

# EDITORIAL

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved in the tremendous awards evening. The organisers (Sarah, Kirsty, Kirsty, Gwenan & Darren), the hotel and their staff, the award winners and all those that attended. It was nice to see so many smiling faces during what was such a good night, and I hope it will continue every year and be built upon. This sort of event showcases exactly what can be achieved - we cannot progress in any positive manner whilst peoples dislikes and grudges are forefront. However, when disputes, quarrels and disagreements are parked and everyone works together for the benefit of each other and the sport as a whole, such an event can be successfully staged and favourably received.

Not to single out any one person, but I must mention a huge thanks to Darren Owen for his superb knowledge of our great sport, his in-depth enquiries into the individual winners and his continued support.

Of course, unfortunately not all news since the start of 2016 has been good. The very sad news received from York that there will be no more racing staged there has been an immense blow. Thanks must go to Mick Welling for all the hard work, effort and finance he put into the track and for trying to make it a going concern. We wish him and his family well and every success for their future.

From this it is great to see that the sports enthusiasts in the North of England have rallied and there are two projects lined up which will bring extra racing venues in the area and hopefully lead on to a new hard track. Perhaps these like-minded individuals could be convinced to venture north of the border and meet with the sports enthusiasts from Scotland to work on a project for a new venue or hard track in that area too. The BHRC of course will offer any help and assistance that they are able to any individuals or committees working on such projects or wanting to stage racing.

The Pacing Classic Races and Sire Stakes in 2016 will be staged at Tir Prince. The track will be the home for the races for the next three years, during which time the new Racing Manager, Eric Witherspoon, will be planning to build the races back up and regain their identity in the juvenile stakes. Eric and Tir Prince have already announced new sponsors for the races, so the wheels are well in motion for his plans. Continued good luck and thanks to Eric and the team!

It is great news that the Big Guns Series will return for 2016 and thanks to Huw Evans it has the continued sponsorship and support of the Standardbred Sales Company and also bigger purses. Venues are due to be announced shortly in conjunction with the invitation for licence holders to nominate their horses.

It's been good to see that TrotBritain and the Le Trot series are expanding to differing venues. With similar race conditions and varying race distances, they now have a variety of surfaces and areas to race in, which coupled with the importation of extra stock can only enhance the series.

Congratulations of course must go to Ireland on their success at the UET conference where they were admitted as full members of the UET. In conjunction with the support announced recently from the Irish Government, the IHRA are making great advances for the sport.

Although the sport has suffered from some negative updates, there are many positives in the above for the 2016 season. I hope, despite the weather, that the horses are in and jogging and I look forward to seeing you all at the races!

As always I can be contacted at any time on my mobile 07817 588770 or via email at [roy.sheedy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roy.sheedy@hotmail.co.uk)

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