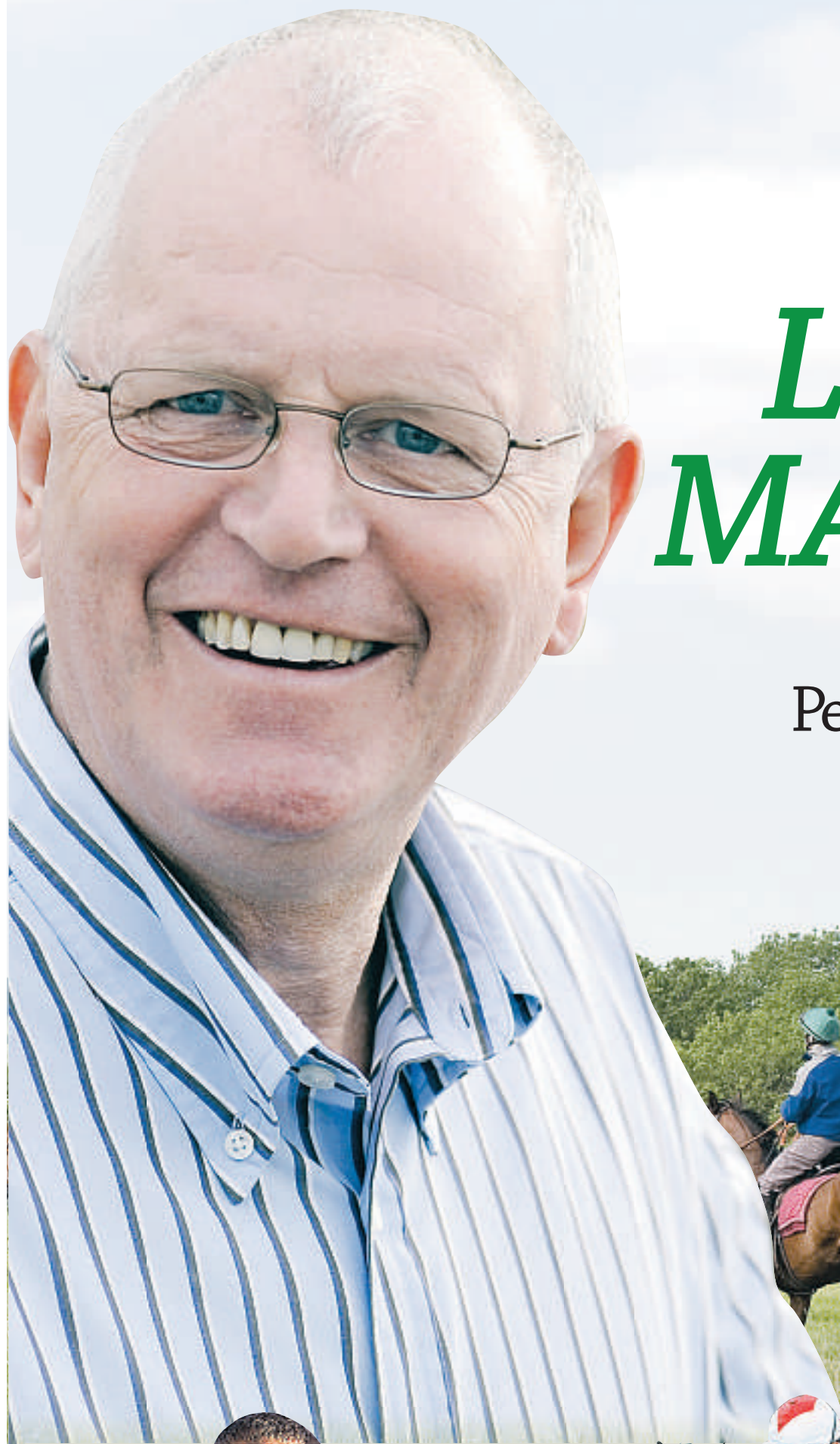


RP Sunday

I'M THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE

Mick Channon talks to
Peter Thomas about Classic
success, a change of tack
– and life and death



Steve Palmer

I spent Tuesday
night looking
at Porsches



Celtic Swing

A last hurrah
in France
recalled



The Queen

Witnessing
the royal silks
being made



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You'll be wanting to know what I had for breakfast next . . .



We give people in racing a weekly grilling . . .

Today Sharron Murgatroyd, 52, jockey-turned-writer

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given? If you want to keep a secret, don't tell anybody.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Julia Roberts.

What's your favourite smell? The roses in my garden.

If there is one thing you could change about your life, what would it be? Not to have put my mother through all the worry and heartache since my accident.

Which person do you most admire and why? My mother. She brought me up to be a strong and independent woman.

Sum yourself up in five words Strong, independent, happy, humorous, daring.

What was the best day of your racing life? Riding Molojec to win at Ascot on December 13, 1986.

What's the best bet you've ever had? Night Clown at Edinburgh.

What is your earliest racing memory? Watching John Rickman on ITV 7 when I was around eight years old.

If you were taking someone racing for the first time, where would you go and why? I would take them to Fakenham as you can get up close and personal to all the action.

What was the last film you saw? I watch a movie most nights but my favourite movie is Legends of the Fall.

What was the last book you read? AP McCoy's autobiography.

Give us a playlist of your favourite five songs and artists Word On A Wing (David Bowie); Goodbye My Lover (James Blunt); Breakeven (The Script); Bat Out Of Hell (Meatloaf); Let It Be (The Beatles).

Give us a song you never want to hear again Total Eclipse Of The Heart by Bonnie Tyler.

Who's your favourite horse ever? There have been so many but I'm A Driver, Brother Bronco, Pagan Sun and Badsworth Boy are my favourites.

What would be your specialist subject on Mastermind? David Bowie.

What is the strangest/funniest thing you have ever seen on a racecourse? A loose collie got on to the course at Fakenham and started to jump the obstacles.

Who or what really annoys you? People who keep whingeing about money all the time instead of focusing on how gorgeous and precious life is.

Give us a horse to keep an eye on Puteri Nur Laila.

Give us a trainer and a jockey to watch out for Richard Fahey and Graham Lee.

'Life is gorgeous so stop whingeing about money all the time'



Tell us something about yourself that only you know I write songs as well as poetry although I'm searching for a musician to help me put it all together. Now you all know so it is a secret no more!

What's your most unappealing habit? I sometimes come over as being rather brusque.

What's your favourite restaurant/pub for a night out? A Chinese meal somewhere.

Which race would you most like to win/back the winner of? As a lady jockey I would have liked to have won the Diamond race.

How do you relax away from racing? I like art, music, films, daydreaming, a

nice meal with my friends, teaching my friends' children to ride.

What keeps you awake at night? Temperature.

What's your biggest regret? My accident, but having said that it opened a lot of other opportunities to me. I've done some amazing things since, plus of course I have written and had four books published.

What's the worst thing anyone's said to you? A lot of people say horrid things but I rise above it.

Who'd be your four ideal dinner party guests? David Bowie, Brad Pitt, Reginald D Hunter, Jessie J.

And finally, what did you have for breakfast this morning? Melon and satsumas.

INSIDE TODAY

From The Vaults

A timely classic report from Alastair Down on the day Galileo gave the Coolmore team its first Derby for 19 years
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The Big Read

'Everything has changed, gone into the modern age, but racing hasn't'
Mick Channon is in typically forthright mood as he speaks to Peter Thomas
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On Location

'This highly skilled pool of artist artisans is small and ageing and there is no sign of it being replenished'
Steve Dennis sees the royal silks being made
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The Sunday Review

Matt Chapman says Richard Hughes's revealing biography will make you look at the jockey in a different way
Page 13



The Story of the Race

When Celtic Swing justified all the hype in Paris after a dramatic decision to bypass the Derby
Page 15

'He travelled with ominous authority throughout and it was only a matter of when Kinane would go for the gloves'

THERE have been wider-margin Derby winners but Galileo looked a man among boys when, barely turning a hair, he sauntered home at Epsom yesterday by three and a half of the cosiest Classic-winning lengths you'll ever see.

"He's some beast, isn't he?" Aidan O'Brien said to me in the winner's circle afterwards, and there cannot be the slightest doubt about the quality of this performance.

Beaten pointless and prayerless into second place was an undefeated 2,000 Guineas winner, with the race's only dual Group 1 winner an honourable but utterly unavailing third. No base metal here, just the proper hallmarked stuff.

Never worse than fifth, Galileo travelled with ominous authority throughout and it was merely a question of when Mick Kinane would elect to go for the gloves. Approaching two out, he asked Galileo to go and grab greatness and the Ballydoyle colt quickened with no more fuss than a horse leaving inferior companions behind on the early-morning gallops.

The small soup-bowl of a winner's enclosure was packed with every member of the Coolmore/Ballydoyle clan who ever drew breath. And why not? With the almost flawlessly bred Galileo the winner, and having bought the stud interests of the runner-up Golan as well, it is unlikely that John Magnier and his cohorts have ever had a more profitable day's work.

And, if you wanted to know what the victory meant to Magnier, O'Brien and Kinane, you had to go back 24 hours to the three of them sitting at the press conference after they had won the Oaks with Imagine.

Yes, they were pleased, but the overriding impression was that they weren't focused on the moment at all. Their minds were already on other things, and all three were already consumed by what might follow in the Derby itself. You suddenly realised that they didn't hope to win the Derby, they expected to win it and, even in the flush of a famous victory, the weight of that expectation lay heavy on them.

This has been O'Brien's weekend, the Oaks and Derby bringing his Classic tally to five in a month. If the Tories had parachuted him in late to the election campaign, he'd have won that too.

The public's perception of trainers is that they have an enviable lifestyle and, among the "world owes me a living" section of the profession, that can be true. But the apparently mild O'Brien is chiselled from a very different quarry and grafts like a convict. You may think that the racing world has little more to show him at the age of 31, that few challenges are

FROM THE VAULTS VINTAGE RACING POST WRITING

Alastair Down on Galileo's victory in the Derby

left which can get his blood up. More wrong you could not be.

