



# Harness Racing Calendar

The official publication of the British Harness Racing Club

Volume 51 No. 4

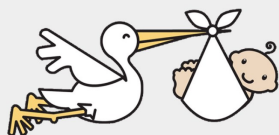


# British Harness Racing Club



Pg No

Chairman's Report	4
York Review	6
Q&A with Yannick Gingras	10
Annual Awards 2019	13
Through a Fan's Eyes	14
York Sale	18
Crock of Gold	20
Breeders Crown	23
Sire Stakes	28
Stagbi Golden Girls Final 2020	31
Review of Tir Prince 2020	35
Tir Prince - Class of 2020	37
Over the Water	40
Trot Britain	41
Irish Harness Racing	44
Review of Amman Valley 2020	48
Carol Vorderman in the sulky	51



**We wish Hollie good luck as she leaves us to have a baby.**

*Photo front cover courtesy of Nadina Ironia*

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# British Harness Racing Club



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The Chairman, Directors (old and new) and staff of the BHRC wish you all a  
very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the final edition of the year of our revamped Calendar, in my opinion one of the success stories of 2020. A massive thank you goes to Julie, Karen, Kayleigh, Mandy and Sarah for all their dedication to the cause and professionalism in producing this journal.

It's that time of year when we reflect on the past racing season, and what a journey it has been!

We turn the clock back to the spring of uncertainty and the difficult decisions licence holders, promoters and others in the sport faced. Well, it happened, we had a season of hard track racing so a massive congratulations goes to everyone at Amman Valley, Corbiewood, Tir Prince and York for putting on the show.

Let's remember, this was largely without a crowd and was subject to Covid-19 regulations. Yes, numbers were down but to everyone's credit over 400 horses were still registered as being in training, displaying licence holders desire to race in the toughest of circumstances. Of course, we hope to see the return of grass racing in 2021.

Further evidence of the investment people are willing to make in the sport

was on show at the Annual Camden Stud Sale at York, with horses going under the hammer for great sums. We look forward to watching the sales graduates race in 2021. On the subject of the sales graduates, York will be ploughing financial support into races next season - absolutely wonderful news.

Against the odds, Tir Prince saved the Group 1 Billy Williams Crock of Gold after the original race was called off due to a lighting malfunction. By golly are we glad it was saved as Miraculous showed he still has it!

It was wonderful to see the season stretch into November and our product, yes British Harness Racing, was beamed live to Australia as Ladbrokes' business down under provided betting markets. Okay this was a basic start, and may bring in very little revenue initially, but surely, it's a positive.

The tracks have embraced live streaming this year and should be congratulated for this innovation, which I know doesn't come cheap. The service has been well received and British Harness Racing has become a role model as point to pointing has taken up this form of coverage with tracks making inquiries with yours truly, and in some cases, using the York production team.



On the trotting front it is certainly great to hear about the successful trip to France by Trot Britain and licence holders, in this edition Mike Evans provides the details of the latest

imports. The mission would be for more stables to house a Trotteur Francais in the future.

Since the last edition of the Calendar work has been carried out on a new handicap system, a working party have painstakingly drawn up a system based on the New Zealand ratings format, which will be aired for all to see and digest as consultation continues.

Ultimately, the Committee will consider the implementation of the system.

Not wanting to step into politics here, back in September the BHRC Committee took a vote on whether to introduce one person one vote, on this occasion it was rejected but I feel we need to re-approach this topic in 2021, in my opinion the licence holder must have a direct say in elections for officers of the governing body and other key matters.

Hopefully we can come up with an acceptable structure.

Please don't fret if you think the 2020 awards have been forgotten - no such thing. As previously mentioned here I would like to propose a different format

for the nominating and voting of our champions and hopefully we can put this forward very soon.

We at the BHRC have a list of objectives in the coming months, and I won't deny it there will be obstacles to negotiate but please bear in mind, everyone sitting on the Board of Directors enters the BHRC with the hope of governing and promoting the sport to the best of their ability, without a governing body you have no sport.

This winter will not be one of hibernation, it will be one of proactiveness, we must not wake up in late March with the realisation the season is approaching and nothing has been addressed.

Some of the objectives for the sport this winter:

- Address issues with the Rule Book, including the whip rules
- Resume the review of our stewarding
- Continue dialogue with Le Trot, Trot Britain and STAGBI
- Open up dialogue with Wales and Borders HRC.

Back to the Calendar, massive thanks to every contributor this year, onwards and upwards in 2021, which may see the Calendar being produced in digital form as well as hard copy. I hope you enjoy

this edition.

There was another success story this year and that was the Sulky Show, which has featured great guests from home and abroad. Thanks to everyone who contributed with a special mention for Sarah Thomas for her excellent production skills, along with her energy and passion for the sport.

As we draw to the end of 2020 I would like to pay tribute to our Secretary, Heulwen Bulman, an excellent addition to the BHRC, someone who works tirelessly, over and above the call of duty. Heulwen, we are blessed to have

you on the team. I would also like to wish our Office Administrator Hollie Sutcliffe good luck for the future as she is set to leave us at the end of the year. Hollie and her husband Steve are expanding their family, so a big congratulations from all of us at the BHRC.

That's it folks, so on behalf of the BHRC may I wish you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Yours in sport,

Darren Owen

BHRC Chairman



## Review of 2020

The racing season all over the UK in 2020 was in serious doubt and subject to delay due to the global pandemic that unfortunately we are still currently in. Even before a horse stepped foot on York there were lots of calls and emails between Craig, the Yorkshire Police and the Harrogate Council. Our thanks must go to Craig for persevering with this and to Jason, Darren and everybody else who worked tirelessly to ensure racing happened.

Eventually in June we got underway with three Qualifier and Workout days all of which were trials for new pay-per-view stream which was needed as the racing was going to start behind closed doors, this was a way of us

allowing everybody to access the racing. By trial and error the quality and reliability has transformed and now bears no resemblance of those early streamings. A big thank you goes out to all who have worked so hard to make it work, as well as those who have taken the option of the pay-per-view stream. It would be nice to say that the stream brings in the revenue lost on the gate, unfortunately the quality we have does not come cheap with the stream currently just about breaking even. However the quality is now very professional and hopefully it can be developed further as a revenue stream.

The first race meeting got the green light with very limited crowds in attendance. It was perhaps apt that the first winner of the season was won by our very own Simon Clarke who trained the winner, Action Jackson.

Track owner Mick Welling made a commitment to support the people that support the track, and in doing this we raced weekly for the first time in many years totalling an amazing 16 race meetings over the year, many weeks we had a card with over 10 races on it.

During the season we were treated to some fantastic performances from both pacers and trotters, and it's hard to not recognise at this point the resurgence of 'Papa Smurf' Alan Haythornthwaite who partnering up with a several trainers made an almost weekly appearance to the winners enclosure having successfully driven yet another trotter.



The smile behind the mask

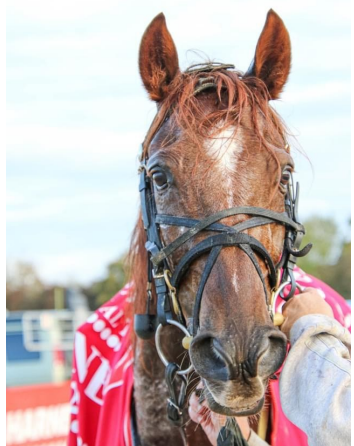


Racing replay?



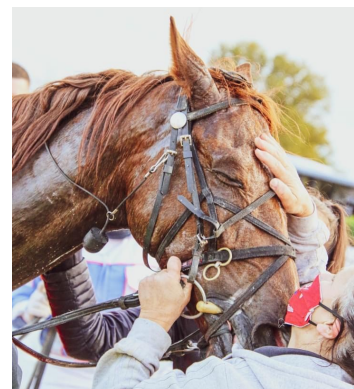
York were pleased to team up with the IHRA to stage two of the British & IHRA Juvenile Heats. It was fabulous to see local horse and record breaker Oakwood Anabella winning heats at York and then going over to win the final at Portmarnock. She is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

We were also pleased to stage the 2nd STAGBI Mares Group 1 final which is growing into a fantastic event, won this year by Lyons Queen steered by Grant Cullen whom himself drove more winners at York than anywhere else this year.



We have seen some fantastic performances and clocks this year at York. The track has been in fabulous condition and has held up well to the regular fixtures. One of York's main races, The Daniel Welling Memorial, was won by a great supporter of the track, Scottish raider Hamish Muirhead. Cash All hit a real 'purple patch' in the autumn clocking a personal best time of 1.56.8, the horse clocked a magnificent double that weekend, going on to notch up a win at Corbiewood the very next day.

On the same card the Anto Russell Memorial we saw Merrington Movinup return to the winners enclosure. This was just one of many winners at York this year, for BHRC trainer/driver of the year combination Alexis and William 'Rocker' Laidler.



The big trot race of the year The George Button Memorial was taken by Diamant De Godrel, this horse is the pride and joy of owner Savannah Nicholson. Godrel can always be relied upon to be in the shake up, he went on to win again the next week. The Nicholson's not happy with just 1st prize money also took out third place with



Blason, a great training result.

With local restrictions still breaking out all over the country the annual sale was in serious doubt but with thanks to all the work from the York team, and to the support from the police and council we were finally given the green light. I must say, the sale was the best sale we have ever staged at York, with quality in every stall. The sale topper being Ultimatum reaching £31,000. This year for the first time the sale charged commission with all proceeds going back into racing for the very juvenile's sold through the ring this year. This would not have been possible if it was not for the support from the owners, trainers and sponsors, we thank you.

