



Harness Racing Calendar

The official publication of the British Harness Racing Club

Volume 55 No. 3



British Harness Racing Club

Pg No

Board Report	4
WTC Updte	6
Apopka Denise	9
Oakwood Anabella	14
York Pact Weekend	18
VDM 2023	20
Breeders Crown	23
Trudy Launchberry - AVTC	26
Haugh Field 2023	27
Crock of Gold	31
Aberyswyth	34
Moneyhill	39
Confederate	40
Through A Fans Eyes	41
Tribute to John Blissett	43
An update from NZ - Bob Meadowcroft	44
Yearlings to follow Pt 2	46
Following in the footsteps - Oliver O'Mara	47
Judy Hall	48
Integrity Update	52
Henry Hill	53
Evenwood Sonofagun	55

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BOARD REPORT

As we enter the final weeks of racing it seems appropriate to reflect on just some of the highlights of the season. Since the last edition at the beginning of the summer we have seen the staging of some of our flagship meetings.

We know how hard it is for all our promoters to stage meetings, and we thank them on behalf of licence holders for their continued hard work.

We would like to take a moment however to congratulate Tregaron, Tir Prince VDM, Tir Prince Breeders Crown and York PACT for their festivals of racing, along with all promoters - for these meetings, which truly showcase our magnificent sport.

We have seen some of the best of the best running over the summer, we have seen dreams made, records broken, and some of the old faithfuls show us they are still 'le crème de la crème'. We congratulate the Laidler stable, who still have the two most highly rated horses in Great Britain. It is no easy task to keep these horses at the very top of their game.

At this time of year the Championship tables start to heat up and eyes are firmly on current leaders: James Haythornthwaite who heads the driving championship from Rocker Laidler, Raymond Huschka and Claire Fletcher go head to head in the owners table whilst Alexis Laidler again heads the trainer championship - with the million dollar question being who will top

the tables in mid October?

As Directors (predominantly Charles Inglis, Carol Jenkins and Jason Podmore, have taken on the roll of Regional Stewards their time has been somewhat taken up over the summer. Although this situation is not ideal as it gives us limited cover, it has made a substantial saving to our somewhat limited budget. Should anybody out there feel they could offer their services as either a track steward, or regional steward, please contact the office. Unfortunately there is no longer any travel allowances paid with the position of Regional Steward, however where Stewards are in attendance at a meeting purely for the purpose of stewarding they are entitled to free race entry.

Sadly the spring sunshine and worry of hard ground soon diminished and the summer weather can only be described as dismal, and we sadly saw the decimation of some of the late July early August meetings due to weather conditions. We work with promoters to offer them support when meetings are cancelled - it is equally frustrating for all concerned.

Plans are already afoot for the fixture list and John Smart continues to work hard to offer a balance of fixtures all around the country, working with fixed dates and established dates to try to ensure that the needs of all are met. It is a very challenging job and we thank John for his continued input.

Sadly there has been three serious cases of aggravated verbal abuse against both Stewards and Directors. This has led us to review both the process and the current rule book. The Directors have been working on a Behaviour Policy, a summary of which will be published on the website, which involves using existing rules in a much firmer way. This will be implemented from next year. This kind of abuse cannot and/or will not be tolerated.

As we approach the closed season our efforts will be focussed on the long awaited and much needed redevelopment of the website. This was always the third and final stage of the computer system overhaul. As we have tried to explain the whole computer system was totally broken. The re-build had to start with the horse database, it was then rolled out to include the licence holders and handicap system. The final stage is to link the new database to the website. As our website is outdated it makes sense to update the website at the same time and then link it to the new database. We thank you for your continued patience and hope from next year that you have the facilities you miss so much - the ability to look up horse performance, as well as other functionality.

The Directors have a meeting set up with a bookmaking organisation, and are trying to get a joint STAGBI/BHRC meeting with the British Government to look at funding.

The Rule Book changes that we hoped to implement in 2023 will be quickly reviewed and re-shared with the plan to then offer

stewarding seminars and early release of an updated BHRC Rule Book.

Following on from the WTC the BHRC Admin Team hope to start work on a Welfare Policy and start to discuss and implement some of the actions recommended during the conference - see WTC report later in the Calendar.

Once the racing season is over, Hayley will focus up on tidying up payments due to promoters for fines etc, as well as a number of other office tasks, but will start to run the office on reduced hours to enable her to catch up on her well deserved holidays.

Our thanks go to Hayley who has worked extremely hard this year to run the office with just support from directors. This has enabled us to not have to employ a second person, and thus make a considerable financial saving for you the licence holder. Our thanks also go to Julie and Carol who carry out a number of routine tasks for Hayley.