To spend time with him is to understand what the expression 'driven man' really means. He works for an organisation that demands success and it is on those shoulders that the final responsibility for delivering it rests.

However calmly and politely Aidan carries that burden, the fact is that he operates under fiendish pressure from dawn through to long after dusk.

HE HAS learned to be tough, but those for whom he has delivered such spectacular success in recent years should remember that, in order for him to go on hitting these sort of heights, they must allow him to retain the capacity for enjoying the job.

And yesterday, in giving Coolmore its first Derby for 19 years, O'Brien produced the sort of performance from Galileo that keeps racecourse turnstiles clicking round.

And to listen to the sort of plans outlined for Galileo – the Eclipse, Queen Elizabeth II and Breeders' Cup – was to get some inkling of how exceptional they believe this colt may be.

Galileo has clearly burned out the turbo in Aidan's 4x4 on the home gallops, and for connections of a Derby winner to be talking about dropping him back to a mile is extraordinary.

Yesterday's Derby had the feel of a vintage one, not least because at long last there was a proper, heaving hotch-potch of humanity back on the infield.

But this marvellous race is all about the hope of seeing a horse do something that is brilliant on the day and whets the public's eternal whistle for even greater achievements ahead.

Last year's winner went on to cakewalk an Irish Derby and win an Arc. In Galileo, we may just have a colt capable of exceeding even that achievement.

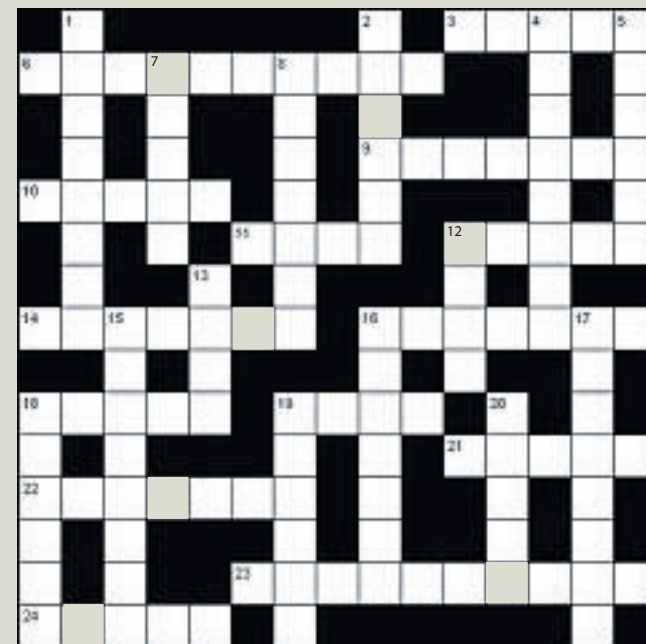
You can't invent superstars or talk horses into greatness. They do it themselves and it is our job to wait patiently for them to gallop over the skyline – and our privilege to watch them etch their place in the record book and the public memory.

One such animal almost certainly graced the Downs yesterday.



First published
June 6, 2001

PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

- 3** Listed Galtres Stakes winner for the Queen, Set To * (5)
6 Rider of Frankel (3,7)
9 Only horse to beat Brigadier Gerard – Chelsea CL architect (7)
10 Everton midfielder and one-club man (5)
11 Position for rider's strap (4)
12 La Touche Cup winner at Punchestown, * Junior (5)
14 Rode Inglis Drevier to win 2007 Ladbrokes World Hurdle (7)
16 Gutsy horse – boxer (7)
18 Run of poor form (5)
19 Trainer of Shackleford, 2011 Preakness winner, * L Romans (4)
21 Kicks upfield – chancy wagers (5)
22 Home of the Fair Grounds Racecourse, New * (7)
23 Curragh Classic sponsored by Dubai Duty Free (5,5)
24 Sariska's odds when winning the Irish Oaks in 2009 (5)

Down

- 1** Winner of the 23A in 1930, one of Morny Wing's six winning rides (4,4)
2 23A winner in 1984, * Senor (2,4)
4 Sometime world's most expensive stallion, maternal grandsire, Secretariat (5,3)
5 Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner in 1986 – US author of

- Breakfast at Tiffany's (6)
7 Country where one can see racing at its capital, Doha (5)
8 Owner of Shahrastani and Kahyasi, both winners of 23A (3,4)
12 Drive on, encourage to win (4)
13 Bargain buy (4)
15 Draw level (8)
16 Newmarket race for two-year-olds, * Mile (7)
17 Only trainer in Britain to have trained over 1,000 winners under both codes (8)
18 Trainer of Shareef Dancer, 23A winner in 1983 (6)
19 First name of chasing legend sired by Grey Mirage out of Flower Child (6)



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The answer to last Sunday's crossword (above) was Le Moss and Andrew Howles wins a copy of *Her Majesty's Pleasure*.

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THE BIG READ

MICK CHANNON TALKS TO PETER THOMAS

EDWARD WHITAKER (RACINGPOST.COM/PHOTOS)



‘We could learn so much yet we’re so far up our own arses’

AS MICK CHANNON wades into his bacon butty and sends another volley of abuse whistling past the ears of an unsuspecting owner, it’s hard not to ponder just what the Queen would make of it all, in this her Diamond Jubilee year. Although there’s no red, white and blue bunting festooning the historic walls of West Ilsley, memories of racing’s most regal patron inhabit every last brick, but times have changed since the present Lord of the Manor arrived in 1999.

Goings-on at the old place have been well documented since its first mention in the Domesday Book of 1089, but history does not relate if Major Dick Hern ever greeted Her Majesty wearing a baggy t-shirt and a pair of jeans with a hole in the back pocket, or drove her up the gallops tooting on the horn of a 4x4, leaning out of the window and telling obscene stories about Terry Biddlecombe.

He may have done, of course, and the reigning monarch may equally have spluttered on a sandwich of finest smoked streaky with lashings of HP Sauce, but on balance it seems

►►Continues page 6

►►From page 5

unlikely. In 2012, with the days of Highclere and Height Of Fashion gone the way of Edmund Hillary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and the Sex Pistols, formality takes a back seat while Channon finishes his breakfast.

In fact it's the Establishment that's taking a battering at the moment, feeling the full force as the famously vocal trainer sets the needle flickering wildly on the Rant-o-meter. The BHA shouldn't feel persecuted – our man has already lambasted several members of staff, one or two of his own family, various England managers, the odd jockey, the whole of Newmarket and himself, in no particular order, with varying degrees of venom and the occasional nudge and wink.

"I'm sorry if I'm talking shit," he apologises, with no apparent sincerity. "I'm just going on about things in general – when you're President of the World you tend to do that."

He grins, and when Channon grins the world either grins with him or raises its eyebrows. Frankly, he doesn't seem bothered which it is; he has 150 horses to train, an army of staff to employ and is far too busy to worry unduly what anybody else thinks about his unholy stream of consciousness. Last week he just got even busier.

FIRST it was announced that he would take delivery of the National Hunt horses formerly in the care of retiring trainer and good friend Henrietta Knight. Second, he became Classic-winning trainer Mick Channon, when Samitar landed the Irish 1,000 Guineas, leaving him to ponder the pressing but welcome matter of charting a course through a summer of Group 1 action for his star filly. But with a large team to prime for Royal Ascot and a fortnight of Euro 2012 football to cram into whatever gaps are left in his schedule, the forthright Wiltshireman can't be sitting around eating bacon sarnies, so we've got to get ourselves moving.

Channon's a little easier to keep up with now than in the days when he gave countless Division One full-backs the runaround. Arthritis in his feet has turned his former loping gait into something closer to a shuffle in his slower paces, while the permanent scars of the M1 car crash that killed his great friend, bloodstock agent Tim Corby, four years ago are a physical reminder of the worst of times, but as he sets off in search of second lot, his mind turns not to the dark side, not to the pinned vertebrae, the smashed nerves and the metal plates in his face, but to survival, to today and the need to enjoy it.

"We're still here," says Channon, who survived the crash, on the way home from Doncaster Sales, along with his young son Jack. "People say I was unlucky, but I'm the luckiest man alive – I used up all my lives in one go."

"It's something you can't prepare for or take on board. I was asleep, Tim had heart failure, the lights went out at 70mph, but by the grace of God, Jack and I walked away from it, and then you have to pick the pieces up."

It's an incident that seems to have strengthened the 63-year-old's belief that the supply of subjects to be approached with a po face is a strictly finite one, and horseracing certainly isn't one of them. Visitors to West Ilsley receive hospitality and conviviality, but if they want political correctness, clean language and a serious countenance, they should give the place a wide berth.

Young Jack, now a 19-year-old pupil assistant with a stack of good exam results and a stint in Australia behind him, temporarily retains a little of the seriousness of youth, with his anorakish tendencies and his pessimistic wellies,



but elsewhere the mood is resolutely anarchic. Michael, Channon's son from his first marriage, takes his father's sartorial lead and extends it to shorts and sunny banter, while flip-flops are not frowned upon. It's a family business with no need to stand on ceremony.

"I'm in racing, like a lot of people, because it's a way of life," says Mick. "When I came into it I didn't know what a business plan was, I just loved the horses and the craic you have in the mornings, and yes you have some bad days, when you're a grumpy old man, but that's part and parcel of it. We're in it because we love it."

"I've never been a statistics man, strike-rates and all that bollocks – I've got too many moderate horses. It's all very well if you've got a yard full of nice maidens and top-class horses, but people keeping moderate horses want to be going racing and having fun, you want to be rolling the dice more often."

"If you've got a good horse over here, it's ****ing boring – they run four or five times a year and that's it. That's no fun for an owner and it can't be any fun for horses – that's why the Americans and the Australians love running them. They have horses for fun, not so they can say 'my horse hasn't been beaten'. What a load of bollocks. We could learn so much from the rest of the world yet we're so far up our own arses."