These are just some of our memories from 2020, a year dominated by the global pandemic, where the words the new 'norm', please wear your mask and remember social distancing have all become etched on our brain. There were lots of fabulous memories, just not enough space to put them all.

However, we will be back in the 2021 season to make some more, we hope to see regular fixtures, high quality racing, with varied conditions to suit all horses and hopefully more future racing stars. Until then keep safe, keep dreaming and see you in 2021.

**Merry  
Christmas**



Photos courtesy of Sarah Thomas, Equine Photography



# YANNICK GINGRAS

**In this edition of the Calendar, we caught up with Yannick Gingras, the Dan Patch Award winning Canadian born driver. Here, the superstar reinsman, associated with some of the sport's great horses and races, shares his racing experiences and views with us.**

**What are your earliest memories of harness racing and why did you choose the sport as a career path?**

I remember harness racing since my very first memory in life. I loved going to the racetracks with my dad growing up and dreaming of driving horses.

**Can you recall your first competitive drive and first winner?**

I actually won my first drive which was in an amateur race with a horse named Tidewater Tomahawk. My dad was in France for a trip then and I couldn't wait for him to come home and show him the replay of the race.

**Why did you think it was important to make the move to the US?**



Racing at home wasn't quite as good as in the USA and Ontario and for a French Canadian guy the move to Yonkers was the popular move to make at that time and I felt it was my best chance to get my career going fast or faster anyway lol!

**Away from Watson Harrop, who has been the biggest influence on your career?**

My dad no doubt has been my biggest influence. I learned so much off him growing up not only about horsemanship but also as a person and father.

**Of all the horses you have driven, which would be your favourites?**

Favorite horse is a very tough one because I have been so fortunate to drive many great horses. **Darlin's Delight** was my first top horse and will always be

special. **Foiled Again** took my career to the next level and he was so tough, an amazing career that I am proud to have been a part of. **Mission Brief** was amazingly fast and the fastest trotter I've driven when right. Her being such a challenge to drive at times I think makes her more special to me. Makes you feel like you accomplished something good when things worked out. **Father Patrick** was a great horse with an amazing gait. **Tall Dark Stranger** is the best horse I've driven because he had it all. There was no flaws in him. Well bred, fast, strong, game, you name it he had it. There's so many more it's not even right leaving them out and I know I'll be mad for forgetting one.

**Which drive has given you the most**

**pleasure?**

Two drives really stand out for me: Foiled Again Breeders Crown win was so special because it was just him so much. He wasn't the fastest but he showed true resilience in that race by going full speed the whole race yet refusing to lose.

Tall Dark Stranger Meadowlands Pace win was also very special because of the lead up to the race but also because of the disqualification in the Breeders Crown the year before and people not believing he would of came back had he not been interfered with that night. He proved he was a fighter and a true champ.

**Which racetracks do you enjoy driving?**



Meadowland is home to me and the place I like racing at the most. I still get the feeling of mission accomplished when winning there because it's truly not easy winning there. Top horses, drivers and trainers.

**Away from North America, tell us about your driving experiences abroad?**

Loved racing in Australia even though it wasn't very long. The friends I've made there is what I remember the most and they truly made us all feel so special. They know how to treat visitors.

Sweden I absolutely love and if not for USA I would love racing there. I enjoy the way they race but the part I like the most is their fans. They truly know and love their horses. The atmosphere there is MUCH better than anywhere else I've been at in the world.

**What would be your remaining ambitions in the sport?**

The two races I would love to win are the Elitloppet and the Hambo in that order. Other than races, I would love to travel and see the tracks around the world. See how things are done elsewhere.

**Away from the racetrack, what do you enjoy doing?**

Away from the track it's mostly kids right now as I have 3 kids aged 9, 12 and 15. I love being with them and seeing their activities when I can. They are growing up wayyyyyy too fast.

**If there was one thing you could do to improve the sport in North America, what would it be?**

To improve the sport here it has to start with getting the fans more involved in any way we can. We are so secluded from the public which I feel it is wrong. I love meeting hockey players and feel we as drivers and our horses should be more accessible to the public.

**Can you give us the names of some horses to follow in 2021?**

Southwind Gendry I'm very excited to see next year as I think he will be a great 3yo, Atlanta is coming back as well.

Our gratitude goes to Yannick for answering our questions here and for being part of the Sulky Show recently.

A big thank you also goes to Watson Harrop Jnr for arranging the interview.

# 2019 Annual Awards



**Vicky Gill: Leading Lady Driver 2019**



**John Gill: Horse of the Year 2019**  
Newtown Jody

**Edward McCarthy (owner): 3 Yr Old**  
Filly of the Year 2019 - Newtown Jody



**Sally Teeboon: 2 Yr Old Filly of the Year**  
2019 - Alpine Doubledeuce



**Rocker Laidler: Driver of the Year**  
2019 & **Alexis Laidler: Trainer of the**  
Year 2019



**Richard Haythornthwaite: Trotter of**  
the Year 2019 - Emirat Du Levant



# THROUGH A FAN'S EYES

Christmas is upon us once more, a year ago I was looking forward to the 2020 season, in the Dandridge household new year means new plans, places to visit, new adventures who knew what was about to unfold. It was certainly very different and tough for us all in many ways, suffering the loss of loved ones, incomes and livelihoods. Lets hope 2021 can turn this around for us all. My dear Auntie always opened the front door at midnight to let the new year in whilst my Uncle opened the back door to let the old year out, not a tradition I've carried on, but this year I will be shoving 2020 out the back door.

We have still managed to make some memories this summer catching up with good friends having a socially distanced picnic with Brian and Julie in their field enjoying good company human and equine.

A trip to the Middleham home of Darren and Sally Owen armed with our chainsaw where we dismantled their old shed - we do love a bit of demolition. Whilst there we ended up assisting Darren with the draw for Tir Prince. When I saw Rockin Mambo was running I was having no part in picking those balls out of the bag. I quickly volunteered Mr D for this job, whilst I

pulled out the names, no pressure on Mr D then! What does he do - pulls out a SEVEN for my beloved Mambo, I'm pleased to say Mr D has now been allowed back in the house for the winter.

Thanks to the livestream (and all involved in setting it up) we have still been able to get our harness racing fix this season being spoilt with the quality and quantity of racing brought to our sitting room. We have also been lucky enough to go and watch a few meetings at Tir Prince. The highlight for us both (of course) was watching Rockin Mambo winning the BHRC Pacing Classic what a finish. Marc and Jenny invited us up onto the track. Amazingly Marc hands Rocky to me, directs David to stand the other side and click Sarah Thomas takes a photo which now has pride of place on our living room wall. This for a fan is what dreams are made of.

I thought nothing would top this but no it gets better. We were invited to Forgeside, spending an amazing weekend in excellent company, their hospitality was top notch such a delightful family. I awoke early on a misty Sunday morning, sat on the balcony taking in the fresh September air, admiring the view taking stock of



the horses in the fields surrounding the house. To my left Smokin Mambo just visible through the mist, in the foreground their jogging track, beyond this I can see Jessies Conquest to my right a group of mares with foals at foot enjoying their last few weeks together before parting company to stand on their own four feet. Behind me in the barn the 'MANE' man himself Rockin Mambo.

Our weekend was packed full, a drive through the scenic Brecon Beacons with Rocky in tow going to Bernard Llewellyn stables to watch Rocky power up the gallops with Marc on board if he could talk I am sure Rocky would have told us how much he enjoyed that. On the return journey we passed Brywins Stud and also a glimpse of some relatives of Coalford Tetrack another horse I have enjoyed watching race.

On returning to Forgeside we went to see the mares and foals, standing looking at Rocky's mum and sister Marc suddenly says I'm missing a mare and with the speed of Sebastian Coe runs through the yard and across the fields. We are obviously worried for him fearing the worst, then Marc returns and sheepishly tells us she's not missing, I forgot I have moved her to some different grazing oops, Oh well panic over we are all human after all.



We thank you so very much team Jones for inviting us into your world to see what happens behind the scenes, you all work so hard your success with your horses is well deserved.

I must mention the brilliant evolving Sulky Show my go to Friday night entertainment if you haven't watched it look it up on You Tube, very interesting, episode 18 the best so far it was hilarious well done everyone.

In April the 2020 season looked in jeopardy but here we are in November just concluding the season on 4 hard tracks, a very successful live stream for all to enjoy and a brilliant show on You Tube - well done to all involved you have worked so hard to make it all happen this year.

One moment on the live stream a driver being interviewed said if we earned the same money as the American drivers we would be superstars, to us fans you are superstars, so keep on doing what your doing we can't get enough of this sport.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

**Mel Dandridge**

*PS Father Christmas if you are reading this I would love a Standardbred left under my tree please.*

## Roland Pugh – An Honest Man

The sudden and untimely death of Roland Pugh has left his family and friends reeling in grievous shock, and his loss will be devastatingly felt in every area in which he was involved.

