

SUMMER 2008

The KINGSCLERE *Quarter*



THE PARK HOUSE STABLES NEWSLETTER

The KINGSCLERE Quarter



HATTON FLIGHT and WHISKEY JUNCTION discussing their four wins apiece

Front cover: HOLBECK GHYLL at Epsom
Back cover: Learning more on the Downs

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HALF

The 2008 flat season has started in fantastic fashion, with no fewer than 48 winners from 234 runners and the promise that there are many more to come. It seems a long time ago now since the dark mornings and freezing temperatures of January when we were busy with the jumpers and just a handful on the all-weather.

The beginning of the flat season saw the emergence of some very promising younger horses, but also the return of the slightly enigmatic **Holbeck Ghyll**. Having long been considered a close ally of bookmakers throughout the land, his reappearance win at Kempton Park will have



WESTERN ROOTS winning at Salisbury

seemed to many observers at the time a 'flash in the pan'. However, his subsequent march up the handicap ratings saw him realise a sufficient weight to guarantee entry to the prestigious 'Dash' sprint on Derby Day at Epsom. Taking up the running inside the last 100 yards he held on for a famous victory under a dashing ride from William Buick. It was a great result for his owners David and Patricia Nicholson and Alan and Irene Halsall, who have stuck by the horse through thick and thin in the past few seasons and we hope that it will not be the end of Holbeck Ghyll's 'renaissance'.

TERM REVIEW

by Andrew Balding



DARK MISSILE

Western Roots is another to have done very well this season. Brought to Park House in February when former trainer Mick Appleby took on the job of Head Lad, he has since won three times. Having been a useful two year old, Mick has been instrumental in his training and his recent victories suggest he is on the way back to former glories so there could well be more to come. That is also true of **Isphahan**, who earned a well-deserved break having recorded two wins and two seconds in just over a month during the early summer. He has rewarded his owner Mohamed Rafique's unwavering belief in his horse. **Brave Buggy** is another to have got his head in front when winning at Bath early in the summer. He stays well, loves fast ground and should win again.

The stable's venerable flagships **Banknote** and **Vanderlin** have between them won a total of 15 races and nearly £500,000 in prize money. Both have been running with great credit in pattern company and deserve further success, a remark that also applies to **Border Music**, who almost provided the Kingsclere Racing Club with a Royal Ascot winner in its first year when finishing a close fourth in the Buckingham Palace handicap at the Royal Meeting. Like so many horses with a preference for the all-weather, Border Music seems to appreciate the flat track at Ascot

and he will continue to run in some of the major handicaps there this year. Hopefully his turn is not far away.

Another to have gone close in top company this season is **Dark Missile**. Last year's Wokingham heroine ran very well on her first start this season in the Abernant Stakes at Newmarket, just losing out in a three-way photo having led a furlong from home. While things haven't gone her way since, she has shown that she is capable of mixing it with the top sprinters around and her 9th in the Golden Jubilee having been drawn in stall 19 was certainly not a bad effort, especially as those drawn 1-6 filled the first five places.

Old favourite **Ollie George** returned from injury in great form this year, and a third to subsequent Duke of Edinburgh winner Sugar Ray on his reappearance at his old stomping ground of Bath suggested a win wasn't far away. That win came in a class 2 handicap at Goodwood in June on only his third try at 1m6f, when having looked down and out with a furlong to run he bravely battled his way back to the lead under a never-say-die ride from Liam Keniry.

Show Winner and **Dingaan** have yet to taste success this season but that is not for want of trying, as the former has finished second on two occasions this year, while the latter has run up a sequence of three successive second placings. Both deserve the win that is proving so elusive this season as reward for such consistency. A return to the winners' enclosure has been very welcome for stable stalwarts **Drumming Party** and **Irony**. Both back in action of late and showing a great deal of their old enthusiasm.