And this from a man who describes his sons as "opinionated".

Occasionally he'll try to quell dissent in the ranks by informing Jack that "bollocking me is a sackable offence", but mostly opinions are encouraged and it's a policy that seems to be working given that Samitar's Guineas success, although it did break new ground, was really just an extension of a career that began on his retirement

Main picture: Channon with Irish 1,000 Guineas winner Samitar (Matthew Davies); left, promising stable jockey Martin Harley

'Who wants to go and watch a Guineas when you're freezing your knackers off, everybody's pissed off and the horses are still hairy'



from football in 1986 and of a Group 1 spree that began with the success of Piccolo in the 1994 Nunthorpe.

Having served as assistant to John Baker and Ken Cunningham-Brown, the sideburned Channon took out a licence in 1990 and, despite an aversion to statistics, rose steadily to the top flight of the sport, hitting his first century in 2002 and his best total of 144 in 2003, landing 17 Group 1s in the process.

Many of his top performers still race in the colours of long-standing owner Jaber Abdullah, but it was in the silks of wealthy American Martin Schwartz that Channon finally broke his Classic duck last Sunday with a filly whose mare the trainer had sold for a bargain 10,000gns when he decided to offload his Norman Court Stud to Patrick and Tania Trant.

Aileen's Gift was carrying Group 3-winning filly Nijoom Dubai when Channon bought her from Ireland and six-times scorer La Gifted when he sold her shortly afterwards, before her new owners sent her to Rock Of Gibraltar and were rewarded with Samitar whom Channon promptly bought for 39,000gns for owner John Webster. Is he bitter that the sums don't seem to stack up in his favour? Is he heck.

"So I sold a mare carrying two Group winners for ten grand," he shrugs. "If I'd held on to things I'd be a rich man, but it's my business, you buy and sell and move on, and I loved that Patrick and Tania took her to Rock Of Gibraltar and I loved the foal from the start, and I had a punter and she fitted an order and it's all come from Norman Court, where I'm still a director, so it's a great result for everyone."

Samitar was sold to Schwartz after a two-year-old career of enormous promise, and despite two reverses at

the start of this term, Channon knew he had a good filly on his hands and never lost faith in her, much to Jack's chagrin.

"The worst thing about it is that he told us back in the winter it was the best chance he'd ever had of winning a Classic," he says, and Mick grins at the forced admission of his rightness and because he's spotted an opportunity to rub it in and have a pop at racing's administrators at the same time.

"We knew she was a good filly last year but I don't think any trainer was happy with their fillies in March and April," Mick says. "It's not their time, horses in general, but we have two trials and then it's straight into the Guineas, and I think it has to change."

"Who wants to go and watch a ****ing Guineas when you're freezing your knackers off, everybody's pissed off and the horses are still hairy. Everything is wrong about it. Every other sport has changed, gone into the modern age, but racing hasn't. We can blame bookmakers, prize-money and what have you, but we're eating ourselves. We need to restructure our racing and put it on for the people."

"But you know what they'll say: 'We've been doing it like this for 200 years.' Same old shit and nobody has the balls to shake things up. We bring a good Aussie in, Paul Bittar, but we don't give him any teeth. He needs to be able to say we're going to do this and then do it."

Invigorated by this tirade, Channon recalls his equally invigorating visit to Ireland last weekend where Samitar finally came good. The tag of non-Classical-winning trainer wasn't the heaviest burden a man has ever been asked to carry, but it's one he is glad to have laid down, with the added bonus of providing promising stable jockey



Martin Harley with the biggest moment of his young career.

"The Classic wasn't annoying me but it was the monkey on our back," he says, "and the really annoying thing was we've had so many good fillies that got beat, too many photos gone the wrong way. So we always celebrate the ones that win because Group 1s are what a place like this is geared to.

"People say we're a bit ambitious at times, but if we weren't, racing would be pretty boring, if you didn't have a Clive Brittain or somebody like him to put people in their place. If there's a chink in someone's armour, Clive will find it, and I hope I'm the same. Nobody's going to have a soft time of it – if they turn up and win regular, they have to be pretty good."

THE nice weather has brought owners out in their droves to lounge on the sofas of West Ilsley. They've learned to give as good as they get and stalwart Frank Adams has used a ride in the back of the 4x4 as an excuse to bait his thinning trainer. "Blimey, Mick, could you wear a hat next time," he chirps. "The light reflecting off the back of your head is blinding me."

"It's all those winners I keep having – all those people patting me on the head saying well done," comes the riposte. Many try to trade banter with Channon, but few come out ahead. He directs a few choice words at his work-riders, then he turns his thoughts to Hen and Terry – Knight and her husband Biddlecombe – his next-door neighbours as the crow flies, whose world was turned upside down by Terry's stroke last year.

Hen announced last week that she would be handing in her licence, but

Channon is happy that he'll be not so much taking over her horses, rather helping his old muckers to stay in the sport with a reduced work-load. Hen will mind Terry and pre-train the horses, Mick will hone them to race fitness and they'll no doubt all meet up in the bar to discuss tactics. It's an arrangement that suits the former jumps man down to the ground.

"I started over the jumps with John and Rodney Baker," he recalls. "We still have a couple of jumpers and people forget I bred the winners of the Tote Gold Trophy and the Hennessy, Jamesmead and Ghofar, so it's not a big shock to the system for me.

"Saturday night we were at the pub and they were in great form, but it's become too much for her to look after 40 horses. I've got four head lads and two assistants and a proper system, but Hen does everything, so if I can help out some friends and stop them drifting out of the game, I'll do it. Anyway, she's been here three days as an assistant and she's had a bloody Classic winner already, which isn't bad going."

As second lot files back down the hill in the sunshine, Channon opens a box of Tic Tacs (the green and orange ones) and begins chain-eating. "You can't have just one, you've got to have four or five," he explains, which is very much also his approach to speedy juveniles, if talk of his team for Royal Ascot is anything to go by.

The whole car, Mick, Michael, Jack and Frank, starts to reel off the names, Graphic Guest, Cay Verde, Pay Freeze, Bungleinthejungle, Chilworth Icon, Jillnextdoor, and match them to potential targets. "I think we've got all the two-year-old races covered," says Mick. "Then we've got the big guns, Arnold Lane for the St James's Palace



Above, two views of horses returning after exercise at Channon's historic West Ilsley stables

or the Jersey, Tidetime in the Britannia, and Laugh Out Loud and Samitar for the Coronation – I'd like to send one to the Jersey and keep them apart but I don't think that's going to happen. But if that's the worst problem I've got, it's not too bad."

Cay Verde wins the communal vote as their best chance of the week in the Norfolk, which leaves Channon happy with the horses but disappointed with his own declining status in the yard.

"I used to have my own opinions but it has to be done by committee now I've got another grown-up son," he grumbles and grins. So I ask him if he's still happy with his lot in racing and glad he embarked on a second career on the Turf rather than taking the traditional footballer's route into pub landlordship and weight gain.

"Would I go into it again? You go into it because you're totally naive, you think you're going to beat the world, then you look back and say 'how ****ing lucky was I?' It's like Sir Alex, at Man United for two or three years and almost getting the sack, then all of a sudden he'd won the FA Cup, things started to change and now he's an icon, and the same happened to Shankly and it applies to this game. If you keep going, it'll happen for you."

Channon stands at the top of the gallop and takes in the view from the grassland that has been trodden by so many Turf greats. "You can see for 30 miles that way," he says, "past Didcot power station – beautiful, isn't it?"

His sandwich may be bacon, not cucumber, but the present master of West Ilsley has the spirit of the stables running through his veins as much as any of the previous ones. It's just that he's a bit more bloody inappropriate than some of them.

'I've never been a statistics man, strike-rates and all that bollocks – I've got too many moderate horses'

CHANNON ON . . .

Schooling 'Me and Terry were sat there like the Muppets'

I remember sending our good Flat horse Halicarnassus to Hen's before he went for a race in Turkey a few years ago. He was a bit of a character, a bit in and out, so I took him over there to school him with one of their lead horses. I'll always remember it, it was bitterly cold and me and Terry went and sat in the car and watched him come up. He went through the first, splatted into the second, went through three hurdles and smashed them to pieces while Terry and me were sat there like the two old boys off the Muppets. It cost her about two and a half grand and I was wondering if I had any dough on me to slip the gallops man.

Dissenters 'You just have your say and nothing changes'

I suppose there's me, John Gosden, Mark Johnston and we've all got our views and we're probably all trying to make it right for ourselves, but we're trying to help as well, and John Gosden knows the name of the Unknown Soldier, you know. I suppose when you're a young man you think you're going to change the world, but as you get older you just have your say and nothing changes.

Change '0-65 horses should be running for 200 or 300 quid'

Look at football, the way the Premier League has come up in the last 20 years and brought the rest of the sport up with it, while we're subsidising moderate racing. We've all got moderate horses – I've probably got 40 rated less than 70, so it affects me – but I think the 0-65 horses should be running for 200 or 300 quid with proper prize-money higher up. You've got to give some part of the industry the chance to at least break even, keep the owners and breeders going, give us the chance to sustain ourselves. And if somebody else wants to subsidise moderate racing, I haven't got a problem with that.

Euro 2012 'Roy might be the right one in the long term'

We missed qualifying for three big tournaments when I was playing, so I'm glad we're there. I wanted Harry [Redknapp] as manager because he would have taken the country with him, he'd have been a bit exciting and we'd have played a bit flash, but Roy's a safe pair of hands and he's been brilliant in putting teams together. He might be the right one in the long term – he's a bit more like Alf Ramsey, a football brain and a bit of knowledge.