Carol Jenkins has been working with a solicitor to look at the re-wording of our Constitution. Draft updates will be posted to the website and/or future Calendar editions as available, for consultation.

As we move to the closed season we ask you to consider whether you could offer your services in anyway to the BHRC Board, this may be by offering yourself as a Director, or by offering some support in any other way if you feel being a director is not for you.

*Barry, Jason, Will, Carol, Julie, Charles &
Hayley*

The World Trotting Conference, Berlin - August 14-18 2023



WTC
WORLD TROTTING CONFERENCE
GER 2023

A party of five (Ryan O'Neill, Gwenan Thomas and Sue Young (STAGBI) and Julie Park and Hayley Cassells (BHRC) joined delegates, life members, observers and visitors from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Serbia, Sweden and the UET.

The days were long, starting at 9.00am and with most days not finishing until 6.00pm there was certainly a lot to take in, and as usual at any business type event, it is not only what you learn in the workshops but also the networking opportunities that are so valuable, and many friendships/business allegiances were made.

The meeting is split into sub-groups, it is impossible therefore for one person to attend all sub-groups. However between us we made sure that all meetings were attended and notes were shared, a very brief outline is included below:

Constitution Meeting: There have been no new applications for membership to the ITA, however In support of Ukraine, Russia has for the time been excluded from all work in UET and all championships in Europe. It was decided to take the same position regarding Russia in the ITA. The WTC has been changed to a 3 yearly event with a yearly virtual meeting of committees. The World Driving Championship however, is to remain a bi-annual event.

Breeding Committee: it was agreed to move to the use of SNP chips, a timetable will follow. Foals born from embryo transfers using frozen

embryos will not be eligible for registration in the stud book nor will foals born as a result of OPU/ ICSI. Discussions were started re horses receiving life time bans from racing also having a lifetime ban from breeding - further discussions to follow.

Equine Health & Integrity: all countries appeared to be limiting the use of the whip, with some countries having a whip ban altogether. It was agreed that the ITA will continue to take a long-term view over use of the whip, and continue to limit and moderate the use of it within the sport. The general feeling from delegates was that in order for the industry to survive outside influences a whip ban seemed more of a when, than an if, it will be enforced.

The ITA will continue to work towards improved integrity testing techniques and increased testing frequency.

The welfare of the horse from conception to death must remain paramount.

The group were presented with data on barefoot racing which indicates that there could be both short term and long term damage to the horse from it. It appears that countries are taking steps to either limit the frequency that horses can race without shoes to prohibiting the practice altogether.

Over the whole week a lot of time was spent talking about the welfare of the horse from conception to death. The words Social Licence were prominent throughout.

Social Licence - in its broadest term means each individual country self-regulating the welfare of their sport before it was enforced on us. This would mean a vision/strategy for "The good life

of the horse". Things to consider under a social licence may include (but not be limited to) topics such as: conception, gestation, training, racing, retirement and death. Hot topics we will need to address are welfare concerns around whip, juvenile racing, integrity and road racing. Juvenile racing, each country to look at developing a sustainable programme which ensures the welfare and longevity of the horse.

Racing and Wagering: much of what was discussed over wagering is not applicable to Great Britain as no financial support is received from the government. Over the closed season the BHRC will again approach the government re funding. It was agreed that each authority should secure their rights to racing data and video images - (BHRC already collect this for stewarding purposes). The BHRC will meet with promoters over the winter to discuss how this could be used further to benefit the future of the sport.

A couple of countries have already produced economic/environmental impact reports which they agreed to share with all members. This may be helpful going forward if we find any grants that we are eligible to apply for.

Marketing and Business: it was agreed in 2019 that each member country produce (on a monthly basis), their top 5 horses. There was no format for how these would be selected.

Some countries were electing to pick by a panel to put their pick together, some were going to just use their top 5 earners in the month, whilst others it would be on numbers of wins, one country used a weighted system. This data was to be advertised on the country's website/Facebook page and shared with the ITA. A page where all data is to be displayed (by country) is to be created.

One country has invested heavily in developing a game called STABLE, whilst another has invested in a mechanical horse and sulky which can be used for driver training and marketing purposes. As this is being developed in England we have offered the country in question the opportunity to test it here in England with our drivers.

Some (including GB) have looked at how VR can be used, allowing non-drivers to experience driving in a race using a VR headset - again this is something we have already discussed with Sarah Thomas. Other considerations included how ChatGBT could be used to benefit the sport.

World Driving Championships: will remain as a bi-annual event. There are currently 19 members: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UET and USA. There were only 10 places this year, though in some years there has been 12. The number of places is determined by how many horses can be on the gate.