FOUR YEAR OLDS

Yeaman's Hall was our first runner of the turf season, and an important one at that, as he was sent off favourite for the traditional curtain-raiser for the flat season, the Lincoln Handicap at Doncaster. The Lincoln has proved particularly strong form this year, with several of the protagonists having since won or gone close in better company. Unfortunately, Yeaman's Hall has been unable to prove himself at that level as he suffered an injury in the race that has kept him off the track ever since. Hopefully he can make a full recovery and one day fulfill his undoubted promise.

Hatton Flight has shown himself to be one of the most progressive stayers in training having won five of his last



WHISKEY JUNCTION winning at Lingfield his fourth consecutive win in 2008

six starts, including his last four in a row. Those wins have seen him rise around two stone in the handicap, but the manner of his latest win suggests he can prove a force to be reckoned with in considerably better company in time. Fast ground is important to him but such was his confidence that he managed to continue his winning run in an apprentice handicap at Ascot on ground considerably slower than ideal.

Whiskey Junction is another to have made great strides this season having returned this year from an injury sustained in the stalls at Bath last April. His full recovery from what was a potentially life-threatening incident would have been reward enough for the many people involved in assisting in his rehabilitation, however since his reappearance finishing fifth at Bath in April, he had won four races in succession, entitling him to tackle better company during his autumn campaign, while **Rambling Light** fulfilled the promise of some good runs early this season when winning in fair company at Windsor in June in first-time cheek-pieces, and **My Learned Friend** has returned to the form he showed at two, recording two wins at Lingfield on the turf, where he is now unbeaten in three starts.

Buccellati ran three times this season and on each occasion ran particularly well without winning. Having made his seasonal reappearance in a very strong renewal of the Group 3 Brigadier Gerard Stakes at Sandown Park, he went

on to finish a fine fourth in the Wolferton handicap on firm ground at Royal Ascot, where he was unlucky not to have finished closer having suffered trouble in running in the home straight. He showed his versatility when finishing fifth in the very competitive Old Newton Cup at Haydock in soft ground. Happily his turn came when winning a valuable mile and a quarter handicap at Ascot very easily in late July.

Oceana Gold has proved slightly disappointing on his last two starts having shown so much promise on his reappearance this year when only just failing to make all in a valuable heritage handicap at Newmarket in May. He was withdrawn at the start having been fractious in the stalls at Ascot in mid-July and it is to be hoped that he can soon return to his early-season form once his stalls problem is ironed out.

It was pleasing to see the return of Dark Missile's sister **Night Rocket** to the track in July, and though she could only manage fifth in what looked an average maiden, in her first start for some time and she duly came good in a median auction maiden at Wolverhampton under David Probert. This was somewhat of a relief as it was owner Jeff Smith's first winner from here this season! Another to come from a good family is **Siren's Gift**, whose dam was also owned by Jeff Smith and trained here at Park House, and was demoted from first place in the Group 1 Nunthorpe. A full-sister to Listed winner and former stablemate Speed Cop, she has



BUCCELLATI working with Jedediah (right)

gone close in good company on several occasions this year and deserves a change of luck in the near future.

THREE YEAR OLDS

Dream Eater's victory in the big sales race at Doncaster last year and his subsequent close sixth in the Group 1 Middle Park rightly suggested he could take high rank amongst the three year olds this year. He finished fifth in the 2000 Guineas without the benefit of a previous start, and all those to have finished in front of him that day have proven themselves to be top-class colts. His subsequent 3rd in the Jersey at Royal Ascot came in a strong renewal of that race, and the combination of the drop back in trip coupled with the lightening fast ground looked to prove just beyond him. He very much deserves Group race success before the end of the season.