Roland was a craftsman in every aspect of his life – a much sought-after carpenter in his working life who could easily work 7 days a week, but his passions for harness racing and wildlife ensured that he found precious time for both. Following in the footsteps of his father, Roy, Roland became recognised as an expert on owls, and together they established the now-popular initiative for installing owl boxes on farms, almost forty years ago. Roland even gave a talk on the subject on Radio 4..... as he would quote in his good-humoured way ‘not a lot of people know that.....’ (Though his Michael Caine impersonation left a bit to be desired!) Checking and monitoring bird populations and nesting boxes in his surrounding counties was a significant part of Roland’s life, and the collation of such data helped in turn to monitor the precious ecology of those regions.

Horses, racing, and very particularly harness racing were Roland’s other obsession. Before the advent of BHRC, Roland partnered his father’s runners both in the sulky and under saddle, and then, being both talented and light, got



regular ‘catch’ rides and drives, notably for Gwynne Higgins, and enjoyed plenty of success. Win or lose, Roland had the greatest talent of all – to take pleasure –and knowledge - from all that he did.

In the early 80’s, when the fore-runner of the BHRC, the National Harness Racing Club, formed to be the governing body of ‘trotting’ in the UK offered ‘amnesty’ to race with them, new associations such as Wales & West HRA, and Amman Valley Trotting Club were formed, and Roland and Roy were founder members. With their precise minds, they were much in demand for helping to set up grass circuits, and became official time keepers and track measurers. In later years, Roland

became so adept at setting up a half-mile track in a previously unmarked field, that he could do it by eye, and when it was officially measured, his judgement was spot on. He liked things to be *right*.

For over a decade, Roland, who now no longer competed, was official race-framer in Wales & West, and the copious records he kept meant that the racing was always fair and competitive, and *every* horse went to post with a chance – he was determined that every participant should enjoy their racing.

For the last two decades, Roland was a BHRC Regional Steward, originally an appointed and paid position with an honorarium, until such things became taxable, when BHRC paid them as expenses. Such things did not trouble Roland, who never took a penny. Even as he was asked to travel further, and the demands became greater, he did it all for the love of the sport.

This time, **I say**, ‘Not a lot of people know that....’ And what a good regional steward he was. His knowledge of the rules was extensive, but best of all, his common sense in applying them was first class. He always did what he believed to be right, politely, firmly and fairly.

What you saw was what you got with Roland Pugh, an uncomplicated, genuine, compassionate, loyal man,

who was never afraid to express his emotion. You would see tears in his eyes after great performances, but also when he knew a victory meant much to someone in lesser races. He so wanted people to *enjoy* their lives, as he so enjoyed his, and took great pleasure in seeing new drivers take their driving tests, then progress.

Robert Burns encapsulates the very essence of Roland in his poem

### **‘Epitaph on my own Friend’ .....**

An honest man here lies at rest  
As e’er God with his image blest:  
The friend of man, the friend of Truth;  
The friend of age, the guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm’d,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform’d.  
If there is another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

May your God bless you, Rol. You were such a nice guy that you never realised how many people held you in high esteem. You have left a gaping hole in many lives that could never be filled. I am privileged that I am one of them. My heart goes out to Roland’s sister Karen and the rest of his family. An Independent, irreplaceable, gentle man.....

**Stella Havard**

## York Sale Results

46 lots entered  
6 lots not forward  
4 lots not sold  
36 lots sold for a total of £299,600 =  
£8322 average

### Yearlings

41 yearlings entered  
4 yearlings not forward  
3 yearlings not sold  
34 yearlings sold for total of £294,800 =  
£8671 average

### Colts

20 colts entered  
1 colt not sold  
1 colt not forward  
18 colts sold for a total of £195,100 =  
£10,839 average

### Fillies

21 fillies entered

3 fillies not forward

2 fillies not sold

16 fillies sold for a total of £99,700 =  
£6231 average

**York Sales Graduate Series** (for horses sold at York Sale) to be raced on Sale Day 2021 (added money generated from buyers and sellers fees)

2 Year Old Fillies £3988 (+sustaining and entry fees)

2 Year Old Colts £7804 (+sustaining and entry fees)

**York Sales Graduate Series** to be raced in July 2022 for non winners of £100 as 2 year Old

3 Year Old Fillies £997 (+sustaining and entry fees)

3 Year Old Colts £1951 (+sustaining and entry fees)

Sarah Thomas



Sale topper ULTIMATUM (£31,000)

## York Sale Results



Top selling filly AYR BLAZE (£15,200)

### Emma Frieze

Emma passed away on the 4th November after a short illness, Emma was 41 years old.

Emma started her career in harness racing with Brywins where she had prolific amount of winners training and driving, Brywins Tomi to win Aberystwyth, Maple Hanover to win a Crock of Gold, her own mare Brywins 67 and many more.

Emma then went to Canada to work for Doyle Transport briefly before she started training. She had winners at Mohawk and sire stakes winners Hidden Message and Holy Moly Maggie. Emma loved harness racing especially the trotters due to the fact they were more challenging. Emma was a kind intelligent talented horsewoman a lady of few words but when she did say something you hung onto every word, she loved to see her daughter Alexis and her niece Menna excel on their ponies in the show jumping ring just like she did. Where it all began ..... She will be sorely missed





# Miraculous: The Return of a Champion

*"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." – Confucius*

The Crock of Gold: a race synonymous with some of the greatest names our sport has seen in recent times. Since its inception in 2004, it has become the most prestigious Free For All in the country and has provided some of the most thrilling finishes and emotive success stories along the way.

To win the race once can be a dream come true for connections; to win it twice elevates the horse to legendary status. And on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, Miraculous joined that elite club of legends, alongside Scoot Around, Stoneriggs Mystery and Evenwood Sonofagun, when winning his second Crock of Gold at Tir Prince.

Miraculous' first Crock of Gold success came back in 2017, on a night brimming with anticipation under the floodlights. The

crowds were out in force, lining the rail along the home straight two and three deep to watch Miraculous face Evenwood Sonofagun for the first time, two horses who had graduated to the Free For All class via two very different routes; the former having transitioned seamlessly from an illustrious stakes career, and the latter through the grades having scored major handicap after major handicap. Ultimately the judge couldn't split them at the wire, and for the first time in the Crock's history a dead heat was declared between the pair. Honours were shared for twelve months before Evenwood Sonofagun won the title outright the following season. For Miraculous, a follow up win on his next start at Wolverhampton proved to be his last visit to the winner's circle for a season and a half. A



win at Portmarnock in 2019 saw him lower his lifetime mark to 1.54.6, but on his home turf he remained luckless, racing time and time again at the highest level and with merit, yet always tasting defeat.

Having been riding the crest of a wave on his first attempt at a Crock of Gold in 2017, Miraculous came into the original 2020 event in September as an outsider. With the race postponed to November following the dramatic floodlight failure that night, connections turned their attention to the Tir Prince Star Makers Series instead, an autumn series running through October for which he satisfied the entry criteria. Two second placed finishes and a third in the three heats saw him secure a place in the final; and on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, for the first time in over two years on British soil, Miraculous crossed the line in front. This win proved to be the springboard from which, just one week later, Miraculous would secure that elusive second Crock of Gold victory, in stark contrast to the success in 2017.

Instead of the atmospheric floodlights under a blanket of darkness, the horses graced the track in broad daylight. Where people had once crowded to get trackside, the rails remained empty. The only sound that cut through the near silence was that of the commentator; the fans were restricted to their homes to watch via the live stream and their vocal support could not be heard. None of this diminished the sense of occasion. Every horse that faced the starter did so with their own story behind them that had led them to this very moment.

For seven furlongs, Miraculous and his now-



regular pilot Richard Haythornthwaite bided their time as the race developed in front of them. As the field of five turned off the last bend for home, and the long-time leader Ayr Paparazzi drifted away from the inside rail, Miraculous and Richard took their opportunity without hesitation. Perhaps it was the long-awaited win the previous week, perhaps it was the manner of the drive, perhaps it was the training preparation in the build up to the event – or indeed, a combination of all of these and more, but as Miraculous powered to the line he looked as much the champion on this fourth attempt at the Crock of Gold as he had done on his first.

It was as satisfying an outcome to the race as his connections could ever have hoped for: to win the Crock of Gold outright at last, when so many had written this horse off. The emotions it evoked in the immediate aftermath were as bold a reminder as anyone needed that this race remains the pinnacle of its class. For Richard, this was his first Crock of Gold win and a major race to tick off his bucket list. For trainer Sally Teeboon, this was vindication for the days, hours, weeks and months of hard work, time and effort to train the horse to continually race against the best horses in the country. For Alan Dickinson, one of his owners, it appeared to be the proudest of moments as he shed several tears



watching his horse return to the winner's circle as a champion again.

Every single person involved with Miraculous demonstrated perseverance, patience and faith in him. Miraculous ensured that their loyalty was rewarded the only way he knew how.

The only question that remains now is: can Miraculous become the first horse ever to win three Crock of Golds? Only time will tell, but one thing Miraculous taught us all on November 1<sup>st</sup> was never say never.

"Form is temporary, class is permanent."

**Sarah Thomas**



As the dust settled at the end of Breeders Crown night at Tir Prince raceway on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August, one thing had become crystal clear. The stallion FORECLOSURE has now joined the ranks of the all time great greats to have stood in the UK and Ireland.

Fitting then that **race 1** should be won by the aptly named 2yo filly **OAKWOOD ANABELLA** (Foreclosure x Carmel Camden) on her first visit to the track and only her second lifetime start. Driven by Vicky Gill the two year old filly exploded from post position 6 and was five lengths clear by the first turn. By the time she entered the long back straight the race was over and the only question now was how fast she would go. 2.02.1 was the answer, just missing the track record. What an opener.