PICTURE OF THE WEEK

All the fun of Derby day, coupled with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, is encapsulated during the finish to the opening race at Epsom yesterday, won by Sir Henry Cecil's Wrotham Heath. Picture by Edward Whitaker. Order pictures that appear in the Racing Post at racingpost.com/photos



'It's like a scene from The Pyjama Game but a lot less militant'

ON LOCATION

Steve Dennis visits Gibson Saddlers in Newmarket to see the royal silks being made – just as they have been for generations



HERE is a red sleeve. Over there is a black cap beside a bundle of gold braid. Next to them is something resembling a purple bodywarmer tricked out with a golden pattern. These parts are a jumble sale; their sum is far greater, because this is one of the most famous sets of racing colours in the world.

The Queen's purple, red and black silks have been a constant presence in British racing for 60 years. Horses such as Dunfermline, Aureole, Carlton House, Pall Mall and Highclere have carried them to glory, jockeys such as Harry Carr, Willie Carson, Joe Mercer, Ryan Moore and Hayley Turner have worn them in victory. Now here they are coming to vivid life on the sewing table at Gibson Saddlers in Newmarket, the familiar jacket taking shape under the flicker-fast needle as it has done these last six decades.

Gibson Saddlers, tucked away up a sidestreet in Newmarket between the sprawling Tattersalls sales complex and the storied De Niro's nightclub, holds the Royal warrant to produce the Queen's racing silks, has held it since it was granted by her grandfather George V in 1932. In the shop window the taxidermist's art is displayed in the stuffed body of 1880 Derby runner-up Robert The Devil, his nose rubbed smooth by generations of fond hands; in the back rooms other artists go about their daily work.

In the sewing room Viola Lake, Lena Vowden, Helen Oliver and Becky Nicholls clothe jockeys and horses alike. Lake is putting the finishing touches to Clarendon Racing's black jacket with white chevrons



on sleeves, little scraps of polyester taffeta falling around her feet like stardust as she works. Nicholls is supervising the laser machine that does so much of the preparatory cutting but lends to the room an acrid smell of singed dog hair. Oliver is stitching together plaid exercise sheets for trainer William Knight, having finished a neat set of red-trimmed dark blue paddock sheets for Nicolas Clement, and Vowden is adding a skein of gold braid to the Queen's black velvet cap.

It's like a scene from The Pyjama Game but a lot less militant. No-one is actually whistling while they work but these are unmistakably painstaking labours of love. Karl Butcher, who with his father Mick is director of the firm, lends a little substance to the sheen.

"There are two standard types of material we use for racing colours, a 5oz polyester taffeta and a 10oz nylon satin," he says. "The trend is for owners to ask for the lighter cloth, the ratio of requests is about 60-40 and the gap is growing."

"It can take up to four and a half metres of cloth to produce a set of silks, depending on how elaborate the design, and the finished article can take anywhere between about four and a half hours and seven hours to complete."

"Last week we made a couple of sets of the Queen's silks for two kayakers from the University of California, who were to wear them in the Diamond Jubilee pageant on the Thames."

Clockwise from above: Helen Oliver works on the royal colours; Mike Butcher plaits the Queen's colours on to a nose strap; Lena Vowden, Rebecca Nicholls, Karl Butcher, Helen Oliver and Viola Lake with a finished set of the silks and cap; and Butcher, a director of Gibson Saddlers, holds the royal insignia

'In the next room the air is sweet with the smell of soft piquant leather with the solvent tang of glue'

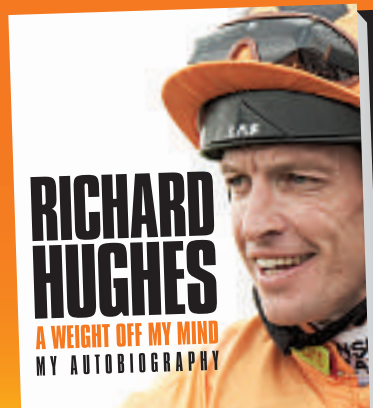
He stands in front of a captive rainbow, a wall of shelves laden with bolts of material of every hue and shade. Weatherbys allows 18 shades for use in racing colours, but Butcher also runs his hand lovingly over swatches of aquamarine, shocking pink and straw, all ready in case the Duke of Devonshire orders a new set. Time was when owners could let their imagination run free; the days of 'heliotrope with an old gold stripe' are gone but Butcher could reproduce that antique splendour on a whim.

Owners want a lighter material because every little helps in the search for a winner. At first sight silks seem not to have changed since Gordon Richards' day, but Butcher points out the covered press studs instead of the traditional buttons – Derby historians may note that Tommy Weston's white stock wouldn't get caught in a press stud – and the elasticated cuffs to save on those inelegant elastic bands jockeys wear.

He reaches down the light and dark blue of the Niarchos family, who order a mix of materials for their instantly recognisable colours including a heavier, more luxurious habotai silk. "Our European customers still seem to prefer the more traditional 10oz cloth," he says. "Some of the Queen's racing colours are 5oz and some 10oz."

Then he opens a drawer to reveal overflowing handfuls of spots, diamonds, checks and stars ready to adorn body, sleeves and cap, all now laser-cut as standard to eliminate the labour-intensive process of every individual detail being handmade. Lake

**TOO TALL,
TOO HEAVY
& BATTLING
HIS OWN
DEMONS**



Richard Hughes is one of the sport's most unlikely superstars. His startlingly honest autobiography graphically details the highs and lows of life as a top jockey

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Pictures: CHRIS BOURCHIER



watches Vowden apply the gold 'frogging' to the front of the Queen's purple jacket, rolls her eyes and smiles when she remembers how it used to be done.

"Up until three or four years ago we had to prick round a tissue-paper template and then use the tiniest running stitch to apply the gold braid. It could take anywhere between 12 and 18 hours just to do the braid. Now we can do it in three."

In the next room the air is sweet with the smell of soft leather piquant with the solvent tang of glue. It's a heady blend, an olfactory delight, although those working on saddles and bridles say they only notice it after they've been on holiday such is its all-pervading familiarity.

AT ONE bench, piled high with reins and bridles requiring re-rubbing and restitching, a man repairs a broken noseband. Across the floor someone is gluing half-tree saddles, someone else is cutting thin strips of leather from a sheet. Mick Butcher picks up a browband template and lengths of purple, red and black ribbon and begins to weave one fit for a Queen.

"We've recently sent 15 half-tree saddles to the Dubai Racing Club," says Butcher jnr. "Andreas Schutz ordered 20 in red and black."

"Most of the work we do involves repairs and maintenance. Given the economic downturn more people are having their existing gear mended rather than buying new, although we do a fair amount of bespoke work too."

He flips through a photo album that includes a saddle lightly dusted with Swarovski crystals, saddles for racing simulators and a hot pink 'general purpose' saddle created for Princess Haya. Each saddle goes out with the Gibson emblem tucked neatly away somewhere, a little shiny reminder of the quality of the work that goes into each piece.

"That's something people aren't often aware of, the amount of work and skilled labour it takes to create a saddle or a set of racing silks," adds Butcher, a remark freighted with implications that will progressively affect this most traditional of trades.

All those working on these saddles and bridles –

with one exception – can boast decades of experience at Gibson's, and all are either past retirement age or advancing on it. There's the rub; this highly skilled pool of artist artisans is small and ageing and there is no sign of it being replenished by a timely injection of youth.

School-leavers do not clamour to become apprenticed to the saddlery trade, and consequently there is a grave shortage of opportunities for the likes of David Crawford and Val Ryan to pass on the accumulated skills and techniques gleaned over a lifetime. It may not be a dying art but it's sickly. That's why it's so refreshing to see Carolyn Fowler leaning over the outline of a saddle, trimming and tidying away. She's 27, has been at Gibson's just over a year, enjoys the work immensely.

She represents – possibly single-handedly – the next generation of saddlemakers, although that economic downturn Butcher mentioned has seen the market shrink as more people turn to synthetics manufactured more cheaply overseas.

"Last year was 20 per cent down on previous years," says Butcher, putting pink stars and spots and diamonds back in their bags.

"And the first two months of this year were very, very quiet, although things have picked up again this spring."

As if to illustrate the ongoing upturn, Jimmy Quinn appears in the doorway with two saddles over his arm. They look a little battered, and he hands them over to Ryan with instructions to make good the wear and tear and can he have one of them back by Thursday morning? Ryan nods, all in a day's work, looks them over and confesses that he's seen much worse. New girth-straps, a bit of stitching, new life breathed into old leather. They'll be ready for Thursday.

Back in the sewing room the Queen's silks sit assembled on the table, the braid gleaming. Lake picks up another order – this time a set of maroon and white 5oz silks – and begins sewing the panels together, stitching together the very fabric of British racing.

On location
in . . .
Newmarket

NEWMARKET

IAN CARNABY



WOOLSTON FERRY is still winning races, I see. Eight of them so far, all on the all-weather. Four for Mick Channon, three for David Pinder (generally at 20-1) and now a debut success for Henry Candy, who is certain to place him to advantage again.

'Oh the Woolston Ferry, it doesn't travel very fast. It was never built for comfort, it was built to last.' Which it did, for 141 years, and Lowry painted it, but then they built the Itchen Bridge and that was that. Gutta Percha and the Balladeers marked its passing with a song they hoped would rival Ferry Cross The Mersey by Gerry and the Pacemakers, which never quite happened, although I must say it's nice to get a personal thank-you note when you send off for the CD.

It's remarkable what you can fit into a single day if you really try. I'd always wondered whether it was possible to walk from the White Swan pub in Mansbridge, north of Southampton, all the way to the Platform, an excellent folk and blues hostelry on Town Quay, using a path by the Itchen the whole way. It isn't. You run out of path and have to wander through the red light area, which is no problem in the middle of the afternoon except that it was very hot and I was dripping sweat on to the Racing Post and the Weekender, thereby limiting their contribution to the Salisbury Placepot conundrum.

