it more appetizing, and perhaps some Epsom salts as a laxative. Other additives are more bracing.

Arkle's basic feed when in training was a mixture of mash and dry oats mixed up with six eggs and supplemented by two bottles of Guinness, and Mandarin enjoyed a Mackeson. On his retirement he had two bottles a day delivered to him from the local pub in Lambourn, courtesy of the late Colonel Bill Whitbread, whose company sponsors the famous handicap chase in which he was thrice runner-up. But unsupervised eating can cause problems: the good hurdler No Bombs once filched his lad's Mars Bar, ingesting a prohibited substance which the 'work, rest and play' delicacy contains. He ran, won, failed the dope test and so lost the race. There are also, in horses as in humans, fussy eaters: when the yearling Nijinsky arrived at Ballydoyle from Canada, Vincent O'Brien discovered that he would not eat oats. So O'Brien had to send across the Atlantic for supplies of the horse nuts which the pernickety young horse was used to. By the time the nuts arrived in County Tipperary, Nijinsky had taken to eating the oats!

## Snapshot

Our yearling filly Polarity with her companion Pinny tuck into spring grass



## Did you know?

New jump jockey sensation Tom O'Brien is trainer Aiden O'Brien's nephew

## Did you spot them?



Spotting the identity of Gerry Enright (1) and Richard Rowe (3) proved no problem for most - but a much younger and slimline Paul Nicholls (2) fooled

all except Neil Stoner from Worthing. Congratulations Neil - a copy of Superform's latest annual will soon be on its way to you!

# All dressed up and ready to go



More work for the valet!

The jockey's valet is one of the most important backroom boys of racing. He transports most of the equipment belonging to the jockeys from meeting to meeting and is paid 10 per cent of their riding fees for that meeting. He prepares their equipment (supplemented by the owner's colours, which are brought to the racecourse by the trainer) in the changing room before each race, bearing in mind what equipment each jockey will require for each

race (what size saddle, for instance) and how much weight will need to be put into the weight-cloth. He will assist the jockeys in dressing, making running repairs, supplying extra equipment which a young or forgetful jockey might not have, and generally ensuring that events in the jockeys' changing room a scene of sometimes manic activity into which even trainers may not venture - run smoothly. Most top jockeys have all their equipment

with their valet, keeping with them only their own helmets and back protectors; at the end of the day's racing the valet is responsible for cleaning it. The next day, whether at the same course or at some other venue, it will be all ready and waiting for them when they arrive in the changing room. One of the most famous valets has been John Buckingham who won the Grand National on legendary outsider Foinavon.

# Course factfile: Beverley

**Location:** North of Hull  
**Telephone:** 01482 867488  
**Website:** www.beverley-racecourse.co.uk

Beverley is a flat only race track where there's been a big investment in recent years resulting in a very well appointed and maintained facilities. It's a small and very friendly racecourse set in pretty Yorkshire countryside north of the Humber.

Beverley is a right-handed track with gentle undulations, about thirteen furlongs round. The straight five-furlong course rises from start



to finish and provides a demanding test, especially in soft going.

**Celebrations:** Pipe and Glass at South Dalton - a tucked away dining pub in a pretty tiled and bow windowed pub with low

beams and high backed settles. Good choice of award winning foods and wines. Booking essential (01430) 810246

**Wellington** at Lund serves good food in a bustling pub where tables can't be reserved (01377 217294)

## Did you know?

The point-to-pointer Rossa Prince has the unusual distinction of failing to win a walkover. At Tweseldown in May 1990 he bolted while being saddled for his solitary effort and could not be retrieved by the time he was due in the parade ring, so was disqualified. This feat was matched in April 1994 by another point-to-pointer, Mister Chippendale, disqualified after a walkover when his rider failed to weigh in!

# Cleaning up racing's image

Racing's regulatory authorities have always battled against a public perception that the sport is corrupt. Up until recent times proving allegations of corrupt practices has been extremely difficult for them. A number of previous investigations and cases have fallen apart because of the difficulty of proving charges. However, with the memorandum of understanding initiated by the betting exchange Betfair, they have a new set of tools for investigation. This, plus wall-to-wall television coverage, put them in a strong position. Betfair, and others involved the betting industry, agreed to work closely with racing's authorities when they suspected unusual betting patterns and, with sophisticated computer software at their disposal, these patterns were much easier to uncover. A paper trail is now available and, with the authorities being given new powers to seize telephone records, the chances of success in the investigations increased markedly. The first and highest profile case was the pending prosecution by



Kieren Fallon in happier times on our winner Welsh Assembly

the City of London Police against jockeys Kieren Fallon, Fergal Lynch and Darren Williams, trainer Alan Berry and a number of unlicensed people. The case is due to be heard at The Old Bailey in September. All deny any wrongdoing. Further cases have followed and, to date, 14 jockeys, one trainer and numerous unlicensed individuals have been under investigation. But the flipside to all this is whether racing's name isn't just being dragged through the mud due to often fairly minor transgressions of some very fuzzy rules. Jockeys, it seems, shouldn't pass information to anyone -

something of a concern if owners are also to be kept in the dark about tactics and potential threats to your own runner! And it seems fine for horses, with a considerable degree of premeditation, to be run over unsuitable trips, using the wrong tactics on ground known not to be ideal. The very public crusade to 'protect racing's integrity' is laudable but in danger of scoring an own goal if the interests of gambling continue to be put before those of horses owners and trainers. We've endured seeing our most promising youngster Sweep Home driven out in only his second start to 'obtain the best possible placing'

when clearly injured. The interest of punters was secured by him achieving second place which ensured racing's integrity, unlike our lovely horse, remained intact. No one gave a thought to enquire how our horse's, or our own interests, had been compromised by rules designed to put betting first. It's an enigma that racing still wants to cuddle up to an industry it hopes will be its salvation, but which continues to bleed it dry, whilst it remains aloof to those who really care - including the animal welfare lobby which is a far greater threat to undermining racing's long term integrity.

## Snapshot

Divine White, ridden by Ashley Hamblett, makes her 2007 seasonal debut for new trainer Peter Bowen.