Kempton Park has been a very successful venue for our horses with ten winners there so far this year, especially during the early part of the season, when our strike-rate reached over 33%. **Oceana Blue** provided the second part of a double (initiated by Holbeck Ghyll) when winning in late March, and **Amanjena** looked very useful when bolting up by six lengths on her handicap debut the following week. The following day, our second double of the season was recorded by two very promising unraced three-year-olds. **Ada River**, a sister to the very smart Listed winner Don't Dili Dali, won in good style on her racecourse debut. She was far from disgraced on her subsequent start behind the Oaks-fourth Clowance on just her second start, and there is surely improvement to come. The same can certainly be said for **Top Lock**, who has improved with each race since his Kempton victory, latterly finishing third in the Group 2 King Edward VII at Royal Ascot before filling the same position in the Group 1 German Derby in

Hamburg. He holds entries in the Great Voltigeur and the St Leger and will be a threat wherever he goes. A scopey son of the top stallion Nayef, he is from the same family as an old Kingsclere favourite Border Arrow and as his pedigree suggests, he should continue to improve with age.

Other early-season winners include **Relative Strength** and **Restless Genius**. Both haven't progressed on the racecourse since their seasonal reappearances but they remain lightly-raced and capable of better than they have showed of late. **Victoria Montoya** looks a progressive type, having got off the mark at the fourth attempt when successful at Goodwood. She was slightly below-par at York the next time but the ground that day was very testing and she did seem rather perturbed by the fluorescent yellow silks of one of her rivals, which resulted in her paying far less attention to the race than one would have liked! She won again however a decent handicap at Sandown and is of course related to some illustrious former stablemates. It



ADA RIVER



KALAHARI GOLD



TRANSFER

would be very pleasing to see her achieve some black type, which is a real possibility also for **My Aunt Fanny** who has impressed in winning twice around the tight turns of Chester since narrow defeats earlier this season. She is also a daughter of Nayef and probably the best of the Hitchins' family's homebreds to date!

Other winners include the lightly-raced pair **Kalahari Gold** and **Transfer**, who both recorded good maiden wins in June. **Blue Sky Basin** has won twice in very good style and looks capable of further improvement, while **Little Pete** has proved a fine addition to the yard and his Haydock win is surrounded by a string of placed efforts in good company. He would get the half-term award for consistency and toughness!

Meanwhile, the talents of two young Park House apprentices were showcased at the Newmarket July meeting, when former stable apprentice William Buick rode **Donegal** to victory in the Listed Bahrain Trophy. Having twice performed very well in the face of stiff tasks at the Chester May meeting and at Royal Ascot, Donegal deserved a black type win, but it did not come without considerable help from the jockey. Not to be outdone, current stable apprentice David Probert claimed his biggest success to date when victorious aboard **Jedediah** in a very valuable heritage handicap just one hour later, in the process notching up a 204-1 double for the stable on one of the most important racing days of the year. Jedediah's win came on the back of some fine runs in some of the most competitive handicaps around and he should continue to be a major force in those races throughout the remainder of this season.

Wigram's Turn has been slightly less fortunate than some of his stablemates, having twice bumped into very well-handicapped rivals. He continues to run well and really deserves to get his head in front. Others to have shown promise in defeat include **Prairie Storm** and **Royal Straight**, while **Abstract Colours**, **Ma Vie en Rose**, **Rabeera** and **Seedless** have all shown some promise.

TWO YEAR OLDS

Foundation Room was our first two year old runner of the year, and set a fine example to the others in winning in very good style on her debut at Salisbury. She went on



DONEGAL winning the Listed Bahrain Trophy at Newmarket



JEDEDIAH wins the £100,000 three year old handicap at Newmarket's July Meeting

to show improved form in finishing 3rd in a Listed event at Sandown Park before unfortunately picking up an injury. However, all being well she will be back for an autumn campaign to include the St Leger sales race at Doncaster, won last year by stablemate Dream Eater, as well as the Watership Down fillies sales race at Newbury. There is certainly plenty more to look forward to with her.

Prince Siegfried could not have been more impressive in winning his maiden and now has the Tattersalls Million as his main target, although he is likely to take in some pattern races before that. He looks an exciting prospect, as does **Swindler**, who finished second in the Strutt & Parker maiden at the Newmarket July meeting, a race with a rich tradition of providing future Group winners. Sadly, an injury



PRINCE SIEGFRIED makes a winning debut at Salisbury

has ruled him out for the rest of the season, but he remains a very exciting three year old prospect who is guaranteed to stay middle distances. **The Desert Saint** is another to have suffered an injury that has ruled him out for the remainder of this season. The form of his debut second has worked out very well indeed, with a Royal Ascot winner finishing in behind, and he looks capable of winning some nice races next year.