**Race 2** saw another Foreclosure winner. Driver Bernard Nicholson sat with the confidence of

someone who knew much more about the 2yo colt, **CHURCHVIEW FRANKEL** (Foreclosure x Lyons Flum) than anyone else present and he was right, produced on the outside turning for home he coasted over the line in an impressive 2.01.9.



Ayr standardbreds have continually produced stakes fillies of the highest standard, 2yo filly **AYR CONTESSA** (Armbro Deuce x Ayr Queen) continued that tradition in **Race 3**. Excellently conditioned by T. Haythornthwaite and driven by her son James, Contessa is now a perfect 3 for 3 with £7,300 in the bank.



Bernard Nicholson's dream night continued in **Race 4** when 3yo filly **CHURCHVIEW NICHE** (Foreclosure x Meadowbranch Niche) returned to defend her Breeders Crown title. Holding off the fast closing ALLBETSAREOFF, NICHE won by 1 1/2 lengths in 2:01.4. Giving Bernard Nicholson a Trainer/Driver double on the night, and winner number 3 on the board for Foreclosure.



Not to be outdone James Haythornthwaite also notched a driving double when he produced 3yo colt **STAR ATTRACTION** ( Yankee Lariat x Judy Hall ) with perfect timing to take the glory from WHICHGUYAMI in **Race 5**. This gave trainer Teresa



Haythornthwaite two Group 1 winners on Breeders Crown night.

Now under a beautiful red sky sunset we had the perfect setting for a fairytale and **Race 6** provided it.

Steve Lee's continues to roll back the year's and led out from the 1 hole driving Walter Stewart's 4yo Gelding **LADYFORD DOLLAR** (Forafewdollarsmore x Ladyford Ideal) who was also defending his breeders Crown title, setting perfect fractions Steve saved just enough to hold off the late charging GDS KING. Walter stood in the winner's enclosure like a proud father holding the son of his former champion FORAFEWDOLLARSMORE as he was crowned 4 year old colts and gelding winner.



All stage managers are taught to save the best for last but now the large crowd began to wonder what racing manager Eric



Witherspoon could produce for a finale.

In two words **NEWTOWN JODY..** (Foreclosure x Onyx Killeen). Vicky Gill fired the 4 year old filly, who was BHRC 3yo filly and BHRC Horse of the year in 2019, from the 6 hole like something from a cannon and quickly settled her into a relentless pace. Past the three quarters pole Vicky now looked like she was in command, and then drew the gasps from the crowd as she started to go through gears on the last turn to win in a romp, recording the fastest time of the night 1.57.5 A new track record for 4yo fillies! Giving the UK Champion Lady Driver Vicky Gill a memorable double on a very special night.



This was winner number four for Foreclosure (Rocknroll Hanover x Pleasing Package). Resulting in **Foreclosure** being the leading 2 year old stallion and the leading **overall stallion** on Breeders Crown night for the 3rd consecutive year.



Congratulations to Oakwood Stud.

The **Top Broodmare** on Breeders Crown night went to **Judy Hall** (Astreos x Andie S (Direct Scooter). The 15 year old mare is owned by the Walker family and is the dam of 3yo colt winner Star Attraction, placed 2yo colt Wasntexpectingthat, and placed



4yo colt Takemetothelimit. Interestingly she now has a colt foal at foot by Foreclosure the breeders crown top stallion 2020, one to watch for in the future breeders crown races.



**Leading Trainer** went to Teresa Haythornthwaite with 2yo filly Ayr Contessa and 3yo colt Star Attraction winning and several placed horses throughout the night.



**Leading Drivers** were James Haythornthwaite with 2 winners, Star Attraction and Ayr Contessa and Vicky Gill with 2 winners, Oakwood Anabella and Newtown Jody.

Congratulations to all winners and their connections.



The first running of the breeders crown in 2007 saw prize money over £20,000 and from 2016 has increased to over £50,000 in the last couple of years with another increase in prize money scheduled for 2021. This is a massive achievement.



The mood of the evening was then captured perfectly by the BHRC, as chairman Darren Owen and director Jim Mcinally presented BREEDERS CROWN UK & IRL supremo David Wilson with a

magnificent trophy to mark his lifetime achievement award. David's acceptance speech was humbling as he reflected on a lifetime in the sport and what it had meant to him.

'To put some context to his award just ask yourself how many times a year you can attend a race meeting in the UK or Ireland with 7 races and £50,000 in prize money, which under the present circumstances, was great. It also means in the 14 years from the first meeting in 2007, the Breeders Crown has never missed a meeting.

We go into 2021 breaking the £500K (half a million) paid out in prize money. As sponsors are a bit sparse on the ground, we have to look for other avenues of keeping this prize money up. So, for next year instead of top of the range carts and harness being part of the prize money, we will be holding 2 raffles of both carts and harness at 2 intervals throughout the year, and all monies will be put into the prize fund.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BHRC for acknowledging my work with the Breeders Crown and a lifetime in harness racing by presenting me

with the Lifetime Achievement Award. It truly means a lot to me. I would also like to thank all the stallion owners, trainers, owners and all who support the Breeders Crown and wish them a Happy Christmas and great New Year—David & Jacqui.'

Thank you David and Jacqui Wilson and Tir Prince Raceway here's to BREEDERS CROWN UK & IRL 2021.

**Mandy Stanley**

Photos thanks to Sarah Thomas Equine Photography







## Sire Stakes

On a sunny Saturday morning in late September York staged yet another bumper card featuring 16 high class races, featuring the BHRC Sire Stakes, and the eagerly waited for appearance of the impressive Oakwood Anabella.

**Race 5: Sire Stakes 3YO Colts/ Geldings** - Whichguyaml took out the 3YO colts/geldings division. The Richard Walker bred youngster, sired by Eagle Luck, and owned by Patrick Anderson. Giving yet another victory for the Emerald Stables, trained by John Gill, driven by Vicky Gill

2nd Stateside Dude  
3rd Star Attraction  
Time: 2.0.0  
Distances: 1L and 2.5L

**Race 10: Sire Stakes 2YO Colts/ Geldings** - Oakwood Denver, bred by James Delaney, sired by



### **Race 10: Sire Stakes 2YO**

**Colts/Geldings** - A very comfortable win for Oakwood Denver, bred by James Delaney, sired by Foreclosure, owned by Alan Dickinson, trained by Sally Teeboon, and driven by Richard Haythornthwaite

2nd GDs Thunder

3rd Ceiron Jack

Time: 2.1.8

Distances: 5.5L and 7L



### **Race 11: Sire Stakes 2YO**

**Fillies** - The race we had all been waiting for, ended up with no shocks and the only surprise being the time clocked. Oakwood Anabella, as dominant as ever was bred by James Delaney, sired by Foreclosure, owned by Viv Gill, trained by John Gill, driven by Vicky Gill

Quote from Sarah Thomas  
'Every time this filly has graced the track she has impressed me, improving on every performance and finding more and more each time. I didn't think it was possible to be even more impressed by her but today she not only broke the track record for 2YO fillies but also the British record, going a blistering 1.58.3 which was the fastest time of





the day across all 16 races. She's a very special filly and she has been trained and campaigned to perfection by the Gill family at Emerald Stables'.

2nd Indiannas Quest

3rd Coalford Ski

Time: 1:58.3

Distances: 12L and 7L



**Race 12: Sire Stakes 3 YO Fillies - She Be Stunning**, sired by Foreclosure, owned and bred by Steven Gilvear, trained by John Gilvear and driven by Gordon Gilvear

2nd Rhyds Seequin

3rd Ayr Rhythm

Time: 2.0.9

Distances: Hd and 2.25L



**Race 15: Sire Stakes 4 YO - GDs King**, with just two runners for this race it turned out to be a tactical affair, not only on the race track!

The winner owned by B Ritchie, bred by D Dunbar, sired by the great Hasty Hall, was trained by Teresa Haythornthwaite, and driven to victory by son James.

2nd Kier Camden

Time: 2.2.9

Distances: 2.5L

**Leading Sire:** Foreclosure

**Leading Driver:** Vicky Gill

**Leading Trainer:** John Gill

Thanks to Sarah Thomas for photographs

# STAGBI Golden Girls Final 2020



**Although at the start of the year it was clear that the 2020 season would look markedly different to the preceding one, the STAGBI Directors were keen to build on the success of the inaugural Group 1 Golden Girls Final staged at York in 2019; and despite the challenges faced by all four hard tracks in terms of adhering to protocols and largely racing behind closed doors, the Future Broodmares Series once again provided a great platform for some of the best mares in the country to compete at the highest level.**

The six qualifying legs saw five different winners, with the only dual victor lowering her lifetime mark on both occasions (Ayr Empress – 1.58.7, 1.58.5) at York. Newtown Jody and Stashthecash were the widest margin winners of their respective races (4L) at Tir Prince and Corbiewood respectively; Hawthorns Dream overcame being the outsider in the betting market to win her leg at Corbiewood; and Lyons Queen's win at Amman Valley became the springboard from which she recorded her first sub-2 minute mile when finishing second in a subsequent leg at York.

