

Spotting the early starters...



Farrh - a chance to compete with Frankel - again! - but as a stallion

At this time of year it's always interesting to see which of the 40+ new stallions will make an impact on the track with their first two-year-olds in the up coming 2017 season. Frankel's first runners were obviously keenly awaited last year - but unfortunately Europe's most expensive stallion was trumped by Sir Prancealot from the bargain basement - standing at one thirtieth of the price! In 2017 Camelot, Dawn Approach and Farrh are likely to provide the most eagerly anticipated runners, whilst mid-fee stallions

will be well represented by Lethal Force and Havana Gold. Our own interests will focus on Whitsbury Stud's Swiss Spirit for whom we already have a nomination for our own mares. Farrh repeatedly had to play second fiddle to Frankel on the racetrack - but maybe that flags him as a likely contender as a new stallion in 2017. Camelot's progeny are likely to need time - as may well be the case for Intello who stands at a lofty £25,000 fee. It'll also be interesting to see how the ill-fated Society Rock's youngsters shape up.

But in the final analysis our three new stallions to follow are: Lethal Force, Intello and Swiss Spirit ...and fingers well crossed that Swiss Spirit may just emerge as the leader!

Did you know?

Champion Jim Crowley replaces Paul Hanagan as Hamdan Al Maktoum's first jockey.

Racing's funding coming into focus



The importance of media rights has come into focus as they become vital to racing's finances. This primarily revolves around payment for the racing coverage relied upon by bookies and provided by the specialist racing channels. The plan has been that a fixed percentage of media rights revenue should be channelled into prize money for the races being broadcast. But, as always, racing's fragmented interests (owners, racecourses, broadcasters and bookmakers) all take opposing views. Lack of an overall plan for racing is well illustrated by the BHA's current drive to increase ownership whilst the UK's breeding industry has plummeted to new depths of production - there simply are not enough home-grown youngsters being produced to meet any increased demand.

What are the media rights worth?

Paying for the racing product is controversial enough - far more difficult is to put a price on it! However there have been two professional attempts to determine the value - one by Deloitte who produced a report 'The economic impact of British Racing' in 2013 and 'The Analysis of the funding of horse racing' by Frontier Economics in 2016. There's no question that the consumption of racing coverage on TVs, online and via mobiles has grown significantly since Deloitte's valuation of £100 million per annum in 2013. The 2016 report, requested by government, suggests that the value of racing's media rights had risen to £127.9 million by 2014.

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THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

SPRING 2017

Farewell to a legend...



Sadly, Brian Fletcher died recently. Living nearby to the Homebred Stud, he was a good and enthusiastic friend to Homebred Racing and was always keen to cast an eye over our youngsters as he really loved horses. Brian was an Aintree legend and won his first Grand National at the age of just 19 when partnering Red Alligator to victory. But he is probably best remembered for his 3 National rides on the unforgettable Red Rum providing two further victories and a second place making him the most successful Grand National jockey of the 20th Century.

Brian's record, which also includes another 3rd place, is all the more remarkable since his career was cut drastically short at the age of 26 when a terrible fall fractured his skull. Brian was always renowned for having 'great hands' and a unique ability to present a horse at a fence. His skill over the Aintree fences, before they were modified to be safer, established a record never likely to be equalled. His love for horses was the reason why he lost the ride on Red Rum, which was so devastating for him, simply because he voiced his opinion that he knew the great horse needed a rest and connections were being greedy to keep running. Being a quiet man and rather shy, Brian never pushed himself forward and as a result has never really received the recognition his great skill and unique record deserves. Those interested in racing should celebrate Brian as one of the greatest.