There are 19 ITA members, with only 10 or 12 places available. Places are allocated as follows:

1 place each: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States of America
UET get 6: but they decide which 6 countries from the UET membership from the results of the European Drivers Championship

Wild Card: when 12 places are available the reigning World Driving Champion gets an



automatic place and there is a wild card place on offer.

This year we saw Rick Ebbinge the reigning champion from the Netherlands re-take the crown.

LEADERBOARD AFTER 4 OF 4 LEGS

1.		RICK EBBINGE	163
2.		DOUG MCNAIR	150
3.		HANNA HUYGENS	150
4.		SANTTU RAITALA	145
5.		MICHAEL NIMCZYK	132
6.		PETER MCMULLEN	130
7.		JORDAN ROSS	118
8.		BLAIR ORANGE	107
9.		MIODRAG PANTIĆ	103
10.		RODNEY GATT	78

What else did we learn: it was re-assuring to hear that many of the measures that the BHRC have implemented, or have plans to implement show that they are moving in the right direction, that we are one of the few countries that receive no income from the government or income via a betting levy and that all countries were experiencing problems with decreased membership and dwindling numbers of horses registered.

We are very much a little fish in a big pond, however we had an equal say in matters

discussed, we have the support of other countries and we felt very much part of a bigger family.

We would like to thank Heinz, Anja, Isabelle, and everybody who worked so hard to put on the conference, we thank them all for their hospitality, and support throughout the week.

All attendees attended at their own expense.





Apopka Denise

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It was with sadness STAGBI learnt that the broodmare APOPKA DENISE (US) has passed away. Apopka Denise was owned by Marc and Jenny Jones, Forgeside Stables in Sennybridge and her name has become familiar to many as a successful broodmare.

Bred by Status Stables USA and raised in Gerogetown, Kentucky. Apopka Denise (US) was out of CHINA MOON (US) a filly that was sold at Harrisburg as a yearling for \$60,000. CHINA MOON (US) was a BIG TOWNER (US) mare out of JENNY M HANOVER (US) by ALBATROSS (US). JENNY M HANOVER (US) was a full sister to World Champion JAGUAR SPUR (US) p3, 1.51.2 T1.49.2 \$1,806,473 and half sister to JASMINE HANOVER (US). JASMINE HANOVER (US) had 7 foals in 1.54 which included LITTLE MISS DRAGON (US) p3. 1.50.2 \$767,634; ARTSTANDING (US) p2,

1.50.1 \$743,075 & JAMAICA HANOVER (US) p5, 1.50.3 RT 1.50.2 \$230,885 APOPKA DENISE as the first foal out of CHINA MOON who went on to have 5 subsequent foals, her best offspring being FULLY COMMITTED (US), p6, 1.53.1 \$289,682 a full sister to Apopka and DUKE OF LUCK (US) by Camluck p6 1.53.2 \$121,784.

APOPKA DENISE (US) was originally sold as a yearling at the Kentucky Standardbred Sale, 1999 for \$14,000. Apopka herself had little success on the track, she raced as a 2 year old and won \$1,095 with no wins. As a three year old in 2001, she was bred to Grinfromeartear (US). She was returned to Grinfromeartear for 5 consecutive years, her first two foals INGENUITY and IGNORE THE CRITICS hardly set the world alight. However, things took an upward turn with her next

foal, **TRANSCENDING** who attained a record of 1.48.2 and earned \$923,733, followed by **CHANGING GEARS** who had a record of 1.51.4. In 2006, she foaled her fifth Grinfromeartear foal, a colt **WEXFORD BEACH**.

Thus, having foaled in Canada, she was immediately put back in foal prior to being exported to Great Britain in Sept 2006. She was subsequently entered in the Annual Standardbred Sale, Builth Wells. A strong, well built physically impressive 8 year old daughter of Jennas Beach Boy (US) she was sold in -foal to Camotion (US) with a Grinfromeartear (US) colt foal at foot. Apopka Denise attracted much attention at the sale and she was purchased by Welsh father and son, Les & Marc Jones from Sennybridge for £12,000.

APOPKA went on to have another 12 foals with Mark & Jenny Jones at Forside.