Celtic Spur finished a very encouraging second on his debut at Kempton Park, and he looks certain to go on to better things given that he was able to run so well despite seeming particularly physically immature at this early stage of his career, while **Advertise, Bella Rowena, Chiberta King, Der Rosenkavalier** and **Tasman Gold** all showed promise on their debuts and should step up on what they achieved there.

Deyas Dream has been placed on two of her three starts in maidens and appeals as a likely type for nurseries this season. **Yeoman Blaze**, whose homework suggested he was capable of far more than he has achieved on the racecourse to date, is another who could be one to watch in that sphere.

Of the unraced ones who look nearly ready to make their debuts, **Brief Encounter, Cavera, Celestial Dream, Countess Zara** and **Parc des Princes** have all been shaping well at home. We also have a whole host of unraced horses who have just made the step up to full work at home and it is exciting to think that they too could be promising. ■

THE 2008 **12** TO FOLLOW COMPETITION

These are the scores up to and including July 8th. Of course there have been a number of winners since and things will have altered already. It looks like being a high scoring year if we can keep the momentum going and there are a lot of two year olds to come out still.

		1 EVANS, MALCOLM	129		
		1 O'BRIEN, DR M J (B)	129		
		3 AMB	118		
		3 BURDETT, ADAM	118		
5 Woolley, Stephen	117	31 Finlay, Rosemary	79	58 Fisher, Ted	62
6 Williams, P	113	31 Gee, Simon	79	60 Knowles, Shiree	60
7 Slade, Martin	110	34 Palmer, Clare	78	61 Cheshire, Nathan	59
8 Grubb, Oliver	109	34 Powell, David	78	61 Cousins, Rose	59
9 Kingsclere Stud	108	36 Oswald, Michael	75	61 Donovan, Brian (B)	59
10 Stansby, Clive	103	37 Dangar, Richard	73	64 Allan, Mrs S	57
11 Grubb, Georgia	101	37 Gee, Chas	73	64 Bonner, Chris	57
12 Newbery, Karen	100	37 Hyde, Maurice	73	64 Palmer, W	57
13 Slade, Valerie	99	40 Payton, Michael	72	67 Cheshire, Angela (A)	56
14 Gordon, Suzie (B)	97	41 Watson, Greg	71	68 Allan, Brian	55
15 IAB	96	42 Balding, Emma	69	68 Gover, Tony	55
16 Morris, Cheryl	95	43 Balding , Anna Lisa	68	68 Mouchlian, Dominique (B)	55
16 Sopp, Mrs M J	95	43 Box, Peter	68	68 Sutherland, Evan	55
18 Dillon, Batt (B)	94	43 O'Brien, Dr M J (A)	68	72 Lumley, Sue	54
19 Donovan, Brian (A)	93	46 Derbyshire/Chivers (A)	67	72 Michaelson, Roger	54
19 Reis, Paul	93	47 Beasant, Pete	66	74 Dillon, Batt (A)	53
21 Feane, Paddy	90	47 Johnson, Andy (A)	66	74 Palmer, Cecilia	53
22 Howson, Geoffrey	89	47 McPhee, Stuart	66	76 McPhee, Mina	52
23 Balding , Jonno	87	50 Appleby, Mick	65	76 Rae-Smith, Mrs M A	52
23 Broughton, B	87	50 Green, Marion (B)	65	78 Gordon, Suzie (A)	50
25 Bays, Andrew	86	50 Johnson, Andy (B)	65	79 O'Brien, Dr M J (C)	49
25 Moulson, Lee	86	53 Gee, Mary	64	80 Bishop, Trevor	48
27 Shadow, R	84	53 Kooros, Leila	64	81 Baveystock, Howard	47
27 Walker , Gilly	84	55 Hodgkins, Adrian	63	81 King , Gaily	47
29 Derbyshire/Chivers (B)	83	55 Mackinnon, Roger	63	81 Pettitt, Dwayne	47
30 McPhee, Angus	80	55 O'Brien, Dr M J (D)	63	84 Paris, Rex	45
31 Balding, Molly & Ruby	79	58 Back, David	62	85 Gay, Susan	43