When I reached the quay I thought about walking over the bridge to Woolston, where the shipworkers at Thornycrofts, convinced that German prisoners of war were being better treated than British casualties, once rose as a man and marched on the military hospital at Netley. As Philip Hoare records in his superb book Spike Island, they gained the day and the prisoners were moved, but ended up closer to the railway line. A couple of escapees made it as far as Waterloo before being picked up again.

I've known the odd moment of sadness in Woolston – women, that sort of thing – so I settled instead for the Platform and a taxi all the way back to the White Swan, followed by the drive to Salisbury.

Two of my friends, Ray Greatorex and George Materna, had horses running there and Ray's two-year-old Jubilee Brig was only just pipped in the opener. Then Four Nations ran moderately in the long-distance handicap and George looked a bit subdued but I cheered him up. We can all see it'll win as soon as Amanda Perrett's horses hit form, can't we? Of course we can. Besides, I still had enough for a final pint in the Platform. I was pretty knackered, to be honest.

I suppose paradise is sitting in La Regata tapas restaurant, opposite Red Funnel steamers in Southampton, watching the world go by, although listening to Nelson Riddle's Route 66 theme in the car after a good day

Get your kicks on route 66 – or maybe somewhere closer

comes close. It was a great single because the B side was the haunting Lolita Ya Ya. Nelson was anxious that this shouldn't be too jaunty, given the subject matter of the film, and came to London to talk it over with director Stanley Kubrick.

It's hard to imagine any English equivalent of Route 66, although there is in fact a fascinating book called A272 – An Ode To A Road by Pieter Boogaart. The A272 runs from East Sussex to Winchester and Boogaart and his wife, a Dutch couple clearly head over heels in love with rural England, point out everything of interest along the way. I stopped off on the way back from Goodwood on Saturday to listen to the 7.00 at Lingfield, which I thought Picabo might win.

JUDGING from a conversation we had at Punchestown, I believe her owner Tom Ford may have been quite optimistic as well. Believe me, if you're going to listen in vain for a mention, the A272 is the most sympathetic place to go.

Incidentally, news reaches this distant outpost that space is given over to the boy Channon in today's paper. Therefore, I'll just say I'm very pleased about Samitar, because if anyone deserved a 1,000 Guineas it was Mick. He's a fighter who keeps on going, no matter what, and I could have filled this space with tributes from former Southampton players – three of whom, Bobby Stokes, Peter Osgood and Alan Ball, are sadly no longer with us.

On a lighter note, it was good to see him winning on a Sunday. "You must have been born on a Sunday," I once said to him. "If I arrived on a Saturday – Southampton 2 (Ted Bates, Wilf Grant) Bury 0 – and you turned up eight days later, that must have been a Sunday."

Mick pondered this. "Well, if you say so," he said. "I haven't a clue. I've never been one for looking back, you know."

I've often wondered what that must be like.

'It's hard to imagine any English equivalent of Route 66'

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

James Burn catches up with former Scottish trainer **Len Lungo**

No regrets as old master enjoys new life

IT'S nearly three years since Len Lungo relinquished his trainer's licence, but he's had plenty to occupy himself with, including saddling the odd runner for his son-in-law James Tate, who trains in Newmarket.

A new house has been built on the yard where Lungo trained from in Dumfries, while a farm and hay-growing business require his attention. He also owns a snooker club which his wife Barbara helps run, although don't expect Lungo to be troubling world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan any time soon.

"I'm hopeless," he says. "I'm a reserve for some of the teams when the reserves can't make it."

Lungo proved more adept with horses, winning the Swinton Hurdle and Northumberland Plate with old favourite Mirjan, while Cheltenham Festival victories came courtesy of Celtic Giant and Freetown, with Crazy Horse and The Bajan Bandit both winners at Aintree's Grand National meeting.

In the 2000-01 season he eclipsed the longtime Scottish record set by Ken Oliver when saddling 59 winners,



Name Len Lungo **Age** 62

When at large 1988-2009

Greatest moment Winning the Northumberland Plate and Swinton Hurdle with Mirjan, as well as wins at the Cheltenham Festival and Aintree's Grand National meeting

Other notable achievements Setting new records for most winners in a jumps season for a Scottish trainer three times

but does not class that feat as much of a highlight. "It really wasn't of any relevance to me – it was just a good season," he says. Lungo is proud, though, of an award he received for the best winners-to-runners strike-rate in Britain one season.

Of more interest is Tate's training venture. Married to Lungo's youngest daughter Lucinda, Tate started training last year and can count on the support from his father-in-law.

"It was huge for me when they decided they wanted to train on their own," Lungo adds. "When they did get fixed up the premises they got needed to be refurbished. So I helped a bit there. I was over at Musselburgh and Thirsk to saddle a few horses for them recently so I saw a lot of my old friends on course, and when they have runners in the north I'll be available to saddle and we do go down and visit as well."

Lungo's oldest daughter Leonora is married to Tate's brother Richard and the former trainer reckons he'll be kept busy with grandchildren Ralph and Lena.

Reflecting on his decision to retire, Lungo says: "I haven't got any regrets at all. I miss the company and camaraderie of the owners and trainers I was friendly with, but I don't miss the administration and all the rules and regulations."

"As far as I was concerned it was time for a rest. We had a great time for 20 years and 650 winners or so later we decided it was time to stop."

I GOTTA HORSE

Tom O'Ryan speaks to **John Wicks**, founder of Lets Go Racing 1

'When we win it goes off the Richter scale'

Horse Jubilee Games **Wins** 1

Owner John Wicks (Lets Go Racing 1)

Previous horses Rossini's Dancer, Bachelor Knight, One Kool Dude

JOHN WICKS must be doing something right. It's 12 years since he founded Lets Go Racing 1. Not only is the 20-share group still going strong but Wicks rarely, if ever, has had to advertise for new members.

"People have stayed in it, year-on-year. More than half the original members are still with us," he says.

"They're all good friends. They weren't when they came in, obviously, because they didn't know each other. They are people from all over the country with a common interest and they enjoy the social side, the stable visits and everything that goes with it."

That includes winning. The Lets Go Racing 1 colours were recently worn by champion jockey Paul Hanagan and carried to victory at Musselburgh by the Richard Fahey-trained juvenile Jubilee Games, a £7,500 yearling purchase, who was having only his second outing.

"It was fabulous," declares Wicks.



Members of the Lets Go Racing 1 group with Jubilee Games this month

"There's nothing like having a winner. There were about six members there, plus family and friends, making about 13 in all and we had a great day, which is what it's all about."

Previous success stories, always with Fahey, include Rossini's Dancer and Bachelor Knight. "Rossini's Dancer was terrific for us. He cost £5,000, won four races and was sold to go jumping for £20,000, which meant that members then got a free year and we had Bachelor Knight, who won three races for us."

Last year was one of nailbiting frustration. Lets Go Racing were represented by One Kool Dude, who ran 11 times and paid his way, but who, despite finishing second three times, couldn't get his head in front.

"He was beaten a short head first time out at Dundalk and he was also second to his stablemate Lily's Angel, a Listed winner afterwards, and to Lilbourne Lad, who was one of

Richard Hannon's best two-year-olds, and yet he couldn't win a race," sighs Wicks with a smile.

A great racing enthusiast, Wicks lives in a village on the edge of the North York Moors where he has four holiday cottages.

"I work ten or 12 hours every day. For me, racing is a diversion," says Wicks, who also runs racing days out, which comprise a behind-the-scenes morning visit to the Fahey yard, tied in with an afternoon of racing at York.

Plans for Jubilee Games are fluid. "He is in the Weatherbys Super Sprint which would be very exciting," says Wicks, who works hard at making Lets Go Racing a success. "I put a lot of hours into it and provide members with masses of information."

"We're not about betting and drinking. We just enjoy our racing and have a good day out. And," he adds, "when we do have success it can go off the Richter scale!"

ASCOT FASHION

Amber Burns with a weekly what-to-wear guide in the run-up to the royal meeting



'Bespoke clothing means items can be tailored to your needs'

Which designers will you be wearing for Royal Ascot this year? Can you describe your outfit?

I have several outfits planned and will be wearing dresses by designers such as Claire Thorogood and John Charles which all fall past the knee and will be worn with jackets. One of the dresses is in classic navy and white. I like a loose fit as this ensures that the material doesn't strain, which can create unflattering shots. I will be wearing hats by Vivienne Sheriff and Rachel Trevor-Morgan.

Why have you chosen these designers? Have you worn their designs to Royal Ascot before?

It's the first time I've worn John Charles to Royal Ascot but I think his occasion wear is perfect for this event. Claire Thorogood has been my designer of choice for Ascot in the past. What I like about her creations is that they are unique and made specifically for me so every item is a one-off.

The other advantage of having bespoke clothing is that items can be tailored to meet your precise needs. For example, when I am filming there are shots of me from behind so I need to make sure that there is a lot of detailing on the fabric at the back of the outfit.

What will you wear?

BBC broadcaster Clare Balding



What do you consider to be important when choosing your outfit for such a prominent race meeting?

As I am filming all day I need to make sure that I am wearing comfortable shoes as I walk around a lot. I tend to go for wider heels that won't get caught in the paddock and mid heels which aren't too high. I like big hats but need to steer clear of anything that covers the face as it's important that people can see me clearly when I'm interviewing.

What's in No.3 A look at handbags

Have you ever heard the term less is more? Well it is this summer, as handbags are scaling down in size with clutch and small shoulder bags taking the lead in the season's style stakes.

These petite creations are perfect for Royal Ascot as being compact in size they look sleek and far more elegant than oversized totes which can appear bulky and awkward.

However, just because these bags are small it doesn't mean to say they can't be punchy.

Exotic skins, from leopard to crocodile, are summer favourites with designers such as Jimmy Choo and Christian Louboutin, and these work well in vibrant colours or peachy nudes.

Colour blocking and weaving are also proving popular and some first-class examples of this can be found in high street stores such as Mango and Reiss.