APOPKA DENISE (US) 1998 f, Jennas Beach Boy (US) \$1,095. Dam of 17 foals:

- **INGENUITY** 2002 f, Grinfromeartear (US) \$3,416
- **IGNORE THE CRITICS** 2003 m, Grinfromeartear (US) \$5,726
- **TRANSCENDING** (US) 2004 m, Grinfromeartear (US) p8, 1.48.2 \$923,733 41 wins.
- **CHANGING GEARS** (US) 2005 f, Grinfromeartear (US) p3, 1.51.4 \$189,406 9 wins.
- **WEXFORD BEACH** (US) 2006 m, Grinfromeartear (US) p6 1.57.7 £9,879 9 wins.
- **FORGESIDEDOTCOM** 2007, f Camotion (US)
- **INFINATEY** 2008 m, Immortalized

(US) p5, 1.57.9 £19,288 14 wins.

- **ROCK N ROLLER** 2009 f, The One Night Pan (CAN)
- **THE APPRENTICE** 2011 m, Daylon Alert (CAN) p5, 2.02.1 £5,000 10 wins.
- **INTENSITY** 2012 f, Immortalised (US).p3, 2.02.4 £2,950 2 wins
- **JESSIES CONQUEST** 2013 f, Arts Conquest (US) p3, 2.00.3 £23,398 15 wins.
- **FATHER TED** 2014 m, Arts Conquest (US) p5, 1.57.4 £11,823 Exported to US 2020 p7, 1.51 \$244,141 15 wins BT 1.49.3
- **THE MOCKING JAY** 2016 f, Rogue Hall (US) p2, 2.02 £7,559 2 wins.
- **UN-NAMED** 2017 m, Doonbeg (CAN) Died
- **APOPKA G** 2018 f, Doonbeg (CAN) p3, 1.58.8 £14,126 4 wins.
- **CATCH TWENTY TWO** 2020 m, Sweet Lou (US)
- **UN-NAMED** 2023 f, Foreclosure (NZ) Embryo Transfer

Thus making it an incredible 17 foals in total. Her longevity as a broodmare is commendable and an achievement in itself, but then when you consider what her offspring has accomplished – fair play, and hat's off to her! APOPKA DENISE was indeed a prolific broodmare and the dam of some stand out individuals including:

WEXFORD BEACH (CAN) was the foal at foot when Apopka Denise (US) was purchased in the Builth Sale in 2006. During his racing career in GB, he was owned, trained and driven by Marc Jones. WEXFORD BEACH started his racing career as a three year old finishing second in a Maiden at Tir Prince. A week later he won a maiden in Amman Valley in a respectful 2.02.7. During that first season he went on to win the 3 year old pace at Tan y Castell,

and a heat of the S4C Welsh Cup at Tir Prince (2.02.4) – finishing second to Impartial in the Final (2.01). He started his 4 year old campaign by finishing second in the Senior Welsh Dragon (won by Rhyds Destiny). His ‘big day’ came at the Ceredigion meeting (Aberystwyth), when to the joy of the Jones’ family he won both heat and Final. Ten days later he won a heat of the S4C Crock of Gold at Amman Valley, and clocking his first sub 2 min mile (1.59.8). The following season, he returned to win another heat at Ceredigion and another sub 2 min mile at Amman Valley (1.58.2). He was subsequently sold and exported to Ireland.

INFINITEY, a 2008 born colt by Immortalized (US). He also started his racing career as a 3 year old, finishing first or second in his first 11 runs. As a 3 year old, he won his maiden at Leominster which proved to be great prep for his trip to Appleby, where he won both heat and final of the Appleby 3yo Grass Championship, leaving the likes of Meadowbranch DJ, Rhyds Topaz and Rhyds Boots in his wake. At the York 3yo Championship, a month later he was narrowly defeated by Little Mill Rogue in his heat and Meadowbranch DJ in the final. The 3 year old campaign moved onto Ceredigion, where INFINITEY contested both the Ceredigion 3yo Championship and the BHRC Pacing Derby. He won his division of the Ceredigion 3 year old comfortably, and once again second to Meadowbranch DJ in the extended one and a half miles of the BHRC Pacing Derby. His final win of his 3 year old campaign came on winning a heat of the Breeders Crown at Amman Valley and fourth in final to Frisco Havago. His 4 year old season saw success but his season was cut very short by injury. Three runs, with 2

wins – heat of the Welsh Cup at Amman Valley and the 4yo NWSA Championship at Tir Prince. By 2013, and now 5 he had overcome his problems and returned to the track as a force to contend with, winning a heat and Final of the Tregaron Spring Handicap on his season debut. Having been placed on his next few outings, Marc took INFINITEY to York, winning in 2.00.2. This was followed by a win at Tir Prince, where he took his personal record of 1.57.09. Clearly a good horse that had hit form, and racing out of his skin, and therefore not surprising that he came to Tregaron and won not only his heat but also the final of The Oriel Jones Welsh Classic. Injury once again kept INFINITEY off the track for the entire 2014 season. His final win for Marc came at Almeley in the Autumn of 2015. INFINITEY was then sold and continued further success racing with Wales & Borders. Unfortunately, W&B record not available but his wins did include a runaway 1.56.4 win at Amman Valley.