86 Grubb, Peter	42	93 Johnson, Rolf	38	100 Green, Marion (A)	23
86 Lumley, Peter	42	93 Oates, Des	38	101 O'Brien, Dr M J (E)	18
88 Cheshire, Angela (B)	40	95 Mouchlian, Dominique (A)	36	102 Bedford, Peter	16
88 Lee-Robinson, Nick	40	95 Palmer, Anne	36	103 Hall, David (B)	15
90 Arnold, Pamela	39	97 Walker, Tim	35	104 Hall, David (A)	5
90 Broughton, T	39	98 Grubb, Sarah	26		
90 Gay, David	39	99 Gale, John	24		

SELECTION OF THE LEADERS

LEADING HORSES

MALCOLM EVANS

OCEANA GOLD	6
LOCHSTAR	
PINCH OF SALT	16
RELATIVE STRENGTH	15
TOP LOCK	26
WHISKEY JUNCTION	40
YOUR PLEASURE	
DER ROSENKAVALIER	
DEYAS DREAM	5
FOUNDATION ROOM	15
PRINCE SIEGFRIED	
THE DESERT SAINT	6

DR M J O'BRIEN (B)

ADA RIVER	11
AMANJENA	16
BLUE SKY BASIN	10
FLYING INDIAN	16
MY AUNT FANNY	21
TOP LOCK	26
VICTORIA MONTOYA	24
BRIEF ENCOUNTER	
CHERRY PLUM	
DEYAS DREAM	5
INHIBITION	
YEOMAN BLAZE	

WHISKEY JUNCTION	40
ISPHAHAN	33
HATTON FLIGHT	30
HOLBECK GHYLL	26
TOP LOCK	26
VICTORIA MONTOYA	24
MY AUNT FANNY	21
MY LEARNED FRIEND	20

AMB

ADA RIVER	11
DARK MISSILE	13
DREAM EATER	5
OCEANA GOLD	6
OLLIE GEORGE	19
RAMBLING LIGHT	11
TOP LOCK	26
CELESTIAL DREAM	
FOUNDATION ROOM	15
SWINDLER	6
THE DESERT SAINT	6
YEOMAN BLAZE	

ADAM BURDETT

DINGAAN	13
JEDEDIAH	
LOCHSTAR	
OLLIE GEORGE	19
PINCH OF SALT	16
VICTORIA MONTOYA	24
WHISKEY JUNCTION	40
CAVERA	
INHIBITION	
QUAHADI	
REGAL BLUSH	
SWINDLER	



6 *WHISKEY JUNCTION with devoted wife Leanne Masterton*

SIR GORDON BRUNTON – OWNER PROFILE



The happy Brunton family with Ascot Gold Cup winner INDIAN QUEEN

Sir Gordon Brunton was educated at Cranleigh School in Surrey and at the London School of Economics. During World War II he was commissioned in 1942 and served in the Indian Army and Royal Artillery regiments in Burma, as well as in the Military Government in Germany.

Recruited by Canadian Roy Thomson to the Thomson Corporation in 1961, Sir Gordon's roles included a long period as Director of Times Newspapers Ltd. And from 1966-1984 was Managing Director/Chief Executive of the company during the period of international expansion and diversification in print, publishing, travel and North Sea ventures. Sir Gordon has also been the chairman of Sotheby's and of the Racing Post.

As an owner and breeder he has enjoyed many successes not least with the wonderful staying mare Indian Queen, winner of the Ascot Gold Cup in 1991 for trainer Lord Huntingdon. Currently he has four horses in training at Kingsclere and has had to suffer the frustration of them finishing second on five different occasions this season!