For a more refined look, Lanvin's elegant shoulder bag range has matched fresh pastel colours with chain straps entwined with grosgrain ribbon. The summery shades in this collection are chic and dainty and the chain straps are a decorative delight.

Get the look (left to right below)

Mango – Touch suede shoulder bag, £89.99 (www.mango.com)

Reiss – Sonar, £89 (www.reissonline.com)

Jimmy Choo – Cassie, £995 (www.jimmychoo.com)

Lanvin Happiccolo leather shoulder bag, £990 (www.net-a-porter.com)



THE SUNDAY REVIEW

Our guide to what racing fans can look forward to reading, seeing and watching

Revealing insight into the life of Hughes

A Weight Off My Mind

Richard Hughes

£20 (£15 on Racing Post website)

published by Racing Post



A READER'S appreciation very much depends on their original knowledge of the subject, so let's get the cards on the table.

Before tackling Richard Hughes's autobiography, I was aware he was a jockey, indeed a very talented rider sometimes compared to Lester Piggott. I knew he struggled with his weight, he's married to a daughter of Richard Hannon, he was bred to ride horses, had ridden many good ones and had gone close to being champion jockey. But despite a reasonable knowledge of Hughes, I now know much more.

This is a book that will make you look at Hughes in a different way. For those who thought of him as 'just' a jockey, you will now see a man who has reached rock bottom, faced his demons and fought the devil off.

If you considered him a 'talent', you will wonder how he so nearly came to throwing everything away – not just horses, but a wife. Peeing and drinking have taken up a large part of Hughes's life. Irony if you think about it. Not surprisingly they take up a good chunk of his autobiography.

Born in 1973, Hughes, who became a jockey at "the age of seven" via the pony racing circuit in Ireland, is not fat, but he's tall, which means weight – too much of it – has always been a huge problem. It was an issue when

he was trying to do "5st" on ponies, so no surprise it would become an issue later.

We learn he first stepped on to a racecourse as a professional in 1988 at Naas, but it would be about 50 rides later that he'd ride his initial winner, Viking Melody, at Roscommon.

Style and patience have become synonymous with Hughes rides, and we get an early idea why when he writes: "In my early rides I was impetuous and far too eager. I was fierce keen to go for any gap."

It seems that apart from father Dessie, it was Christy Roche, the man who won the Derby on Secret, who installed words for Hughes to adhere to. "Christy taught me that you had to balance instinct with analysis," Hughes says. "The first thought was not always the wisest thought."

Actually, we learn Hughes was quite sensible in his early days and when money came his way he bought a house and invested. He would move from Ireland to Britain in 1994 to join Hannon and soon fall for the trainer's daughter, Lizzie.

It was at this time Hughes's weight became a serious issue. He says: "I did what all the jockeys do: I watched what I ate and made myself sweat. But I did more than that. I drank. I drank regularly and often."

Hughes's description of his drinking problem is graphic and done in

honest detail. Read the book to find out more, but Alcoholics Anonymous and admitting his problem play a big part in his recovery. Away from peeing and drink, for those who enjoy horsey stuff there is plenty. I loved remembering His Song, an animal with much talent, and the battle with Paul Hanagan for the jockeys' championship was interesting with suggestions of dirty tricks.

Hughes gives us a hint of frustration over certain situations, without any threat of a lawsuit! When he was retained by Khalid Abdullah, it is interesting that Hughes says Henry Cecil told him he was not riding Passage Of Time in the Breeders' Cup because "the prince wanted to use an American jockey", while racing manager Teddy Grimthorpe is quoted as saying: "I'm sorry, Richard, but it's the trainer who does not want you!"

It was interesting how little Abdullah spoke to Hughes personally, and on that score I'd have liked to have learnt more about the Hannon riding plans and how the stable chooses between Hughes and Ryan Moore and Dane O'Neill when having multiple entries in a race. But all in all a rattling fine read and worth a place in any racing enthusiast's library. Ghost writer and Journalist of the Year Lee Mottershead can be proud of his work.

Matt Chapman

Promising debut that leaves you with a thirst for more

Death On The Home

Straight

Iris V Penn

£12.99

Memoirs Books –
memoirsbooks.co.uk
and

racingpost.com/bookshop



FIRST-TIME author Iris V Penn has written a novel that looks set to be a hit with racing enthusiasts. As a keen racegoer and member of the Elite Racing Club, Penn is well placed to depict the world of racing and gambling with accuracy and authenticity.

The white cover with a red splash over a racing scene immediately informs the reader this isn't going to be a 'nice' story, but rather one that is filled with blood and terror.

The novel is written from the perspective of Valerie Elphick, who is a close friend and assistant to the late racefan Ken Hinde. This first-person

narrative allows the reader to enter Elphick's world and feel like they are on an investigative journey with her, which turns out to be a positive.

The story is based around the unusual circumstances of Hinde's death in a car accident. With the coroner pronouncing that the event was accidental, Elphick believes there has to be a different answer and so her journey begins enlisting the help of various characters along the way.

Readers who are familiar with the racing world will be able to relate to the references to the Racing Post and Derek Thompson and Penn's account of a day at the races is also excellent.

There are a few inaccuracies,

however, such as a pony being equated to £500 and Walthamstow dog track being labelled the Goodwood of greyhound racing, a not entirely accurate description of the defunct dog track.

In addition, as the book is very short, there isn't as much character development as there could be and you are left, frustratingly, wanting to know more.

All in all, however, Penn's debut novel is well written, quick paced and at only 100 pages long it can be devoured in one sitting – a perfect read on the train journey en route to the races.

Sarah Hall

Racing likes and dislikes of . . .

bookmaker **Victor Chandler**

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT RACING



I love the nervous anticipation and excitement of the big meetings, especially Cheltenham which is always a magnificent climax and celebration of the jumps season; indeed nothing in sport stirs the mind and body like quality racing over both codes. I look forward to Champions Day becoming a fitting climax to the Flat season and hope the whole of racing gets behind the concept and the day goes from strength to strength. I love the longevity of the leading jumpers and the fact we see the likes of Kauto Star year after year and the sense that we feel we know them almost as much as their connections. It is wonderful to see some of the best horses on the Flat being kept in training such as Frankel and So You Think and long may that trend continue. After Cheltenham and Aintree I love the way the seasons lead us naturally into the start of the turf Flat season.

WHAT I HATE ABOUT RACING

The Flat turf season is still dictated by the Victorian social calendar and the Guineas, Derby and Ascot are too close together. Racing needs one leader and one governing body; there are too many factions. eg. RCA, ROA, RfC, BCS, REL, Horsemen's Group. I dislike the fractured relationship between bookmakers and the industry; we're constantly perceived as the pantomime villain. I used to enjoy the camaraderie with other bookmakers on track and the cordial relationship with other racing professionals which is no longer feasible; I think only Colin Webster and Geoff Banks remain on the rails from when I first started. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to watch or get excited by some of the dross on offer over both codes. Racing often defends itself when there is nothing to defend; it is only two years since Tony McCoy was Sports Personality of the Year largely for his win in the Grand National. Since then we've made modifications to the National fences which have not helped as a result of a knee-jerk reaction; horses no longer respect the fences. The whip rule changes brought in last autumn were handled very poorly and few involved in the process and consultations came out smelling of roses.

ONE THING YOU MUST DO THIS WEEK

HER MAJESTY has reigned over us for 60 years and the least we can all do is to get out the barbecue and watch sport on one of the two bank holidays on this Diamond Jubilee weekend.

The racing itself has a decidedly 'after the Derby' and 'before Royal Ascot' feel to it, but bank holidays and half-terms have their own attractions, not least of which is Cartmel, the Cumbrian course that is laying on a double helping of family fun tomorrow and Wednesday.

Expect a fairground, high jinks and capers, and Derek Thompson, with prices ranging from £12 per adult and £10 per pensioner – £10 extra for parking a domestic gazebo.

It's virtually impossible to escape family fun for the next couple of days. Redcar stages the Zetland Gold Cup, but Yarmouth has a snake charmer the same afternoon and Towcester's card tomorrow will be accompanied by some people dressing up as multi-coloured TV apes known by small children everywhere as ZingZillas. Your choice.

Amid all the holiday confusion, the traditional Monday evening meeting at Windsor moves to Saturday, while Friday and Saturday see racing in June on the July course at Newmarket.

Peter Thomas

And here are four more things you should do . . .

► Visit Newmarket to see a collection of racing purists and fuddy-duddies covering their ears at the course's second annual Summer Saturday Live. Seeing McFly do their stuff after racing could be the thing to round off your day, or maybe you'd rather gnaw your own arm off. Meanwhile, local band No Soap, No Radio play at Carlisle tomorrow, promising "sharp lyrics, lush melodies and a fascinating fusion of jazz, blues and rock with an infusion of Latin grooves".

► Enjoy a point-to-point on the final full weekend of the season, with tomorrow's bank holiday featuring meetings at Chaddesley Corbett, Upcott Cross and Bonvilston, before the action moves to Trecoed on Saturday.

► Get a bit of culture for yourself, without having to move away from the gee-gees. The annual Impressions of the Turf exhibition at the Osborne Studio Gallery features contemporary equine artists such as Alistair Little and Hubert de Watrigant, sculptors like Charlie Langton and William Newton and horses like Big Buck's. The show runs until June 10 at 2 Motcomb Street, London SW1.

► For undiluted racing, head to Ireland, where Naas stages three Listed events tomorrow, the Curragh has one on Sunday and Leopardstown chips in with the Seamus and Rosemary McGrath Memorial Saval Beg Stakes and the Nijinsky Stakes on Friday – and far less in the way of family fun, Queens and bank holidays.

THE HOOFINGTON POST

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM RACING'S HEARTLANDS

Hedley ready to join clerk's roster

JANE HEDLEY is set to become the latest woman to take on the clerk of the course role, a decade after being turned down for the post on the grounds of inexperience.