THE APPRENTICE – 2011 born colt by Daylon Alert (CAN). Another that was owned, trained and driven by Marc, he had a few starts as a 2 year old but unraced at 3. He won his first race at the Tyncastell meeting when he was 4, followed by wins at Tregaron, Tir Prince and Almeley. By 2016 he won in Walton & Monmouth and then was sold to Andrew & Joanne Cairns where he immediately won a heat at Pikehall, Wolsingham and a heat of the Strata Florida before his final end of season win for them at York, when he also took his personal record of 2.02.1. The Apprentice was subsequently sold to Ireland where he raced in 2017.

JESSIES CONQUEST – a prolific winning filly by Arts Conquest (US), winning 15 of her 22 lifetime starts. She won the NWHOA Championship on her

2 year old debut at Tir Prince (2.03.8), followed by the Ceredigion 2yo Championship and the 2yo Breeders Crown. As a 3 year old, she had 5 consecutive raceday wins – Walton Ht (unplaced final), Monmouth 3yo Championship, Tir Prince, Ceredigion 3yo Fillies and the NWHOA 3yo Fillies Championship (2.00.3). Her next string of wins was an impressive collection of consecutive Group wins, namely the Little Welsh Dragoness, BHRC Oaks & BHRC Sire Stakes and at the end of the season she was voted the BHRC 3yo Filly of the Year. At 4, she successfully returned to win both the Breeders Crown 4yo Fillies Final and the BHRC 4yo Sire Stakes and went across to Portmarnock to win the Mares FFA Pace over 1.25miles and in the hands of US Invitational driver Dan Noble set a new track record for 1.25 miles (2.28.5). In 2018, Jessie was retired for breeding, and was scanned in foal to Hasty Hall (US). Her first foal, Jessies Hallmark was sold as a yearling for £14,200 and went onto win the Junior Welsh Dragoness and the York Graduate. Her second foal, Sweet Ivan (2021 colt by Sweet Lou) was sold at the yearlings' sales for £28,000.

FATHER TED – a full brother to Jessies Conquest and by all accounts took a while for the 'penny to drop'. However, his race results would suggest otherwise, as he won a Heat of the York Major 3yo on his racing debut. As a 4yo he was placed on each of his 9 runs, winning heat of the BHRC Star Maker at Amman Valley and the BHRC Star Maker Final at Tir Prince. A month later he went on to win heat and final of the Strata Florida. The following year, Tregaron beckoned again, this time the Welsh Classic finishing 2nd in both heat and final (which was won by Merrington Moving Up), but it was back to the winner's circle in York when he won the

Daniel Welling Memorial Heat & Final in 1.57.4 & 1.57.7 respectively. By the 2020, he was now Father Ted (GB), having been exported to America. Trained by Rob Burke, since being exported he has won 15 races and nearly \$250,000, has a record of 1.51 and race timed in 1.49.3.

THE MOCKING JAY looked to have a very bright future as this 2yo filly by Rogue Hall (US) had a successful 2yo campaign. Winner the Group 1 Breeders Crown 2yo Heat & Final and runner up in both the NWHOA 2yo Fillies Championship and the BHRC Fillies Futurity and was subsequently voted BHRC 2yo Filly of the Year. She was then sold and exported to Ireland, however her racing career did not progress.

APOPKA G now a 5 year old and still racing. A daughter of Doonbeg (CAN) she was also voted BHRC 3yo Filly of the Year having won the Group 2 NWHOA 3yo Fillies Championship, STAGBI 3yo British Championship at Amman Valley, Breeders Crown Heat (2nd Final), the Group 2 BHRC Sire Stakes and placed in the Little Welsh Dragoness (Group 1). At 4, she returned to Tregaron to win the Senior Welsh Dragon Group 1 race with ease but was troubled with injury for the remainder of the season. This season her campaign appears to be focused on Mares' Races and already a winner of STAGBI Mares at Amman Valley, and placed in both York and Tir Prince races. Apopka G currently sits at the top of the points table and the list of invitations extended to the Golden Girls Final at the end of the season.

APOPKA DENISE was certainly a great purchase for the Jones family and she will be missed at Forgeside. Her ashes will be buried along side their training and a tree planted in her memory.



Welcome to GEOFF BASSO visiting the region from Canada.

Geoff has owned standardbreds over in Canada and is an avid fan racing on a weekly basis.