1. How did you first come to develop an interest in horse racing?

My first race meeting was with my father at Goodwood in 1935 when I was fourteen. I remember I stood on Trundle Hill and watched with total fascination.

The real breakthrough came in the early years of the war. I was a student at the London School of Economics and we had been evacuated to Cambridge. In 1940 racing was restricted to Saturdays. A group of student friends, mainly Greeks and Turks, decided

they wanted to go racing for the first time at nearby Newmarket. They asked me as a 'racing expert' (the Goodwood experience) to accompany them. Seven of us packed into a hired car which, as the only one with a provisional driving licence, I was obliged to drive.

At Newmarket I was asked to give them my 'expert opinion'. My knowledge of form was non-existent but I was flattered to play 'the expert role' and I told them to back a horse in the Brettenham Stakes, assuring them it had an excellent chance. PRINCE TETRA won at 33/1 and we each drew £13 8s 6d for our two shillings each way bets on the Tote. To me the winnings represented a full month's allowance. My reputation as an expert tipster was fully established but I was also totally hooked. As to my winnings, I proceeded to lose them over the next week playing poker with the Greeks.

A few months later I was off to join the Indian Army and spent some four years in India, Assam and Burma. I went racing once, while on a course at the School of Artillery in Deolali, to the beautiful racecourse in Bombay. The Indian ladies dressed in their magnificent saris put Royal Ascot firmly in the shade.

While in the Far East I went racing once more. After the Japanese surrender, the Army organised a race meeting in Rangoon to celebrate VJ Day. The horses came from far and wide with not a thoroughbred in sight. On my return to the UK I was totally engrossed in raising a family and earning a living. Whenever I got the chance I would go on a Saturday to Windsor Races which was in walking distance of where we lived.

2. What was the first horse you owned and was the venture a success?

My first experience as an owner was totally unplanned. In 1970 the family moved to our present home in the countryside outside Godalming. My wife Gillian had told me that she would like to take up riding again. As a surprise Christmas present I bought her a retired racehorse mare MISS MERYL on the advice of a local trainer, Pat Taylor. MISS MERYL was sent to another specialist trainer to be prepared as a safe riding hack.

On Christmas morning MISS MERYL, duly changed into a safe riding hack, was paraded outside our front door to Gillian's delight and surprise. I asked our

gardener, Mr Ron Agar, who had spent several years in the cavalry and was an experienced horseman, to ride MISS MERYL and show Gillian her paces. Mr Agar mounted her and the next thing we saw was MISS MERYL disappearing at full gallop into the distance with her rider clinging on round her neck.

Clearly MISS MERYL did not wish to be a safe riding hack and so I sent her to be covered by PHILIP OF SPAIN, a sprinter whose one moment of glory was to win the New Stakes at Royal Ascot. The fee was three hundred guineas and a colt was duly born. We named him PRINCE OF SPAIN and sent him to be trained by Pat Taylor. He went on to win nine races and was placed innumerable times.

3. How many horses do you currently own and what are your hopes/aspirations for them?

Six in training (or resting) all home-bred. My hopes are they will all win, my aspiration to breed and own another INDIAN QUEEN for Andrew to train.

4. What have been the highlights of your involvement in racehorse ownership?

Winning the 1991 Ascot Gold Cup with INDIAN QUEEN (who was in foal). This was a magical occasion as was dead heating the year before in the Prix Royal Oak (Group 1 French St Leger), also with INDIAN QUEEN. Her foal PRINCE OF INDIA won first time out as a two year old at Goodwood.

5. What are the best and worst aspects of owning racehorses?

Winning races or running well; losing races and running disappointingly. All the disappointments are forgotten when you win.

6. What is your opinion of the new Sovereign Series initiative?

I understand that, like all other sports in this media-driven society, one has to introduce and accept change. I have my doubts whether this particular initiative will achieve its objectives.