Refusing to be deterred by that rejection, Hedley, 35, has since broadened her knowledge of the industry and is now being groomed to step into the shoes vacated by Sulekha Varma at Nottingham and Market Rasen.

The prospect of landing what is her dream job persuaded Hedley to leave Mark Johnston's Middleham stable, where she had been a yard manager for six years, to enrol on a six-month training course which, when completed, should see her take over the reins at the two



Jane Hedley: set to start new job in November

tracks in November.

Over a diverse career in the sport, Hedley, who comes from a hunting and point-to-point background in the Scottish borders and studied agriculture at Edinburgh University, has worked for Henrietta Knight, Alan King and Newmarket racecourse, in addition to spending two years marketing stallion nominations

for Shadwell Stud.

"About ten years ago I applied for this job, but I didn't have enough experience at the time so I set about putting that right," says Hedley, who is spending the majority of her training at Haydock under the tutelage of clerk Kirkland Tellwright.

"I've grown up always seeing myself doing this type of job and when the chance came along again it was just too good to miss and I'm thoroughly enjoying the training."

With Varma having moved to take charge of Huntingdon and Warwick, Robert Bellamy has taken over the clerking duties at Nottingham and Market Rasen pending Hedley's appointment.

Jockeys join the Nunday fun in attempt to break a world record

DOING THEIR (HA)BIT

FOUR of Ireland's top jump jockeys – Davy Russell, Ruby Walsh, Barry Geraghty and Paul Carberry – are taking to the habit and all in a good cause.

The quartet of unlikely sisters are pledging their support for Nunday, which takes place in Listowel on June 30, when approximately 500 people will don nuns' habits in aid of suicide crisis centre Pieta House.

The objective is to try to break the Guinness world record for the largest gathering in one place of people dressed as nuns with the number to beat reported to be 250.

Nunday will start at 5.30pm in Frank Sheehy Park and will involve a parade through the north Kerry town and further celebrations in Listowel town square.

The idea is the brainchild of local woman Cora O'Brien, who lost her teenage son David to suicide in 2007 and is now actively involved in all aspects of suicide prevention in Kerry.

Registration for Nunday



Praying for Nunday: Paul Carberry (left) and Ruby Walsh

costs €20 and all participants will receive a nun's outfit that complies with the official Guinness World Records guidelines.

Registration is available at nunday.eventbrite.ie or from local businesses in Listowel.

For further details see facebook.com/nunday.

Treadwell enjoys first taste of Pardubicka track

A TRIP to the Czech Republic by Liam Treadwell has fired ambitions of competing in the Velka Pardubicka after the Grand National-winning jockey won one of the qualifiers for the famous race at Pardubice racecourse.

Treadwell repaid an invitation from trainer Hana Kabelkova by riding Trezor to a six-length victory in the 3m5f Velka Cena Pardubice a week ago, bringing his mount with a perfectly timed challenge to win the first of four qualifying races for the Velka Pardubicka in October.

"It was my first visit and I was a bit daunted about going but I was really looked after," says Treadwell. "It was a fantastic experience and I got a real buzz from it. There were some very big hedges and the water jumps were very wide."

"We jump every fence that is jumped in the Pardubicka except the Taxis and it's 1,000 metres shorter. You have to get round to qualify for the Pardubice but to go and win was fantastic."

It wasn't just a case of having to turn up, with the jockey, who has never ridden over Cheltenham's cross-country course, having to thoroughly learn the course layout and the route taken to avoid any embarrassing wrong turns.

"Going the wrong way was the most worrying thing," he adds. "I spent four hours that



Liam Treadwell: won a qualifier for the famous race

morning preparing. It took two hours to walk the course and then going round again studying the maps. You have to keep your wits about you to make sure you go the right way."

"They are keen for me to keep the ride on the horse and there is another qualification race they are likely to run in

anyway and then the Pardubice in October. I must thank the trainer for putting me up."

"From what I gather some frown on English jockeys coming over because they don't know the course well enough, but she stood her ground to give me this opportunity."

Ewart chasing her golfing dream in US

JODI EWART has racing in her blood, but the 24-year-old's sporting dreams have been realised in another direction after breaking into the big league of American women's professional golf.

With two top-ten finishes and earnings of more than \$100,000 in only her second season on tour, the fortunes of the Florida-based player, who has been tipped as the rising start of the circuit, are being closely followed at Mark Johnston's Middleham stable where her father Harvey Ewart works as a groom after previously spending 30 years with Chris Thornton.

Ewart, 56, is justifiably proud of the achievements of his Northallerton-born daughter who, after being encouraged by her grandfather to take lessons at Catterick Golf Club at the age of nine, went on to win the English national title twice and broke US college records when representing the University of New Mexico before turning professional.

Ewart has been playing in the ShopRite LPGA Classic in New Jersey this weekend and will be cheered on by her parents later this month when they are flying to Ontario to watch her compete in the Manulife Financial LPGA Classic.

"I didn't realise it was Royal Ascot when I booked the trip," admits Ewart. "Jodi is enjoying her life as a golfer, it's all she has ever wanted to do and whenever she plays she knows there will always be plenty of support for her on this side of the Atlantic."



Jodi Ewart: talented golfer

Sanderson hoping to make fresh training start next month

DEBBIE SANDERSON has become the latest female departure from Britain's training ranks although, unlike Sue Bradburne, Tor Stugis and Alison Thorpe who have also relinquished their licences this year, she is hoping to make an early return to the profession.

Sanderson, 47, was looking to raise her profile in 2012

with the switch to Moorehouse Stables in Tickhill, near Doncaster, that was formerly home to David Brown, but strained relations with the yard's owner, Ron Hull, meant the move did not work out and she has now left.

The decision prevented Sanderson adding to her 19 career Flat successes when

Bitaphon, who carries her colours, won at Nottingham last week, as he was allowed to fulfil the engagement only after his entry was transferred to John Balding.

Sanderson started training in 2009 but was forced to seek new accommodation last year when Richard Budge decided to close his Wiseton Hall

Stables near Doncaster.

"Everything is up in the air at the moment, but I want to continue training from my own Poplar Cottage Stables in Retford," says Sanderson, who would have the facilities to cater for a reduced string of around eight.

"I'll obviously have to wait for a yard inspection and the

right boxes to be ticked, but I can't foresee any problems and it will mean I can keep doing the job I love, if on a smaller scale."

Sanderson adds: "I'm having a mini-break at the moment, but provided everything goes through okay I would hope to be back some time next month."

THE STORY OF THE RACE

DRAMATIC DECISION TO BYPASS EPSOM PAYS OFF

FEW horses can have entered their three-year-old careers under the weight of such massive expectation as Celtic Swing.

The hype was merited. Unbeaten in three starts at two, Celtic Swing ended his juvenile campaign with a spectacular victory in the Racing Post Trophy, where a 12-length margin earned him a Racing Post Rating of 133 – the highest ever achieved by a domestic two-year-old.

Celtic Swing's Classic campaign started well enough when he won the Greenham, only to come unstuck at odds-on in the Guineas on faster ground when he was beaten by Pennekamp, albeit by only a head. He was made ante-post favourite to get his revenge in the Epsom Derby, only for owner Peter Savill to produce a major twist in the tale.

THE BUILD-UP

Amid worries that both fast ground and Epsom's undulations would not suit Celtic Swing, Savill chose to bypass Britain's premier Classic in favour of the French equivalent six days earlier at Chantilly. Hysteria surrounded the controversial decision.

Peter Savill, owner He was an exceptional champion as a two-year-old and everyone thought we'd go Guineas, Derby, Leger and go for the Triple Crown. I was seriously interested but he was beaten in the 2,000 Guineas and he had slightly questionable front legs, so I wasn't sure Epsom would suit him unless there was some give in the ground. With hindsight there's no question that he hurt himself on the fast ground in the Guineas, though it came to light only subsequently. If the ground had been like this year's Guineas we might have seen a Frankel sort of performance. He was certainly one of the greatest two-year-olds we've ever seen. I remember talking to Kevin Darley about him and neither of us thought he was ever going to get beaten, he was that good.

Lady Herries, trainer He was absolutely amazing in the Racing Post Trophy and he was a wonderful horse, a thrilling horse. It was so sad he didn't win the Guineas but he just couldn't handle going downhill – he was coming back at Pennekamp when they went uphill.

Kevin Darley, jockey Peter got a lot of flak for not taking the obvious option after he was beaten in the Guineas but I think it was one of the best decisions of his life. The horse hated going down hills. In the Guineas he just lost his action in the Dip and Pennekamp got first run. Another few strides and we would have beaten him.

Savill We went to Epsom and walked round the track and the ground was very much on the firm side so we went to France. It was a well-publicised decision because France was felt to be the lesser option but I had a grand each-way at 500-1 with Victor Chandler for the Derby so I certainly didn't take the decision lightly!

THE RACE

Nerves were jangling at Chantilly for all members of the Celtic Swing team, none of whom were regulars at such an exalted level. Then still a 1m4f event, the Prix du Jockey Club looked a decent race as well, with opponents including a powerful Andre Fabre quartet plus other fancied horses from Britain in Classic Cliche and Flemensfirth.

Darley The French Derby was a different ball game for me as I wasn't used to riding in that sort of race and Celtic Swing was the best horse I'd ever ridden by a long way. I was 35 and had been scraping the barrel for a number of years so Peter showed great faith in me. Back then he had 54 horses with 18 different trainers and he made me the jockey I was. Although I had ridden in France, it was also my first ever ride at Chantilly. I remember Peter was really, really nervous – I had actually walked the track before he got there but he asked me if I was going to walk the track and I just showed him the racecard and said: "Look Peter, I don't need to, they've put a map in here!" It took him five or six seconds before the penny dropped. We had a good laugh and it eased the tension.