Nine mares lined up in the Group 1 final in less than ideal conditions at York on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, with the abandonment of the start car for safety reasons after torrential rain. On the first attempt and in perfect formation, Newtown Jody (Vicky Gill) faltered which caused the only false start of the day and she was subsequently moved to the outside on the front line. Unsettled on the second attempt, she trailed the field at the start leaving one less for the early battle to gain position. Blue Titan (William Greenhorn) ultimately held off the initial challenge from Ayr Empress (Hugh O'Neil Jnr) into the first turn to hold her rail position; Lyons Queen (Grant Cullen) having been drawn widest of all at the start looked to take the cover off Ayr Empress who found herself parked, however Rhyds Nightlife (James Haythornthwaite) had filled the gap and forced Grant's hand somewhat into a bold move at the quarter to take up the lead in 28.4 seconds.

In scenes mirroring the preceding leg, Lyons Queen and Ayr Empress raced side by side with the latter once again committed to being first over, going



through the half in 1.00.5. In the third quarter Lyons Queen extended her lead over the chasing field, with Ayr Empress the best of the chasing pack closely followed by Rhyds Nightlife as they headed into the final two furlongs. Lyons Queen had certainly come on for the run the week before and continued to put distance between herself and Ayr Empress, who in turn went several lengths clear of Rhyds Nightlife and down the stretch the race was all over. A tight battle for the places saw Blue Titan pipped on the line for third having taken the shortest route by a fast-finishing Newtown Jody who overcame a huge disadvantage from the start to flash down the outside. Darcy Camden (Rocker Laidler) showed the step up in class wasn't too big an ask to finish fifth and in the prize money.

### **Full result:**

1<sup>st</sup> Lyons Queen – G Cullen  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ayr Empress – H O'Neil Jnr  
3<sup>rd</sup> Newtown Jody – V Gill  
4<sup>th</sup> Blue Titan – W Greenhorn  
5<sup>th</sup> Darcy Camden – W Laidler  
6<sup>th</sup> Finley Wells – M O'Mahony  
7<sup>th</sup> Rhyds Nightlife – J Haythornthwaite  
8<sup>th</sup> Stashtecash – H Menzies  
9<sup>th</sup> Rhyds Passion – R Haythornthwaite  
2.03.1 5 1/4L & 8L



Speaking as a STAGBI Director, I take great pride in this particular event and the calibre of mare that the series attracts. To see the Future Broodmares races regarded as the feature events at meetings, and to witness time and time again mares lowering their lifetime marks justifies the hard work that has gone in to building this series over the years. These races continue to strengthen mares CVs and encourage owners and trainers to keep mares in training for longer, and the £3400 purse Group 1 Final now appears to be 'the one to win' for connections of mares which are more than capable of





competing overseas, as has been proven by last year's winner Olivia Camden.

Thank you to everyone who competed in the series and congratulations to all the winning connections of the qualifying legs, and of course to the Mound family, Dave Taff and Grant Cullen on winning the Group 1 Final with Lyons Queen.



Text and photographs by Sarah Thomas, Equine Photography

## MEDIA UPDATES:

Sarah Thomas continues to work on new initiatives to promote harness racing certainly across the UK if not around the globe. Not content with her new initiative this year - The Sulky Show (see YOUTUBE), a must watch, Sarah continues to strive to reach out to audiences near and far.

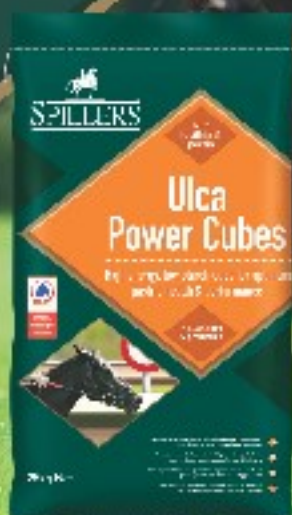
Sarah can never be accused of letting the grass grow under her feet, her latest challenge has been to produce videos 'from the track', and I mean 'from the track', encouraging drivers to wear her 360° camera as well as normal body cameras. Watch her usual media channels on Facebook for the results.

*The Sulky Show*



NEW

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**The bright autumn sun finally set on the 2020 season at Tir Prince Raceway on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November with a thrilling finish to the Green Hornet Grand Final with four horses all crossing the line together much to the handicappers delight.**

Now that the dust has settled Tir Prince Management can look back on the season with a sense of pride as we fulfilled every obligation so far as stakes races are concerned including The North Wales Horse Owners Association Championship Races, The Breeders Crown, The BHRC Classic Races and The Dragon Races for Tregaron Trotting Club ensuring that the class of 2020 didn't lose the opportunity to race as juveniles, 3 year olds and 4 year olds due to the worldwide pandemic.

The situation with COVID forced us to look at streaming our racing on a pay per view basis and we were determined to try and produce a programme that was good quality, informative and value for money, we hope that we achieved this.

Another exciting development was the off course betting, Star Sports threw their hat into the ring allowing UK customers the opportunity to purchase the stream and place bets

online with Star from the safety of their living room. This was a service that many harness racing punters took full advantage of.

It is hoped that either Star or another UK bookmaker will take the product on a bet to view basis as we feel that then the bookmaker will be able to introduce our product to new clients as well as accommodating the existing loyal fan base. From 4<sup>th</sup> October onwards our product was also taken on a bet to view basis by Ladbrokes Australia and we were delighted with this.

The fact that our pictures were being streamed to the other side of the world felt like a huge step forward and we are hopefully that this could be the first step in the right direction on what will be a very long road to try and take harness racing in the UK to the next level.

What about the horses? We saw some fantastic 2 Year Olds: Ayr Contessa, Ayr Ambition, Yerkes Hanover and the superstar that is Oakwood Anabella.

It was fantastic to see Miraculous return to his former self to win The Star Makers Series and the Crock Of Gold and Rockin Mambo showed that he is a real Tir Prince favourite once again taking the Group 2 BHRC

British Pacing Classic.

The Autumn Series also saw the return of weekly racing to Tir Prince which meant that the handicappers got to perform week-in week-out and both the Tir Prince Star Makers Series and the Green Hornet Handicap Heat and Final allowed horses such as Rhyds Star Quality, Wellfield Warlock, Plan B and Ayr Regal to prove that they are capable of putting on a show every week and providing top class racing.

We also really enjoyed The Tir Prince Trot Of Gold Series and believe that the quality of the French Trotters in The UK is improving year on year.

The Autumn series allowed horses that are often denied the opportunity a chance to shine along with their trainers and drivers. A special mention must be made about the trainer driver team of Watson Harrop Snr and Watson Harrop Jnr. Since the start of the autumn series which commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> October Harrop Snr who is the trainer in the father and son outfit had 8 winners from 12 starters a fantastic 67% strike rate whilst Harrop Jnr the driver on the team drove 9 winners from 13 starters for an even more impressive 69% strike rate so well done team Harrop.

We would like to thank all of the trainers that supported us throughout the season and we look forward to welcoming you back next year.

So what of 2021? Well we have put in for 25 race dates with qualifiers starting in April and race dates up to the end of November so we will see how things materialise in relation to that but the hope is to provide a suitable mix of top class stakes racing along with more racing for handicap horses on a regular basis to keep the sport ticking over and hopefully to keep our product on the bookmakers screens.

We will be hosting The Vincent Delaney Memorial in August 2021 and we are absolutely thrilled to be holding this international festival of harness racing and we will be looking to pull out all the stops to try and improve on what has been an exceptionally well run event in Ireland since its inception.

We will of course once again be hosting The Breeders Crown and The BHRC Classic Races along with our flagship race The Billy Williams Memorial Crock Of Gold. We are also looking forward to putting on some more Le Trot Series racing following the success of the inaugural Tir Prince Trot of Gold Series.



## **Tir Prince Raceway a Review of the Class of 2020**

The breaking of the yearlings ready to race as 2 year olds in 2021 is now well underway all over the UK and Ireland as peoples hopes and dreams are carefully placed into the carts for the first time, everyone hoping for the next juvenile superstar.

Like everything, the season at Tir Prince Raceway was delayed due to COVID but when we finally got under way it was The 2 Year Olds that we started with in The North Wales Horse Owners Association 2 Year Olds Championships. The subscription of fillies was so large that the races had to be split into 2 divisions. In the first division Ayr Ambition an Art Major Filly out of Sold Out was the pre race favourite having impressed at York for John Gill's stable. It was however Said To Be Sweet for Team Laidler who took the honours with a very smart performance putting the race to bed in the home straight to win by 1.5 lengths in a time of 2.4.7. To call a victory by the Champion stable a shock would be an overstatement but she was not one of the fancied horses following her performance at York in the qualifiers and it indeed turned out to be her only victory of the campaign. In 2nd Showtime I'm A Lady stayed on nicely and looked destined for a good season whilst Coalford See stayed on well in 3rd.

In the Colts and Geldings Championship we were treated to something very special as Yerkes Hanover made his competitive bow

in the United Kingdom winning in fine style and breaking the track record in the process, clocking a very fast 2.00.5 to win by 2.5 lengths making it a double on the day for the Laidler's and Ed McCarthy. Ayr Camelot went very well in second place having been struggling with sore feet on the build up he wasn't 100% right on the day but showed that he is a quality animal. In third place Wasn't expecting that picked up his first of many place cheques for the season but was never going with the front pair.

In Division 2 of the fillies Ayr Contessa found plenty to win by six lengths for team Haythornthwaite who have made a habit of winning this race over the years. Out of Ayr Queen by Armbr Deuce she put the field to the sword with the minimum of fuss in a time of 2.04.01 and this proved to be a sign of things to come. Imperial Attitude, in second, proved to be a smart filly who was on the premises in most of the big stakes races throughout the season.

