



Super star Pinatubo's career was launched on the all-weather

## All-weather racing increasingly important

It seems a long time since all-weather racing was launched with top trainers simply dismissing the concept out of hand. But how times have changed! The value of all-weather fixtures quickly proved itself when turf tracks were waterlogged or frozen, but now it's recognised as a really valuable part of the mix of meetings - particularly in allowing racing to recommence after the Covid-19 lockdown. Well before then trainers realised that even some of their most

valuable inmates faced less risk of injury on the consistent and level surface. Who would have ever thought that one of Europe's best two-year-olds would possibly debut at 'lowly' Wolverhampton - but that's exactly where Pinatubo first stepped out onto the racetrack (and didn't even start favourite!). The reality is that all-weather racing is here to stay and will continue to play an increasingly bigger part in our sport.

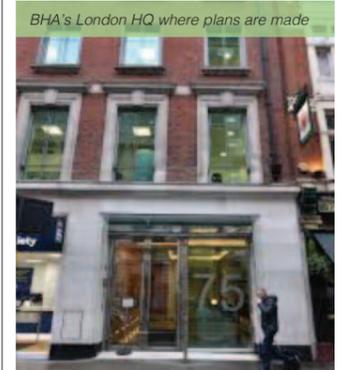


### Snapshot

Because of the dry spring our retired jumper Sweep Home to prevent hooves splitting and cracking. The red hot shoe is offered up to the foot to ensure a perfect fit (hence the smoke) but doesn't hurt!

### Tinkering with race formats again!

The BHA is always so keen to justify its existence that it just can't resist tinkering with the Rules of Racing and race programming. Recently it introduced events that allowed horses that had already won their maiden to keep competing in 'novice' races replacing a large number of maiden races from which winners would otherwise be excluded. The BHA said that



BHA's London HQ where plans are made

this was 'after consultation' but many trainers were unhappy with the change feeling that it unbalanced the whole programme. So no surprise that the BHA is to make further changes now allowing for first time winners who are also placed in their next race to be handicapped - the theory being that this will encourage more horse to start running in handicaps earlier (as if we don't have more than enough handicaps already!). In addition the BHA is to now abandon all auction races that will be replaced by races framed around the price any horse fetched at auction or the median price of the sire's progeny. These new races will have 5 different categories - Open and Categories A, B, C and D. The Open Category will allow any horse to enter irrespective of its sales price or the median value of its sire. Category A will be for horses costing between £50k - £80k or, if not bought at auction, that the sire's median value was less than £60k. Categories B and C are based on incremental values down to Category D for horses costing between £1 and £15k or with the sire's median value being less than £12,500. Hope that you're keeping up with this - which sounds much like the proverbial horse designed by committee!

## Did you know?

Chester is recognised as the world's oldest racecourse having remained in operation since 1539.

### Racing's rags to riches...

We've probably all heard about racing's most costly flops - like Snaafi Dancer costing \$10.2 million in 1983 and subsequently proving a dud in racing terms and at stud. Then there was also the \$16 million colt The Green Monkey who also failed to win. But what about those of whom there was little expectation but who rose to become champions? Vo Rogue cost just \$3,000 but



Takeover Target after winning Royal Ascot's King Stand Stakes

went on to win over \$3 million. Kingstown Town actually cost nothing as he failed to reach his modest reserve at the sales but went on to amass over \$1.6 million in prize-money. California Chrome made just \$10,500 at auction but won \$3.7 million on the track. But most remarkable of all was \$1,250 purchase Takeover Target who notched up 21 wins and 8 Group 1s (including at Royal Ascot) and earned over \$6 million. True that horses make fools of us all!

### Contact us

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# WINNING P HOMEBRED RACING ST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

SUMMER 2020

## More than just looking good



Study The Stars in the paddock at Chepstow

### ...and more to look forward to

'Rocky', our lovely two-year-old colt Study The Stars has already given us great excitement and there's plenty

improving and make a much better three-year-old'. Meanwhile, our three-year-old filly Lafontaine has grown and improved since winning over a mile in the autumn and after an 8 month break made her seasonal debut at Bath which will have blown the cobwebs away. We look

forward to seeing her more competitive next time (and with better luck in running!). More good news is that our lovely two-year-old filly Eau De Vie, who gave us such a fright recently, is now back in ridden work and we hope she'll also make the track in early autumn.



Our 3-y-o filly Lafontaine

more to look forward to after a good 3rd at Windsor and then being beaten just over a length at Chepstow. Jockeys David Egan and David Probert have given him glowing reports and trainer Sylvester Kirk says "He'll win as a two-year-old but will keep

### Picking up an online bargain!

With the lockdown in full force, bloodstock sales around the world have moved online like many other businesses. Part time hobby breeder Stuart McPhee from Kent had been trawling the internet and found one of Australia's premier broodmare sales. He initially placed a few very low cost bids to be able to follow the action but none were successful. Stuart said "I had a little look online and saw that horses were being sold surprisingly inexpensively. So I put in a low bid for Star Effort not expecting to get anything - but was amazed when I secured her for just £6,800". But Stuart had done his homework realising that

Star Effort had been unsold at £200,000 just a couple of years earlier and that she was half-sister to listed winner Kind. But most importantly she is also cousin to the mighty Frankel - proof that it really can be cheaper buying things online!



Bargain buy Star Effort

## A real National hero...

The 1940 war-time Grand National was won by 25/1 shot Bogskar ridden by young Flight Sergeant Mervyn Jones who had to seek permission from his air commodore due to the outbreak of World War II. Jones had only recently passed his air navigation exam and was told by his superior "Go and navigate around Aintree then, and if you don't, we'll put you through another navigation exam!" Tragically, the winning rider was lost in action a few months later aged just 22.