Brian and Red Rum enter Aintree's winner's enclosure



Brian and Red Rum



At Homebred with Gerry Enright



Our new standard bearer

Now that Celestial Bay and Delagoa Bay are heading off to stud, we have a two-year-old grey filly mare out of a prolific black type female line to carry our colours in 2017/18. We are offering the opportunity to be involved in a filly of great potential and with a really exceptional pedigree, who is the great granddaughter of the legendary Time Charter, out of a winning mare who finished 2nd in the Group 1 Prix de Diane. This filly's sire, Mastercraftsman, was a dual Group 1 winner for Aiden O'Brien amassing over £1million in prizemoney and who has already produced 5 individual Group 1 winners including The Grey Gatsby and Kingston Hill. Her great grandmother, Time Charter, was a four time Group 1 winner being Champion mare of 1983 including victories in The Dubai Champion Stakes, The Coronation Cup, The King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes and The Oaks, as well as finishing 2nd in the 1000

Guineas. This is a well-made, attractive and scopey filly already in training with Sylvester Kirk in Upper Lambourn for her 2-y-o campaign, but is likely to be suited to middle distances in due course. Sylvester says "She's got a wonderful pedigree and is a lovely type who's done nothing but improve since she arrived here - she has the potential to be something special." The stable's apprentice jockey Mitch Godwin said "She gives me a great feel and is really exciting!" Fingers crossed that Sylvester can maintain his winning ways for Homebred Racing!

Did you know?

Trainer Roger Varian is moving from his current yard to take up Clive Brittain's Carlberg Stables.

Tom Jones at Sandown Park



Improving the racing product?

Many purists shudder at the prospect of race meetings morphing into pop concerts! But the reality is that music featuring pop personalities has driven significant new income into racecourse coffers. Tom Jones and Olly Murs have been recent headliners at courses from Sandown to Bath (featuring the Wurzels on their 'Cider Night'!) and from Chelmsford City to York. Although music has proven a big summer attraction, during the darker months fireworks have now featured - although the mix of fireworks and flighty racehorses is something of a concern!



Morocco - hoping to attract raiders from the UK

Morocco now on course

Improvements continue to be made to the country's infrastructure as Morocco maintains its mission to become acknowledged as a major racing nation. The latest development is the building of a training centre at Bouznika, halfway between and within a brief drive of the cities of Casablanca and Rabat. Both are home to racecourses, although Rabat's will shortly close down to allow its grandstand to be rebuilt. Two circular sand gallops and stables for over 300 horses have been constructed at the new centre, which is just off the main Casablanca-Rabat highway. It also adjoins the recently refurbished National Stud of Bouznika, home to eight thoroughbred stallions including two big players from Royal Ascot 2012 in Energizer (winner of the Tercentenary Stakes) and Hermival (runner-up in the St James's Palace Stakes), and is little more than a mile away from Bouznika Beach and the North Atlantic Ocean. Yet to be opened to local trainers, it was used for the first time to house the visiting horses contesting Casablanca's International meeting on November 19. No Brits were among the seven foreign raiders for its three main races, which were all run on a sand surface and boasted combined prize-money of 2.5 million dirhams (£171,116). But plans are afoot to organise air travel to next year's renewal, so British

involvement in future is a distinct possibility. In its absence, the overseas trainer to follow was the Spaniard Ana Imaz who has already plundered this fixture on three occasions, and registered her fourth and fifth victories when Xiuni won the Grand Prix des Eleveurs (Oaks) and Intaglio held of the French hope, Malte Brun, in the Grand Prix des Proprietaires (Derby). But Imaz had to give best to the home team in the showpiece event, the mile and a half £82,136 Grand Prix de Sa Majeste Le Roi Mohammed VI, in which Striving proved a length too strong for his fellow German-bred Karltheodor.

Who rules the roost?

There's been something odd happening at the Homebred Stud. During winter we rug up all the horses so that they can remain out (much healthier) but all have access to a barn with ad lib hay if the weather gets rough. At the back of the house we built a new stone barn - in keeping with the rest of the house. The builders did a great job to the extent that the Welsh Government's Historic Monument Service listed it as a Grade 2 building! Retired broodmare Snowy Mantle, dam of Celestial Bay, and her older daughter Divine White are

ARC Racing bans the bookies

Major bookmakers Ladbrokes and Corals are no longer able to provide a bet-to-view service since ARC racing have revoked their licence. The ban has also affected independent bookies who have failed to sign up to racing's new media right agreement to use TV coverage of racing.

This has resulted in several courses running no bookies at all. ARC Racing control 16 courses Bath, Brighton, Chepstow, Doncaster, Ffos Las, Fontwell, Hereford, Lingfield, Newcastle, Sedgefield, Southwell, Uttoxeter, Windsor, Wolverhampton, Worcester and Yarmouth.