Geoff and his nephew visited the recent Brough meeting where he enjoyed the experience of race calling with Darren Owen before having a spin around in the start car.

BHRC

Flu Vaccination Programme

The BHRC used 2022 as a transition period but from 2023 will require horses to have 6 monthly boosters.

Primary course intervals (horses not previously vaccinated):

Primary course intervals are only required for horses that have not yet been administered a primary course or are required to re-start a new primary course.

An initial primary course of three vaccinations must be given (V1, V2 and V3): the second vac-

cination (V2) must now be administered within **21 -60** days of the first vaccination.

Horses must not attend any official BHRC fixture/venue until 7 days after the second vaccination of the primary course.

Vaccine 3 (V3) must then be administered within **120-180 days** of the administration of the second vaccination (V2).

Boosters should be administered no more than **6 calendar months** apart, according to calendar months rather than a fixed number of days. For example, a horse that is fully vaccinated on 01 January would require a booster on or before 01 July.

	OLD SYSTEM	Protocol for 2022 (Primary Course)	New protocol ALL for 1 st Jan 2023
V1 (1 st Vaccine)			
V2 (2 nd Vaccine)	21-92 days	21 – 60 days	
V3 (3 rd Vaccine)	150-215 days	120-180 days	
Booster	Not more than 1yr apart	Not more than 6 months apart	Not more than 6 months apart

OAKWOOD ANABELLA

Oakwood Anabella IR, the 5-year-old daughter of **Foreclosure N** who had a whirlwind tour of the U.S., before an injury curtailed her career, is back home.

Being home means that the Irish-bred mare has returned to Ireland, to the folks that bred her—that being brothers Derek and James Delaney, at their Oakwood Stud in County Offaly, Ireland.

“She is a 100% homebred by our resident stallion Foreclosure N,” said Derek Delaney. “Her dam, Carmel Camden was the Irish 2- and 3-year-old champion mare that my brother James trained and raced before breeding her. We sold Anabella as a yearling for £6,500 at Brightwells Sales in Wales, United Kingdom (U.K.) and didn’t have any part in her ownership when she raced in the U.S., but we followed her very closely along with all of the Irish and British racing fraternity.”

Oakwood Anabella IR is the first foal out of the **No Pan Intended** mare Carmel Camden, and has a full brother in the gelding Oakwood Paddy, Jr. p, 4, Q1:57f (\$44,537). Her third foal is a filly, born this spring, by **Always B Miki** and owned by Oakwood Stud.

Prior to her North American jaunt, this gutsy mare was the fastest 2-year-old in the history of Irish and U.K. racing, and still holds the record of 1:58.3 on a half-mile track. She was timed in the U.K. in 1:57.3 at 2 as well. After winning six of six over Irish raceways, beginning in August through late November of 2020, and earning \$14,917, the owner—Denis Copse of County Limerick, Ireland—decided to send her to America to race.

“She was training back as a 3-year-old with John and Vicky Gill of York, U.K., and was showing tremendous speed in qualifying, so the owners decided she



Oakwood Annabella IR winning at Scioto Downs for driver Austin Hanners (Conrad Photo)

was too good for Ireland, and they shipped her to Brian Brown,” Derek offered.

“There was a guy on Facebook from Ireland who I was bantering back and forth with and had told me for two years he was going to send me a horse,” Brian explained. “That guy never did send me one, but then these other people reached out and told me they were sending me this filly and that she was on her way. That’s how I got her.”

After arriving in the U.S. in mid-summer, 2021, Oakwood Anabella IR qualified at Scioto Downs on Aug.31, pacing in 1:55.4 with Austin Hanners in the sulky. Her parimutuel debut came ten days later at Scioto in a \$13,000 overnight, when she scored an impressive 10¾ length triumph for driver Cameron McCown in 1:53.

Seven days later she paced to a winning 1:50.4 victory at Scioto with Austin Hanners back in the bike. Her owners thought so much of her that they supplemented her to the Jugette for \$15,000.

“She was really something,” Brian recalled. “She came over and had to spend three weeks in quarantine, and then almost another three weeks to get her DNA certified, but she had no trouble getting right down to the business of racing. Her third start over here was in the Jugette. We really asked a lot of her early.”

Oakwood Anabella IR finished a strong second by a head to Test Of Faith in her \$50,760 Jugette elimination, and then was third in the \$152,280 Jugette Final behind Scarlett Hanover and Test Of Faith, clocked in 1:56.4 with Ronnie

Wrenn, Jr., at the controls.