Mervyn Jones being led to the winner's enclosure aboard Bogskar

## Did you know?

Colts and geldings generally out-perform fillies and mares on the all-weather - except in June and July when their female counterparts dominate.

New Approach strides out for an unintended Derby win



## The luck of the Irish!

One often hears of long planned programmes culminating in a Derby victory, but in the 2008 race the winner was never intended to be a runner! Trainer of the winner Jim Bolger said "It's the biggest mistake I ever made in my life. However, it's turned out to be a fortuitous one, but I gladly admit that it was a mistake. I am delighted!" His runner, owned by Princess Haya of Jordan, had proven to be the leading

two-year-old in 2007 but had finished second to Henrythenavigator in both the English and Irish 2000 Guineas leaving Bolger not being keen to run at Epsom. But the horse, who had been entered for the race when just a yearling, was accidentally not removed from the list of entries. In the event New Approach strode out to an impressive victory ridden by Bolger's son-in-law Kevin Manning - the best laid plans!

## How's your Tic-Tac knowledge?

New digital technology may now have made the bookmakers' complex sign language nearly obsolete - few Tic-Tac men are now seen standing on a chair or crate frantically waving their white-gloved hands. Tic-Tac odds have a language all of their own: Straight-up = Evens, Ear'ole = 6/4, Shoulder = 7/4, Top of the head = 9/4, Face = 5/2, Carpet = 3/1,

## Did you know?

40% of all races are now on all-weather tracks and 73% of trainers have at least 50 runners there each year.

Burlington Bertie = 100/30, Rouf = 4/1, Hand = 5/1, Net = 10/1, Double Carpet = 33/1 and No hoper = 50/1. Sad that all this is soon likely to disappear and be replaced by decimal odds.



Tic-Tac man in the crowd communicating to bookies



Barrier trials at Lingfield Park

## Stalls should be no barrier

Barrier trials are now well used by trainers to help get their youngsters ready for racing. Gary and Craig Witheford regularly host barrier trials for two-year-olds at courses around the country. They were responsible for getting our two youngsters Rocky and Pitstop started and ridden away and also for enabling Delagoa Bay to overcome her aversion to starting stalls allowing her to go on to win 5 races on the flat. Starting stalls are an unfamiliar, noisy and claustrophobic place for a young horse. Gary believes that all horses should be able to undergo barrier trials before they start their racing careers because on race day they have only a matter of seconds to be loaded into the stalls often resulting in horses having to be withdrawn if they misbehave.

Sylvester usually sends his horses for barrier trials with the Withefords at Lingfield Park where they are able to learn to load without the pressure of a raceday. Gary says "It's invaluable practice and I think should be made compulsory for all horses before they run. Once they've been through the stalls a couple of times they become comfortable with it and it saves time and anxiety for all

as well as helping prevent injury to handlers". Many trainers make their horses walk through a set of starting stalls every day - others only a couple of times. Our filly Divine White walked through stalls at Amanda Perrett's every day when leaving and returning to the yard - but on debut at Newbury initially refused to be loaded - proving the value of learning at a racecourse!



Study The Stars showing how it should be done!

## The changing role of The Jockey Club

The origins of racing date back to the 12th century when English knights returned from the crusades with speedy Arabian horses. The following 400 years saw a steady stream of Arabian stallions being brought to England to breed with English mares. The nobility at the time issued challenges to race other owners' charges for an agreed wager on the

outcome of the match. But it wasn't until well into Queen Anne's reign (1702-14) that increased numbers of horses competed in the same races where spectators could also place bets. These races spread throughout the country resulting in a meeting of racing's elite at Newmarket in 1750. The result was the formation of The Jockey Club becoming responsible for

setting up and applying the rules of racing. The Club drew up a complete set of rules to govern the sport and granted racecourses the ability to hold meetings that complied with their rules. The Jockey Club also issued rules governing the breeding of racehorses. It was only in 2006 that The Jockey Club's regulatory authority was handed over to a new governing body, now

the British Horse Racing Authority. But the Club still plays an integral part in British racing owning 15 courses and managing facilities at training centres such as Newmarket and Lambourn as well as The National Stud. Now turning over £200 million a year the Jockey Club is governed by Royal Charter and all profits are returned to racing.



Newmarket - Racing's HQ - is owned by The Jockey Club



The Jockey Club Rooms in Newmarket still operate as a private club

## Potters Corner lands £2.6 million for NHS charities

This year's cancelled Grand National was replaced by a virtual version that still attracted a huge audience. Normally betting turnover is £80 million but still generated £26 million and betting duty of £2.6 million was handed over to NHS charities.



Potters Corner - virtual Grand National winner

## Cheltenham gets the blame...

There have been siren voices in the media claiming that holding the Cheltenham festival has been responsible for spreading Covid-19. Reports have focused on the unusually high number of cases within the Gloucester Health Board area. TV pundit Piers Morgan has been particularly vocal and has called for a public enquiry. All this controversy has been particularly difficult whilst racing has strived to get back in action. Morgan claims to know people who attended the festival and have subsequently been infected and points to a higher number



Piers Morgan - playing the blame game

of fatalities due to the virus in and around Gloucester. But many considerations are at play here, including use of shared transport to get to the races, the fact that Gloucester has an unusually higher number of hospitals within its catchment area and that most racegoers actually reside outside Gloucestershire and therefore would not be included in the local statistics. The reality is that we'll probably never know and in hindsight it's easy to make judgements. The other reality is that the festival opened on 10th March - two weeks before the national lockdown came into force on March 26th - and went ahead with formal government approval as did many other sporting events at the same time.

## Did you know?

A racehorse can reach 42 miles per hour in just 6 strides from a standing start - faster acceleration than a Porsche 911 Turbo.