The next time we saw the babies at the big track was for The Junior Welsh Dragon a race that we agreed to hold after Tregaron's July meeting fell foul of COVID 19. Once again, (due to numbers) we saw them split into two divisions and it was Ayr Ambition who took the honours for Vicky Gill as she laid it down to Said To Be Sweet in the straight to take the honours for Team Gill and Ayr Standardbreds. This big strong filly ran green first time out but progressed nicely here to take the honours

in a fast 2.03.4. Said To Be Sweet ran well in defeat whilst Rhyds Mayfly finished a strong third.

In the Colts Division Yerkes Hanover cemented his supremacy at the top with a facile victory in a time of 2.5.4. GD's Thunder as Scottish raider ran brilliantly to finish 2nd whilst Wasntexpectingthat filled the 3rd place birth again.

In Division 2 of the fillies Ayr Contessa followed up with another smart victory this time seeing off Imperial Attitude in a time of 2.4.90. The latter counted herself a little unlucky in this race as she didn't see daylight until they hit the straight and finished very strongly but was ultimately beaten a length. Edith Camden a full sister to Rewrite History finished a distant third.

The Breeders Crown was held at Tir Prince and Oakwood Annabella graced Tir Prince with her presence - she didn't disappoint. She made light of being drawn widest of all in six on the gate to win comfortably in a time of 2.1.20. For a 2 Year Old Filly to win from that position in that manner at Tir Prince in The Breeders Crown left punters knowing that it was the last time that they would see anything other than very short odds offered against this filly for a very long time.

In the colts it was Churchview Frankel who took the honours for Bernard Nicholson on what is fast becoming his annual pilgrimage to Tir Prince. This son of Foreslosure won smartly by 4 lengths ensuring that connections were at least £4000 better off

when they boarded the ferry that night. Oakwood Denver caught the eye in second whilst Porterstown Roman was back in 3rd.

In Division 2 of the fillies Ayr Contessa made it three in a row at Tir Prince to collect her biggest pay day of the season. She was made to work very hard for it by Churchview Diva with the front two finishing well clear of Showtime I'm a Lady in third place.

The Breeders Crown 2 Year Old Division certainly belonged to Foreclosure as he sired the winner of the colts division and had a winner and a runner up in the fillies divisions. He also unearthed his first bona fide mega star with the performance of Oakwood Annabella. Being a stallion in the UK and Ireland is a precarious business as people write stallions off quicker than a loss adjuster writes off a twenty year old sierra, but Foreclosure is now at the top of the tree and could be there for the foreseeable future.

Our last glimpse of the class of 2020 came in The BHRC Futurity in September and Yerkes Hanover maintained his affinity with the wide open spaces of Tir Prince Raceway as he clocked 2.01.10 to win by 10 lengths and collect the £1000 prize money. It could be the Welsh air or it could be that being a full born and bred yank that he likes to race on a proper American style track but rest assured whatever it is Yerkes likes Tir Prince.

In the fillies it was billed as Ayr Ambition versus Ayr Contessa but they both finished

out of the frame and the night instead belonged to On The Money a Control The Moment Filly bred by The Timmins Brothers and sold to Thomas Ripley and connections. She landed a Group 1 Victory on her first start since changing to the Laidler stable with Rhyds Mayfly only beaten a head back in second. Both of these fillies demonstrated

how juvenile horses can improve later on in the season given time and patience.

So that was the 2 year old season at Tir Prince Raceway we very much look forward to welcoming all of these horses back as 3 year olds in 2021.

**Eric Witherspoon**

**WARNING    WARNING    WARNING    WARNING    WARNING**

**The BHRC,Wales & Borders HRC & STAGBI wish to remind members and all industry participants about their responsibilities regarding the welfare of the horses in their care.**

As a breed society and racing organisations we must endeavour to make sure that every Standardbred has a respectable standard of care regardless of their ability as a racehorse.

All horses must be treated with compassion and respect from the day they are born right through to their breeding career, retirement and beyond.

Our organisations expect all their respective members to uphold the highest possible standard of welfare for the horses in their care and will work together with equine charities and welfare organisations in cases where this is not evident.

Members should also be reminded that the practices of racing horses on the public highway has a detrimental effect on the image of our breed and sport. It not only contravenes BHRC rules but violates British law and is therefore a criminal offence.

The BHRC, Wales & Borders, HRC & STAGBI will co-operate fully with any local authority,welfare organisation, highways agency or police force with their efforts to eradicate this practice.

**WARNING    WARNING    WARNING    WARNING    WARNING**

# OVER THE WATER BY ERYL WILLIAMS

## **Blackwell Ruby**

15 runs (7 wins, 2 x 2nd 1 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.51.3

Earnings: \$61131 (£46114)

## **Evenwood Sonofagun**

12 runs (6 wins, 3 x 2nd, 1 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.49.1

Earnings: Can\$ 122,450 (£70301)

## **Father Ted**

18 runs (4 wins, 8 x 2nds, 2 x 3rds)

Lifetime best: 1.51.3

Earnings: \$43115 (£32526)

## **Gentleman Jim**

17 runs (4 wins, 3 x 2nd)

Lifetime best: 1.50.3

Earnings: \$36078 (£27217)

## **Greenhill Debatable**

17 runs (5 wins, 3 x 2nds, 3 x 3rds)

Lifetimes best: 1.53

Earnings \$33141 (£29914)

## **Greenhill Hanover**

14 runs (6 wins, 3 x2nds)

Lifetime best: 1.52.2f

Earnings: \$30520 (£23027)

## **Itsmycheck**

17 runs (9 wins, 2 x 2nd, 1 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.50.3

Earnings: \$46725 (£34915)

## **Matticulous**

21 runs (4 wins, 5 x 2nd, 4 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.49.1

Earnings: Can\$ 131,000 (£75310)

## **Oakwoodinittowinit**

14 runs (6 wins, 2 x 2nds, 1 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.50.3

Earnings: \$32288 (£24316)

## **Olivia Camden**

11 runs (6 wins, 1 x 2nd, 3 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.54.3

Earnings: \$17275 (£13035)

## **Portrstown Chris**

15 runs (2 wins, 4 x 2nd, 1 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.50.4

Earnings: \$17240 (£13206)

## **Robyn Camden**

16 runs (5 wins, 1 x 2nd, 3 x 3rd)

Lifetime best: 1.53

Earnings: \$75785 (£57170)

## **Stormy Hall**

7 runs (3 wins, 1 x 2nd, 1 x 3rd)

Lifetimes Best:

Earnings: Can\$ 14,030 (£8065)

**Total prize money: £412,537**

**A big thank you to Eryl Williams for the regular updates on Facebook**



## Great Britain's New Frenchies

Last time we took a look at the art of selection and the process involved in purchasing Trotteur Français racehorses to race in Great Britain.

The 2020 official TROTBritain - LeTROT sale took place at the start of November. As with everything else in 2020, the Covid -19 pandemic complicated matters.

With France going back into strict lockdown and international visitors no longer allowed, for a brief moment it looked as if we'd be unable to tour in search of our future champions. As usual though, Emmanuelle Morvillers and her team at LeTROT Département International came up with the answer, getting government approval to provide the TROTBritain selection team with Justificatif de Deplacement Professionnel, allowing us to travel to France and around its beautiful country, problem free.

This year's candidates for selection were trialled by Alan Haythornthwaite, Joe Quinn, John Nicholson and Mike Evans, under the watchful eyes of TROTBritain Chair Bill Green and leading trotting trainer Matty Quinn.

TROTBritain selection team regulars Jack Dowie, Ian Pimlott, Paul Mather & Emyr Edwards were unable to attend this year's tour, but had put in the bulk of the work to come up with the 32 horse shortlist.

Of these 32, the selection team felt comfortable in selecting 15 new Trotteur Français racehorses for our British buyers.

### Great Britain - These are your new Frenchies:

First stop on the tour was the Centre d'Entrainement Grosbois, where we found:

1) **Flash De Longuerue**, a 5 y/o gelding by Robert Keeper out of a Bamaro King mare. Earnings of 19,930€ and a 1'15"3 record.



From Grosbois we travelled to the Hippodrome de Laval where we found:

2) **Cedre Pierji**, an 8 y/o gelding by Repeat Love out of a Workaholic mare. Earnings of 44,130€ and a 1'15"8 record.

3) **Catalane du Canet**, an 8 y/o mare by Panymede Tivoli out of a Giant Cat mare. Earnings of 39,005€ and a 1'15"0 record.

4) **Crazy du Calorne**, an 8 y/o gelding by Repeat Love out of a Lolo Josselyn mare. Earnings of 49,185€ and a 1'15"2 record.

5) **Feerie de Triou**, a 5 y/o mare by Redlight Jet out of an Emir Des Fresneaux mare. Earnings of 22,370€ and a 1'16"7 record.

Day two started at the Hippodrome d'Argentan where we found:

6) **Europe**, a 6 y/o mare by Thorens Vedaquais out of a Mon Bellouet mare. Earnings of 32,025€ and a 1'16"8 record.

7) **Chambord Fromentro**, an 8 y/o gelding by Rocklyn out of a Tarass Boulba mare. Earnings of 118,060€ and a 1'13"9 record.