Bookies have been banned from ARC racecourses



Snapshot

Homebred owners enjoying a meal at Kempton Park where Delagoa Bay has been a three time winner over course and distance this season.



turned out in the fields next to the house and have free access to the barn. It's a refuge they know well and enjoy and it's where they also get their twice daily feed to supplement grazing. But this winter they've been very wary about even approaching the barn and it's taken up to 15 minutes to coax them in to eat - all very strange as they love their grub! Their behaviour has become increasingly alarmed at the prospect of having to enter the barn with much snorting, snuffling and

then galloping away. We've checked and re-checked what it could possibly be - flapping wraps on the haylage bales? The central heating boiler firing up at the back of the house? Branches touching the roof of the barn? - all being discounted. It was only on a particularly frosty morning that we discovered the cause - a cock pheasant! He'd been hiding in the back of the barn and only appearing once the horses were tucking into their grub and then successfully driving them out of the barn by fluffing himself up and running around like a Roadrunner! The problem has been solved by now feeding the mares outside the barn where everyone seems happier! He's now called Fred - the pheasant!

Racing rocked by Kempton closure



Kempton Park sits amidst the Green Belt

Kempton Park, owned by the Jockey Club, is to close in 2021. The news has sent shockwaves through the racing community that one of our Grade 1 racetracks should be closed by an organisation that previously was the guardian of British Racing. Like football clubs, racecourses are often sited close to conurbations making them particularly attractive to property developers - the scenario which ended racing at Folkestone. The Jockey Club explains that it will use resulting funds to improve Sandown Park and to build a new all-weather track at flat racing's HQ in Newmarket. All-weather racing is now an essential element of the racing calendar (and may ultimately become the mainstay of racing altogether as it allows for more frequent meetings as it's much easier to maintain) but such a change will give distribution of the tracks a very unbalanced look - now all based in the east of England. Training centres such as Lambourn and trainers in the south, south west and Wales will be deprived of any reasonable access to an all-weather track. This is sure to revive the debate about creating an all-weather track



Desert Orchid's statue



Kauto Star

at Newbury, which when previously floated, caused much adverse comment. But there are few alternatives as the essential for an all-weather is that it's flat. Slopes and hills make it difficult to maintain when rain washes the surface from high to lower parts of the course. It's a surprise that Kempton hadn't followed the Lingfield model of building a hotel as part of the complex - its close location to motorway networks and to Heathrow would seem to be absolutely ideal. But apart from commercial considerations, closure of Kempton would mean turning the page on some of the UK's most important racing heritage. The traditional Boxing Day feature of the King George VI Chase would be transferred to Sandown and memories of Desert Orchid and Kauto Star diminished - but both have

statues in the paddock to commemorate their amazing sequences of thrilling wins, where their ashes are also buried. How would it be possible for these to be relocated? Desert Orchid's owner Richard Burridge said "Closing Kempton Park is a terrible idea - it's a unique and unreplacable course. I'm glad to hear that the plan faces stiff opposition and is far from being a done deal." Leading trainer Nicky Henderson said "The prospect of Kempton closing scares me to death - racing will be a big loser." A spokesman for the Jockey Club said "The council has issued a call for potential sites to meet the housing crisis. Until full proposals have been submitted they can't be pre-judged. Putting the full estate at Kempton Park forward for consideration would help address current needs."



William Hill's HQ

Bookies having to pay up...

For some while British racing has been attempting to secure a proper return from offshore book-makers, and so recent news that the Government plans to replace the outdated betting Levy will be welcomed. The Levy, which has been in force since 1961, does not apply to offshore betting operators, though some have made voluntary contributions. However, the proposed scheme, which at least the Government hopes to introduce in April, will ensure all operators who take bets on British racing from their customers based in Britain will have to pay 10 per cent of their gross profits above the first £500,000. The scheme will be enforced via a statutory Horserace Betting Levy. Sports Minister Tracey Crouch said: "This move will help secure the future of horse racing in Britain by making sure that gambling firms pay a fair return to support the sport. This new approach to the Horserace Betting Levy will help sustain and develop the sport." The minister will review the rate set within seven years of the new legislation, to reflect any future changes needed in the market.

Did you know?

Britain's longest running sports sponsorship - The Hennessy Gold Cup - has ended after 60 years.