“One of her biggest achievements was for her to race in the Jugette after a couple of overnight races and be second in her heat to Test Of Faith in terrible weather conditions and third in the final with very limited time to adjust to that level of racing,” Derek stressed. “We were all just



so proud of her and the buzz she gave us as breeders from racing in the Jugette, to taking on Test Of Faith in :25.4 last quarters at The Meadowlands, and to be the fastest ever 3-year-old exported to the U.S. from this side of the Atlantic. I think she is the first 3-year-old pacing filly to race in the Jugette who was bred outside the U.S.”

Darren Timlin holds the sign that was hung up over the bar at Annaghmore Raceway the night Annabella was racing in the Jugette and all the horsemen went there to watch her race.

Oakwood Anabella IR won her next start easily in a seasonal best 1:49.3 by nearly six lengths for Cameron McCown at Dayton on Oct. 1, then was second to Test of Faith in the \$100,000 She’s A Great Lady at Northfield on Oct. 16. Two weeks later, she scored a resounding 1:51.3 win at The Meadowlands in a \$36,000 Filly and Mares winner’s over with Tim Tetrick in the sulky, before wrapping up the season with a third-

place finish in the \$120,000 USS Indianapolis Memorial on Nov. 5 at Hoosier Park, pacing in 1:49.4 with David Miller at the controls.

Her seasonal totals clocked in at four wins, two seconds, and two thirds in eight starts, with \$109,498 in earnings for 2021.

“She wasn’t a real tall horse, but she had such a huge gait on her that you’d think she was a lot bigger than she was,” Brian offered.

The hardy Irish-bred mare was given nearly a six-month break between her 3- and 4-year-old campaigns, before qualifying at Miami Valley Raceway on April 15, 2022, in a respectable 1:54 for Cameron McCown. She promptly went out and won her first two starts at Hoosier Park, in 1:52 and 1:49.4, before finishing second by a neck to Test Of Faith in a \$25,000 Graduate division at The Meadowlands in 1:49.4 for Dexter Dunn on May 14.

“She battled Test of Faith all the way to the wire with Test of Faith pacing a :25.4 last quarter and Bella pacing :25.3 herself,” Derek recalled. “That race was in terrible weather conditions; torrential rain, and the track was rated with a two second allowance and they went in 1:49.4. That effort was pretty impressive in those weather conditions.”

Two weeks later, Oakwood Anabella IR put in a solid 1:53 qualifier at Scioto Downs on May 28, then captured a \$40,000 Graduate leg at Woodbine in 1:50.2 for Todd McCarthy on June 4. Her next three starts in the Graduate Series saw her perform less than her best, and she was given a brief break before qualifying once more at Scioto on

Aug. 13, where she paced in 1:55 for Koltin Noble. She then won the \$29,000 Filly and Mares Open at Scioto on Aug. 19 in a career best 1:49.2 by nearly three lengths for Cameron McCown and followed that up with a third-place finish in a similar event a week later at that same track.

Before her Sept. 16 outing, when she captured a \$22,500 overnight at Harrah’s Philadelphia in 1:50.4 with Tim Tetrick at the lines, Oakwood Anabella IR was transferred to the Jimmy King, Jr., Stable in Delaware, where she would stay for five starts. However, that victory would be the last triumph of her career, as the mare did not appear to have the same stamina that had been her trademark earlier in her American journey. She was purchased by Bottom Line Racing and Let It Ride Stables—both of Boca Raton, FL.—on Nov. 29, 2022, and then transferred to trainer Michael Hall’s barn.

“I didn’t have her that long,” Jimmy King, Jr., noted. “She was a nice mare but didn’t seem to have the pop she had earlier in her career. Mike Hall picked her up from me after Eric Cherry bought her and that’s the last I saw of her.”

Oakwood Anabella IR finished fourth in 1:55 for Hall and driver Simon Allard on Dec. 28 at Dover Downs in a \$18,000 Winner’s Over, and made one start in 2023, on Jan. 11, where she was also fourth, this time clocked in 1:53.2 for this same driver-trainer combo. Whereas the mare’s last quarters had previously been in :27 or better, she now was pacing her final brushes in the :28 range, and the decision was made to retire her. When she left the track for the final time, she had \$212,960 in career earnings.

“We owned her for a few starts,” Eric Cherry said. “But she wasn’t sound, and we couldn’t get her to become sound, so we sold her back to the breeder.”

“James and I decided to buy her back and bring her home to start a new career as a broodmare after everything she’s done for us, and for Irish and British harness racing. After all the highs that she gave us as breeders we just thought it was the right thing to do—expensive yes—but the right thing to do,” Derek offered. “I thought she gave a real good account of herself to go over there (to the US) and take on top-level competition like that and be competitive at the level. It just showed how versatile and how good of a mare she really was.