Herries It was the best decision Peter ever made not to run him at Epsom because he would never have handled it. The whole day in France was incredibly exciting – Celtic Swing even had bodyguards with him in his plane as he flew over. It was very nerve-racking but one did enjoy it – so exciting to watch him win. He

Result Prix du Jockey Club

Chantilly,
June 4, 1995

- | | |
|----------------|------|
| 1 Celtic Swing | Evsf |
| 2 Poliglote | 8-1 |
| 3 Winged Love | 5-1 |

11 ran
Distances ½l, shd



Celtic Swing opens his three-year-old account with victory in the Greenham Stakes. A shock defeat in the 2,000 Guineas was to follow

'I held my breath for the last three furlongs hoping that he'd hold on'

distance just got us as I thought we'd win at 200 metres, but when Celtic Swing came he just quickened. It's a shame he didn't run at Epsom!

THE AFTERMATH

The joy was short-lived as Celtic Swing was to run just once more when he broke down in the Irish Derby, which was won by Chantilly third Winged Love. Celtic Swing's progeny at stud included Takeover Target and Breeders' Cup heroine Six Perfections. Lady Herries and Peter Savill, destined to leave a deep indentation on racing politics as a combative BHB chairman, have both scaled down their racing interests these days with Savill more involved in the breeding side. The ever-popular Darley, who was champion jockey in 2000, retired in November 2007.

Savill I met Vincent O'Brien at York soon after the French Derby and he said to me: "That horse of yours is carrying quite a serious injury. Watch how he canters back after the race and he's not putting any pressure on his near-fore." We had him x-rayed and nothing showed up but it emerged after the Irish Derby on an ultrasound that he had injured himself – and it was probably about two months old, dating back to the Guineas, which was what Vincent had said. It just shows you what an amazing trainer he was.

Darley I had such a close association with Celtic Swing that he will always be special for me. He had such a presence that I had noticed him at Lady Herries's as a two-year-old when I was giving another horse a test drive for Peter, who ended up buying both of them. I also cannot speak highly enough of Lady Anne and her team and his lad Bob Mason, who absolutely adored him. He was a very, very difficult horse to train and his conformation was terrible. That was what did for him in the end. The amazing thing is I don't think he ever ran over his optimum trip of a mile and a quarter.

Savill Obviously Ireland was a huge disappointment but he was an absolutely brilliant racehorse – the best horse I've ever had by far and the best I'm ever likely to have. But he just had those funny legs – and I did feel vindicated in the decision not to run at Epsom as Pennekamp broke down there and never ran again and another horse collapsed and died.

Interviews by Nicholas Godfrey



Owner
Peter Savill



Trainer
Lady Herries



Jockey
Kevin Darley

was such a thrilling horse to have.

Darley He had a tremendous turn of foot but it was a big field and I had it in my mind not to be too far back. He was going really sweetly when we passed the chateau – so well in fact that maybe I committed earlier than I would have liked. Then again, I was conscious of the way French races are run – they come like Exocet missiles in the last furlong so I wasn't worried about taking the race by the scruff of the neck. Poliglote got to him but he wouldn't have got past us if we'd gone round again. He was pricking his ears and just doing enough.

Savill I remember holding my breath for the last three furlongs when he went to the front. He didn't pull away like he usually did – there were a lot of horses around him and I was just hoping he would hold on. It wasn't one of his best performances by any stretch of the imagination – I was sure it wasn't his best form and I was left feeling a combination of elation and relief. Having a horse like that is an excitement and a pleasure but it is also a big burden, a strain for everybody involved. You enjoy it but there's also serious pressure.

Freddy Head, Poliglote's jockey Before the race I thought we had a chance but Celtic Swing was a true champion. Poliglote was a good horse and I think the

STEVE PALMER ON SUNDAY



PUNTING ADVENTURES WITH SPORTS BETTING'S TOP WRITER

GOODNESS gracious me. With a bit of luck (whatever that is), I would now be a quarter of a millionaire. Having been deep in a betting trough a month and a half ago, resembling a big fat pig foraging for scraps in a dirty swamp, I am now threatening to scale peaks which would have Sir Ranulph ruddy Fiennes quaking in his climbing boots.

Regular Racing Post readers will be aware that I was £36,000 up from five weeks of golf punting going into the BMW PGA Championship and Crowne Plaza Invitational, so that allowed me to go for the jugular (ooh, I love a nice jugular). I decided to target a £250,000 haul from those events via my two main fancies, Justin Rose and Zach Johnson.

Doubles are obviously the tanks which blow the biggest holes in the armour of the bookmaker, and fortunately there are still some firms prepared to stare my main gun squarely in the eye as this bitter war intensifies.

Stan James would allow me only £50 at their enhanced win-only prices (23-1 Rose and 15-1 Johnson) and Blue Square would accommodate only £75 at 20-1 and at 14-1, but Paddy Power, like a brave Irish warrior standing up to me with a shield made of impenetrable emeralds, laid the remaining £625 I wanted at 20s and 14s.

The singles I had – £400 on Rose at 24 on Betfair, £350 on Johnson at 17.5, £195 on Johnson at 16.5 and £35 on Johnson at 15.5 – just increased the possible returns slightly past £250,000 (allowing for some little trading should the need arise on the Sunday).

And then the drama commenced. Rose opened up with a 67 at Wentworth to sit one shot off the lead in a tie for third, while Johnson carded a 64 for a one-shot advantage across the pond.

I drove to Wentworth early on Friday to watch Rose on the back nine



Good guy:
Zach Johnson did his bit in the States

and was regretting my trip as he began to falter. He missed an 18-inch par putt on the 17th hole and I was to the right of the green finding myself uncontrollably attempting to fell an 80-foot pine tree with my bare hands.

A lacklustre 71 left Rose six shots behind the pacesetter James Morrison, but only two off the much more dangerous runner in second place, Luke Donald. Johnson then registered a 67 to lie second, two shots behind Jason Dufner.

At the halfway stage of both tournaments, I felt Donald and Dufner were the only men capable of spoiling my party, so I elected to throw a little cover-shot.

I had staked £3,000 on the week's golf, having gradually increased my weekly outlay during the winning streak (I staked £1,250 once I got a bit of initial momentum and this week the pot rose to £4,000), so I elected to have a double on Donald and Dufner which would get my £3,000 back if all my original bets failed. I had £450 with Stan James at 9-4 Donald and 11-8 Dufner.

After the third round of both tournaments had been completed, I was in terrific shape, and opted for some more gentle

trading. Rose was in second place, two shots behind the front-running Donald (Morrison had capitulated) and two ahead of the man in third. Johnson was in second place too, one shot behind Dufner and seven ahead of the man in third. At that point, I had £3,000 on Donald at 1.55 on Betfair and £1,230 on Dufner at 1.94.

I literally couldn't sleep on Saturday night. I tend to take all financial matters in my stride – money can't buy you love, as some wise old Merseysiders once sang – but the possibility of landing a quarter-of-a-million-pound cash injection the following day had got me tossing and turning like a deranged walrus.

I spent my shower on Sunday morning working out in my mind the amounts I would be giving family and friends once the £250,000 had arrived in my bank account. I was rehearsing my lines in the style of one of those 'secret millionaires' on Channel 4, gleefully imagining the reaction of the most deserving recipients.

Then I purchased some premium-strength lager to take the edge off (it's important to take the edge off), before settling down for the final round of the BMW PGA.

Rose tied for the lead with birdies at the third and fourth holes, Donald looked rattled, and lots of strange, involuntary whooping noises were emanating from my mouth. The coup was on in a big way.

Slowly but surely, though, Donald then started ramming agonising metaphorical daggers into my crotch. His putter began purring and birdies at the sixth, seventh and tenth saw him ease clear of his compatriot. An errant approach from Rose to the 16th hole sealed my fate and he finished second. Fun over.

The sudden sucking of wind from my sails left me a stricken vessel and I could not bring myself to watch the early stages of the Crowne Plaza final round.

I couldn't work out who I wanted to win. If Johnson triumphed, I would make £7,000 profit from the golfing week but would be left wondering 'what might have been' had Rose's putter not misbehaved. If Dufner converted his slender lead, I would make only £3,000, but would not have any lingering anguish.

Johnson eventually prevailed, so that is £43,000 of golf profits in six weeks, but yes, you've guessed it, I can't help thinking what might have been.

Is it possible for a human brain to ever generate total contentment? Tragically, I'm not sure it is.

Oops! Justin Rose appears to feel Palmer's pain



How just one Rose ended up costing me bloomin' £250,000

Porsche or no Porsche I'm determined to stay in the fast lane

BETTING HIGHS

I'VE actually not had a bet on any other sport while I have been so wrapped up in attempts to land the facespitter-motherlode on the golf.

It seems to be a brief calm before the storm on the sporting calendar, but Euro 2012 will be getting under way soon, so rest assured I will be seeking some footballing 'highs' in due course.

BETTING LOWS

NONE to report, other than failure to win £250,000 (see above). I actually spent Tuesday night studying Porsches on eBay with my car-expert friend, wondering whether to spend a chunk of my winnings on a 911 Turbo, but I bottled it through fear of making a hasty return to a trough.

The Porsche I like most is sitting in

'I'd rather have a holiday to a paradise isle with a pleasant female like Hayley Turner'

Rochdale and trading at £25,495. It's got 420 brake horsepower, whatever that means (can pull the weight of 420 horses?).

I don't even really want a Porsche. I'd rather have a three-month holiday to a paradise isle with a pleasant female like Hayley Turner for company, frolicking in the sands and feeding one another coconut, but pals are eager for me to get behind the wheel of a supercar.

I suppose if I got a Porsche at least

I'd have something to show for my money if the worst-case scenario unfolds over the next few weeks (I go on a losing streak and end up back in a betting trough). Wallowing in the trough wouldn't be so bad if I could get out occasionally to polish my Porsche.

Or is that being too negative? Yeah, my trough days are behind me. I just want bigger peaks from now on. I want twin peaks, triple peaks. Show me more peaks, baby – come on!