8) **Droits De L'Homme**, a 7 y/o gelding by Real de Lou out of a Tarass Boulba mare. Earnings of 26,460€ and a 1'16"5 record.

9) **Crack Du Fruitier**, an 8 y/o gelding by Let's Go Along out of a Caballio in Blue mare. Earnings of 51,770€ and a 1'15"0 record.

10) **Esprit De Crennes**, a 6 y/o gelding by Biesolo out of a Ginger Somolli mare. Earnings of 28,840€ and a 1'16"2 record.

From Argentan we travelled to our final destination the Hippodrome de Caen, where we selected:

11) **Deltana**, a 7 y/o mare by Lord Du Pin out of an Evolo mare. Earnings of 51,050€ and a 1'16"0 record.

12) **Crack Des Noyers**, an 8 y/o gelding by L'As de Viretaute out of a Quipo de Couronne mare. Earnings of 47,750€ and a 1'15"6 record.

13) **Comanchero Beach**, an 8 y/o gelding by Power Jet out of an Ami d'Un Soir mare. Earnings of 30,915€ and a 1'15"1 record.

14) **Destinee De Conde**, a 7 y/o mare by Blue Dream out of a Jackpot du Relais mare. Earnings of 45,310€ and a 1'15"1 record.

15) **Coeur De Venise**, an 8 y/o gelding by Corot out of an Ideal Du Gazeau mare. Earnings of 33,770€ and a 1'16"6 record.

Of course these tours are not only about finding new racehorses. Each trip to France further strengthens the TROTBritain - LeTROT relationship.

One of our tasks for 2021 is to 'homologate' some of Britain's tracks. Homologation of a racetrack allows race results and times on it to be recorded in the Trotteur Français studbook. Homologation will therefore allow British Trotteur Français racehorses to qualify to race in France on a home track. This will be a great advantage to British owners

and trainers in the years to come, as the numbers of Trotteur Français youngstock increases from the purchases of yearlings and breeding of mares.

This brings us to the most exciting and potentially biggest news from TROTBritain's most recent Tour de France. In recent years many former Trotteur Français race mares purchased through previous TROTBritain sales have been bred to Trotteur Français stallions, but until now this has meant the mare needing to return to France to be served.

While this will continue, it is not ideal for all British breeders, which is why we are happy to announce that Joe Quinn and Matty Quinn each took up the option to purchase Trotteur Français Stallions through LeTROT to stand in Great Britain.

**Renier**: a winner of 10 races, earnings of 257,000€ and a 1'13"3 record and also placed in a Group 3 race. Renier is a son of Sire of Sires Goetmals Wood out of Justesse (by Big Prestige). Goetmals Wood is a winner of 894,190€ and his sons include successful sires Singalo, Prodigious & Sam Bourbon. Renier's oldest crop are now 4y/o and he has produced race winners in France.

**Ungaro Des Brouets**: Race winner with earnings of 121,350€ and a 1'13"3 record, also placed in Group 3, Group 2 & Group 1 races. Ungaro Des Brouets is a son of Corot out of Vanille Brouets (by Kohol) Corot is a winner of 398,369€ and has produced big money earners Nelumbo 1,011,420€ and Return Money 801,610€. Ungaro Des Brouets oldest crop are now 2 years old and he has already produced horses to successfully qualify in France.



**Renier**

Importantly, Renier and Ungaro Des Brouets are from different sire lines meaning there is now an option for all Trotteur Francais mares to be bred in Great Britain. We look forward to seeing

a big increase in baby Frenchies in Great Britain in 2022 and lots more on the racetrack in the 2025 TROTBritain Junior Series.



**Ungaro Des Brouets**

Traditionally the Irish season has ended on the weekend on which the clocks go back, in other words the third week of October. At time of going to press the season had just been extended from 29<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December, by far the latest fixture ever attempted at Portmarnock, although Lambeg did race on Boxing Day in the late sixties.

We inch ever closer to chairman Mark Flanagan's often repeated goal of 'year round racing'. When Mark first mentioned this to me I gave him a look as if to say 'your head is cut', which is the local lingo for 'you need some mental help'. However, those who know Mark can vouch that he has a habit of making the difficult become the done. In 2019 the IHRA had eighty entries in late October, they must be doing something right !

The last piece I submitted to the BHRC calendar dealt with my enjoyable side line as harness racing correspondent for The Irish Field, and how that came about. Today I will provide a loose (not stats based) summary of what I see as some of the highlights of the 2020 Irish season.

As of last weekend John Richardson and Billy Roche are locked in a titanic duel for the 2020 drivers title. Up to and including the 15<sup>th</sup> November meeting the tally was JR 26 and The Red Baron 25. I did say I wouldn't mention my work with The Irish Field again. However, I can't resist telling you that I am proud to say that the famous old paper started sponsoring a silver salver and a generous cheque for our national

champion driver in 2017.

In that time the same name has been engraved three times (old lemon and chocolate himself). Billy actually won the title around six years ago and his legion of supporters would be chuffed if the silverware was to end up on Clare's sideboard, Clare being Billy's partner. With both men still racing six or seven horses my bookie's head says '4/5 your pick'.

In recent years the IHRA with help from the like of Mary Kane and the ever present Nadina Ironia have organised the usual awards split by colt and filly ; two year old, three year old and older, pacer and trotter. The clubs also elevate a few living legends and hall of famers. I hope these are given out as usual although there is unlikely to be an awards night at a hotel. At least no 'trotting dinner' will be some relief for a few livers.

The highlights mentioned here are not intended to pre-judge or replace the official IHRA awards. The official awards are given on a strict count of races won. My suggestions are based on a quick flick through The Irish Field (the only publication which really carries our sport) and a pile of dog eared, scrunched up programmes.

I will deal with action from the tracks of Ireland from the first meeting in late June. The eight or ten Irish and GB pacers racing in North America have done us proud. Nigel Quigley and Jonny Cowden began the year well in France and New Zealand respectively but the purpose of this piece is to examine

the Irish home scene.

**WELL DESERVED EARLY SEASON VICTORIES ;** Johnny Burns from Monaghan is a dedicated owner, trainer and driver. Johnny is known as Rockin' Johnny due to his action when chasing along a horse. Johnny is more of a jiver than a driver. He owned Meadowbranch Roman who benefited from a couple of forceful drives by Darren Timlin to win two in a row back in July.

You will probably gather that I take a particular satisfaction from a win by 'the small man'. If the non-league clubs didn't do the odd bit of giant killing football would be awfully dull. The same holds true for trotting.

**COMEBACK OF THE YEAR ;** A well-known Irish politician once made a veiled threat on behalf of a paramilitary grouping 'we haven't gone away you know' and this was much parodied and copied by satirical programmes. 55 year old Alan Wallace could be forgiven for saying 'we haven't gone away you know' as his Cloghran based yard was quite literally under a cloud in recent seasons – thought to have been caused by rape seed pollen from a neighbouring farm.

Wallace's days in the doldrums were soon forgotten as he had a smashing year. Starting with a double in late July Alan's fortunes took a mighty upturn. The talented but lazy stallion Newtown Rock even decided to get involved this year and in late summer was as good as ever. Alan junior carried on the success in the autumn with the speedy French mare Eva Dairpet.

**STALLION OF THE YEAR ;** Foreclosure who stands at the Delaney's Oakwood Stud dominated the two and three year old pacers divisions here and in GB. His two year old filly Oakwood Annabella has been much praised by experienced judges and was rumoured to be heading to the home of harness racing (America). Her 1.58.6 track record for a two year old on 10<sup>th</sup> October must be a candidate for **PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR**.

Foreclosure's stock can vary in height a bit but they all seem to have the magic ingredient - 'heart'.

**SPORTSMEN OF THE YEAR ;** A three way tie in this. The Galway family started out in the eighties with Integrity and Miss Ayr purchased from Corbie Wood, and have been breeding ever since. They have endured cruel luck with both pacers and trotters in recent seasons. Therefore they got a mighty cheer from the limited crowd when Frisson d'Yvel broke their jinx on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Alex Cuffe is a sole harness trainer based in scenic County Sligo. The black gelding Earnies Dream (by Crock winner Earned Income) is in the twilight of his career and would not have the toe of his younger rivals. The pair's win on 22<sup>nd</sup> August touched even the hardest of hearts.

Cabra apprentice Calvin Broughan plainly lives for his racing. He was just touched off with both Bingo de Connee and Brasilia Match on November 14<sup>th</sup> and took the two near misses with his usual smile. Justice was done on the 21<sup>st</sup> when he managed to



beat his 'boss' Sean Kane with his own mare Brasiia Match.

GAMBLE OF THE YEAR ; The most successful gamble of the year was not by any of the 'shrewdies' who inhabit the betting ring at Portmarnock. The coup was not by those wizard placers -of – a horse, the Roches. No, the gamble of the year was by the Red John Committee who went for an 'all -in play 'by cancelling day one of the Red John Festival and opted to run twenty one races on the Sunday. God must have been a trotting man as the organisers were rewarded with an overcast but dry day which allowed racing to go ahead.

The RJM committee took a ballsy decision in a region where the weather in Coppeen could be the direct opposite of that in Clonakilty. And as you know it's only a fair stretch of the legs from Clon to Coppeen!