7. Do you have any favourite racecourse and what would be your least favourite?

Goodwood is my favourite, followed by Windsor meetings on a summer's evening. My least favourite is Ascot since its renovation. ■

GARY WITHEFORD – QUESTIONS ANSWERED

1. How would you best define what you do?

Many would describe me as a 'horse whisperer' but I don't like the phrase. I'm more of a horseman and what I do is to try and understand what makes the horse personality and what it is that makes it tick, as it is understanding the horse that enables their problems to be ironed out.

2. How diverse are your methods of treating problem horses?

The methods remain the same, as whether it's racehorses, showjumpers, long-distance endurance horses or just a child's pony that won't jump a couple of sticks, you just have to become their leader. Whatever the horse and whatever its discipline, having a leader will make it relax.

3. What are the long-term benefits to the horse of a 'natural horsemanship' approach as opposed to more traditional methods?

It establishes trust between horse and human. Sending a horse into the stalls for the first time is like a young athlete at the starting blocks at his first Olympics. He's going to be fidgety and perhaps even apprehensive. If the horse trusts you, he'll go in the stalls.

4. What sort of time would it take to, for instance, treat a horse with an aversion to starting stalls?

Most horses can be treated within week, although some will need 2-3 weeks, especially if there is something mentally wrong with them. Part of the problem with treating thoroughbreds now is that the level of inbreeding is such that I am treating 4th and 5th generation horses whose great-grandmothers, grandmothers and mothers all had the same bad traits which are just being passed down, and quite simply there are now quite a few 'bad' horses who will take more time.

5. Once the horse has recovered from whatever problem it may have had, how likely is it to re-occur once it has left?

Very unlikely, although in the wrong hands a horse could revert to its previous behavioural patterns, especially if the horse is treated the same way at home as it had been before coming here. For example, a horse needs a stalls rug because it doesn't like the coldness of the stalls. It can be taught to



Gary Witheford



SABAH with Neil Chalmers and Kayleigh Andrews



Gary in action at the racecourse



go into the stalls while here, but if the rug is no longer used when the horse reappears at the racecourse, the result will be the same as before, in that either the horse won't enter the stalls, or it will become very fractious in them.

6. Does it become easier or harder depending on the age of the horse?

Horses like routine, and like to get up, get fed and get exercised at the same time day in day out. It does therefore get harder to iron out a horse's problem as it gets older, as they are set in their ways by a certain age and changing their routine is harder to achieve.

7. Is there a difference between treating Colts and Fillies?

You can tell a colt what to do, but you have to ask a filly!

8. How often, if ever, do you come across an untreatable horse?

I have recently, for the first time in 35 years come across a horse where, within days of working with him, I had to say enough is enough. Quite simply, he would rather have killed himself than go into the starting stalls.

9. Having worked in the USA and Scandinavia, who would you say had had the biggest effect on your methods?

I worked with Monty Roberts for three seasons, but Stefan Forsman undoubtedly had the biggest effect on my work. Watching him with horses got me thinking big time, and he really brought a lot out of me.

10. What would you consider to be your greatest achievement?

It's a very hard question to answer, as I've seen horses with horrific injuries and just to get those back to the racecourse is an achievement in itself. I enjoyed working with Sabah (formerly trained here), as she was one of the hardest to treat but ended up winning a race and was Listed-placed. The other would be Royal Mail, who would have won the Gold Cup in 1981 but for falling at the cross-fence on the final circuit. He broke his jaw there and ordinarily that would have been it for the season, but Stan Mellor allowed me to ride him in nothing but a head collar at home, and I designed a bridle that didn't need to go in his mouth so that he could run in the Whitbread Gold Cup. He won that race just a month after his injury. More recently, I was the first person to 'break in' a Zebra. People said it couldn't be done, but that to me is like showing a red rag to a bull. ■

Behind the Name...

Holbeck Ghyll has been a real success story this year. Having started the season on a losing run of 15, he has won three times from four starts, the first of which came at Kempton off a mark of 75, and the latest off 85 in the 'Dash' handicap on Epsom Derby Day.