NEW INITATIVE OF THE YEAR ; The October sale of Standardbreds and Trotteur Français put together by Mullingar Equestrian Centre saw only 18 lots go through the midland complex. The management were well pleased when Oakwood Ar Dan at € 19,000 broke the sales record **for all breeds** at the complex where sales have been held for around a decade. The sale was a good starting point and with support from breeders can only grow. The facility is magnificent and Mullingar and nearby Athlone are strong market towns.

British readers will be pleased to note that the top lot went to Shane and Claire Fletcher of Wolverhampton, a team that are not

scared to race and to celebrate.

LONGEVITY AWARD ; John Boyle from Doneraile was born In Donegal but married and settled at the opposite end of the island i.e. County Cork. As a driver, John enjoyed a handful of wins on the tough Cork circuit this year. Not bad for a 74 year old. One visiting commentator to the region dubbed John ' The Pacing Pensioner '.

DRIVE OF THE YEAR ; On July 25<sup>th</sup> I stated in The Irish Field ' if the IHRA have an award for 'drive of the year' this will take some beating '. I was referring to Omeath man Brendan Morgan's winning effort behind Typhee on the previous Sunday.

"Typhee was not the best horse in the race, but Brendan saved every inch of ground before producing Typhee to hassle long-time leader Valiant de Gueham out by the railway and eventually hang on in a three – way photo", the paper ran with at that time.

There have been some clever drives since including Donal Murphy with that old monkey Banderillero Piya and John Richardson with Dragons Den (not the bravest ever foaled) but for my money nothing trumps Brendan's performance that day. He seemed to hit what golfers call 'the sweet spot' on a heavily raced thirteen year old.

Brendan's uncle the late Jack Morgan will be known to readers as the owner of 1999 Musselburgh winner Just Decision. As if to prove a point, Typhee has not won since.

HORSE OF THE YEAR ; At time of writing

Kevin Coreys' ten year old pacer Fairdays Western (The Preacher Pan – Lyons Western) has accumulated more wins than any other horse of either gait in Ireland. He will almost certainly win Horse of The Year honours. If it was a voting process he would probably win anyway. Especially since in the later half of the season you could set the kettle for a 1.58 mile from the gelding. A 1.58 mile is a big run as Portmarnock has been kinder but slower this season.

EMERGING TALENT OF THE YEAR ; A close run thing between Fairdays Western's usual pilot Jonny Cowden from Belfast, and Oisín

Quill from Kenmare in County Kerry.

Oisín has forged a great relationship with the mare Valanzana.

A Happy Christmas to harness racing people everywhere. A big well done to the BHRC and IHRA for keeping racing going during the Covid crisis.

**Dan Carlin**

**Contact one of our editorial team with success stories of standardbreds of the track. We hope to publish regular stories that demonstrate just how versatile this breed are.**

**FEEDBACK:** This is the third of our revamped 'The Calendar' publications. We hope you are enjoying the reading content. Feedback on The Calendar had previously been quite negative as you felt in your words there was 'nowt in it'. We listened to you and have tried a different format. Let us know your views, we think it has improved but we need your views. Drop us a line either through Heulwen in the office or direct to Sarah, Julie, Mandy, Kayleigh or Karen.

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## Successful season following committee collaboration

Like all associations throughout GB this year Wales & West Harness Racing Club were anxious that we wouldn't see any racing in the area but by working alongside Amman Valley Trotting Club we were able to hold seven race meetings and a total of 44 competitive races. A huge thank you has to go to all who made donations to Wales & West to ensure racing could continue, along with Jess Dyer who took the initiative to set up a fund raiser for Amman Valley.

Every year Wales & West hold annual awards and we wanted this year to be no different. The Charlie Blissett memorial has become a regular event during September at Almeley, running heats over varying distances. Although the venue changed this season the series was again well supported. Black Williams returned to the track after a two month spell and rewarded connections faith in the horse taking leg

one. He was back in action in leg two but was beaten by an in form Dis Moi Oui. A win and runner up spot was enough to secure him the title for owner Neville Wilson and trainer/driver Rhun Wilson.

The leading horse title for 2020 went to the Mark Pritchard trained Kentucky Junglejoe (Share the Delight/Mikes Starlight). The seven year old who commenced his racing career this season is described as quirky by connections. He showed great potential in his first appearance on the track winning his maiden by 1 & ½ lengths whilst his novice win showed signs of greenness winning by only a head after a messy run up the home straight. A second place run followed but then it was three back to back victories and some professional performances and he is most definitely a horse to look out for next season. He became a track specialist notching up an impressive five wins at Amman Valley. Brywins Ferocious, Finley Wells and Lanehouse





Girl all shared second place honours with three wins a piece.

Being the owner of Kentucky Jungle Joe John Evans ran away with the owner's title. Kentucky Rocket also added a victory to his tally, this one perhaps being all the more special as he was the man at the reins. John ended the season with six wins as an owner. In second place was Fern Williams who enjoyed four winners in her first season under BHRC rules.

Leading Lady Driver this year went once again to Angie Dyer with four winners. The Dyer family are avid supporters of Amman Valley so it was fitting that they should end the season with an award. The family's lead charge this year was Brywins Ferocious (Share the Delight/Brywins Fantasy). The three year old debutant

scored a treble of victories, all driven by Angie but trained by her daughter Jess. The final contributor to the tally was the yards' faithful gelding Ozzy (Yankee Lariat /Dornisthorpe Lucky) who won the grade 2-5 pace at the beginning of August. Second place went to Emma Langford.



Leading driver went right down to the wire and in the end it was impossible to split the pair at the top of the table. Both Mark Pritchard and Michael O'Mahony notched up an impressive 8 winners a piece over the seven meetings. Mark got on the board early winning the first race of the season, Michael happened to be aboard the runner up in that race so the competition was on early. Week two saw them both drive winners, Mark again on board week one winner Kentucky Jungle Joe and Michael with Talavary Motivator. A treble on the day (Dare To Dream, Lanehouse Girl and Talavary Motivator) at meeting three took

Michael into the lead but Mark was hot on his heels with a win on Lyons Queen in a heat of the STAGBI future broodmares series. The following week it was a double for Mark steering both Highbrooks Ideal and Kentucky Junglejoe to victory. Lanehouse Girl gave Michael a further winner and it was level pegging with five wins a piece. At the fifth meeting four of the six races went the way of the duo, Scoots Falcon and Kentucky Junglejoe for Mark and Lanehouse Girl and Finley Wells for Michael. Kentucky Junglejoe and Finley Wells were back in the winner's enclosure at the penultimate meeting, taking them to eight wins each. Despite both drivers having driven on the final day neither could get into the winners enclosure to give a clear victor. Interestingly both drivers had the

exact same number of drivers over the season, 18 in total, Michael driving solely for his own stable and Mark receiving a number of 'catch' drives.

Leading trainer for 2020 went to reigning champion Michael O'Mahony with eleven winners. Michael trained the eight winners mentioned above which he drove himself but also three additional winners. Paddy Connors used his C Class claim to his advantage achieving a pair of wins with his own Wellfield Warlock, whilst Mark Evans drove Finley Wells to her first of three victories at the track.

Second spot in the trainers division went to Mark Pritchard with 6 wins.

A massive well done to all of our 2020 championship winners but also congratulations to all who made a very difficult season possible.



There are a few back copies of the March, June & Sept Calendars if anybody would like to purchase them £5 each inc P&P—please contact the office

If any reader would like an article published or has any suggestions for content for The Calendar please send details to Heulwen at the office:  
[bhrc.office@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bhrc.office@yahoo.co.uk) OR TO Julie at [julie.park4@gmail.com](mailto:julie.park4@gmail.com)



# Carol Vorderman's closer to home

**Harness racing from North Wales will be a feature of a three part series revolving around the life of TV personality Carol Vorderman. The celebrity most known for her math skills on Countdown was born and raised in North Wales. The series due to be aired on BBC Wales early next year explores Carol's experiences growing up.**

One of those experiences was regularly visiting Prestatyn raceway. Carol fondly remembers being at the track as a child along with several members of her family. Her mother was at one point the race meeting secretary and the programme will visit her childhood memories of being in the paddock.

With Prestatyn raceway no longer being an option for a visit the production team turned to Tir Prince Raceway to provide the nostalgia. An up and coming young driver was requested to showcase the future of the sport, who else would you call but Stephen Lees Jnr and his trusty steed Ayr Regal or 'Reggie' as he is more affectionately known. At the time of filming Stephen was preparing for his racing debut and used the filming day to give his new colours an airing. Reggie was the perfect co-star and stood perfectly whilst Stephen was filmed aboard the sulky and discussed how he became involved in the sport.

Carol's interest in horses remains to this day and she is an owner of some racehorses running under National Hunt



rules. Eric Witherspoon in particular enjoyed some of her racing knowledge winning with the betting tip she gave him on the day of filming.

The production team did not want Carol to just reminisce over her childhood memories they wanted her to give driving a go. This is where Michael and I came in and Wellfield Warlock was the horse we chose. Carol took to it instantly and was in full control jogging round the track at Tir Prince with Michael sat alongside as a precaution. His main job turned out to be

having to stop Carol going too quick. It so happens she's a bit of an adrenaline junkie and gained a pilot's licence in 2013.

Harness racing in the UK struggles to get the coverage it deserves and although the series will only show a small glimpse of the sport if one more person gets introduced to harness racing in the UK it will be a positive result. Keep an eye on social media pages for updates on when the programme will be aired.



**That's a wrap for 2020 (thankfully). Here's hoping that 2021 is a better year for us all. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, let those dreams begin again!**