The six-year-old sprinter is owned by Alan Halsall and David Nicholson, who is the proprietor of Holbeck Ghyll, a country house hotel in the Lake District that overlooks Lake Windermere. The hotel is itself named after a mountain stream that runs through the grounds of the 19th century property, bought by Hugh Cecil Lowther, the 5th Earl of Lonsdale in 1888 for use as a hunting lodge.

Lord Lonsdale was a very colourful character, nicknamed 'the Yellow Earl', as that was the colour of his servants' liveries and his carriages. One of the most famous personalities of late Victorian and Edwardian

society, he was a particularly keen sportsman (he donated the original Lonsdale belts for Boxing), a master of the Cottesmore Hunt and a high-profile racehorse owner, including the 1922 English and Irish St Leger winner Royal Lancer. The prestigious Group 2 Lowther Stakes was first run in 1946 in honour of Lord Lonsdale, who died in 1944.

The modern-day Holbeck Ghyll country house hotel boasts a Michelin Star restaurant, a health spa and an impressive number of famous visitors, including film star Renee Zellwegger, who stayed at the hotel for two weeks during filming for the hit film Mrs Potter. David and wife Patricia celebrate the 20th anniversary of their ownership of the Holbeck Ghyll hotel this year, so it is only appropriate that its equine namesake has chosen this year to hit the headlines! ■

www.holbeckghyll.com



HOLBECK GHYLL winning the dash at Epsom

KINGSCLERE RACING CLUB

This year saw the unveiling of a new concept in racehorse ownership at Park House Stables, with the launch of the inaugural Kingsclere Racing Club.

The Club leases 10-15 horses from the Kingsclere Stud and in doing so cuts out the potentially high cost of purchasing bloodstock and allows for a wide range of horses, from two year olds to established older performers, to be included in the Club.

Albinus was the Club's first winner in a novice hurdle at Doncaster in January. His success was a timely advertisement for the array of benefits offered to members of the Racing Club and numbers had swelled by the time of the 'launch', on Imperial Cup day at Sandown Park, where Albinus once again ran with great credit in finishing 3rd in the big race, cheered all the way up the Sandown hill by a large group of members, all from the comfort of the Racing Club's hospitality box.

The regular gallops mornings have been very successful in creating a sociable atmosphere within the Club, and have allowed the members to get to know the horses as individuals, having seen them in their work, in their boxes, as well as in winning form on the racecourse!

Indeed, since the flat season has got into full swing the Kingsclere Racing Club members have visited the winners enclosure on no fewer than seven occasions, Victoria Montoya having registered two wins and the very progressive Whiskey Junction winning four races in succession.



VICTORIA MONTOYA has added two wins to the Club's impressive tally

Border Music also runs for the Kingsclere Racing Club and he went close to recording a significant victory when hitting the front a furlong out only to be passed late on in the Buckingham Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot. He eventually finished a fine fourth in the black with gold cross colours of Paul Mellon's made famous by Mill Reef and which are now carried by all the Club horses.

There are plenty of Club horses yet to make their seasonal debut on the track. Veteran Coriolanus is into his seventh season in training but retains all his enthusiasm and should be back on the racecourse before too long, while the unraced three year old Street Crime has been showing promise in his work of late and is another likely to make his debut soon.

The two year olds look quite a nice bunch, and Advertise, by former stable star-turned sire Passing Glance out of Averami (also formerly trained here and now based at the stud) ran very encouragingly on his debut at Goodwood in May in what has turned out to be a useful juvenile contest. He has had a few small problems since, but looks likely to win races in the future. Other Club two year olds to look out for in the coming months include Cloudesley and Inhibition, a half-sister to many illustrious former stablemates, including Passing Glance and winning three year old Victoria Montoya.

With a 38% strike-rate on the flat so far this season, the Kingsclere Racing Club has the best strike-rate of any major Racing Club nationwide. ■