After being sold back to Oakwood Stud on Feb. 15, 2023, Oakwood Anabella IR returned to her native country, and the Oakwood Stud facility, where her sire, Foreclosure N stands.

“We are partners with Diamond Creek Farm and have frozen semen here for Always B Miki, Captain Crunch, and Sweet Lou,” Derek explained. “We have bred Oakwood Annabella to Captain Crunch and is carrying her first foal, and we will probably breed her to Sweet Lou next year, and Always B Miki the following year.

Oakwood Annabella IR has acclimatized perfectly at the home of her foaling, Derek added.

“She has settled in really well and seems happy to be home,” he noted. “Bella is one cool horse to be around; she is so chilled and has a great temperament around people, but she won’t take any BS from any of the other horses. She has that dominant streak in her even though she is kind natured. I sum it up in a

word—she is all class. She likes to play with the other mare’s foals in the field, so I’m sure she will be a great mother just like her mum is—she has all the right attributes to be a top broodmare.”

While it is apparent that Oakwood Anabella IR added a global element of excitement and inspiration to the American harness racing scene, she also did as much for the Irish and U.K. racing communities.

“The morale over here (in Ireland and the U.K.) when Bella was racing in the Jugette reminded me of a World Cup football atmosphere,” Derek related. “Some people organized parties to watch her race and the excitement around it was electric, everyone involved in the sport had their eyes peeled on Bella and were rooting for her. It was a very special time in the sport to think that one horse could do that and bring everyone together like that. She is a real star, and it’s a memory that will last a lifetime.”

Courtesy of [Kimberly Rinker](#), Harnesslink for editorial and Conrad Photo for image.

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The York PACT Weekend



This weekend of racing has become a very well supported event in recent years by both competitors and spectators. It was first started back in 2014 and since has grown into a very popular event supported by harness racing fans and enthusiasts from all across Britain. Each year the event showcases top class performances and thrilling races, and this year's renewal was nothing short of that! From 2 & 3 year old Championships for fillies and colts to 4 year old FFA, it showcased heats and a £1500 final, trot races, a top class FFA pace as well as something for the up and coming drivers with the Jessie Jones Down Syndrome Awareness Young Drivers race.

Saturday: the first race was a maiden and was taken away by the much loved skewbald pacer Ferox Flame, owned by Lee Rix, trained by (Mr Start Car) Simon Clarke and driven to victory by the master Alan Haythornthwaite. On to the first of the heats which went the way of the classy mare Kaiya Camden for Joby Randall and team Laidler, this was to be the first of 3 heats won by team Laidler. Frankie B took the second heat then the final heat was won by the Welsh owned Be Like Me for Cliff Dowse.

Gigi De Carsi took the first of the trot races coming off a 30 yard trail for Kia Hall, Andrew Cairns and the team. Then Karen and Peter Addiss took race 6 with their own bred Bonita. It was to prove to be a Team Laidler day, when Race 7 again went the way of team in the shape of Greenhill LouLou for Arnie Flower and Frank Huschka.

The Flying Scotsman Ryan Inglis took the next one with the now David Morton trained horse, Rhys Louie, Crosshill Diablo took the next race just holding



Thinking of Daddy at bay for the Kelly Peacock and John Smart duo.

The race we were all waiting for, the Rab Haw Free For All saw the legend, the one and only, Evenwood Sonofagun win this race for a second year running, and to finish off the day Team Laidler won the final with Frankie B. Not only did Alexis Laidler train the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th place finishers in the final but also won 6 of the 12 races on the day.

On to day 2 of the PACT weekend and it started with a very impressive win from Born In Isolation for Scott Cattigan and team Cullen partnership, winning by an impressive 13 lengths. Fresh Luck finished with a flourish in the next race for the Michael Cooper, Mark Eltringham and James Haythornthwaite partnership.

The next race was won by the up and coming JD Camden for Patrick Anderson, Hugh O'Niel stable, steered by supercool Will Greenhorn. Next it was time for the up-and-coming stars, the first of the Jesse Jones Down Syndrome Awareness Young Drivers race. Division 1 was won by American Mistress for Team Gill, giving Ollie his first win. Division 2 was a spectacle to watch with all 4 horses finishing within 2 lengths of each other, the winner was Raymond Camden for Ronald Grieveson giving him a top class drive clinging to the pegs and staying on to win by $\frac{3}{4}$ length.

Then it was the first of the Juvenile races, the Stagbi 3 year old Colts & Geldings Championship was won once again by Ronald & William Grieveson this time with I Shot The Sheriff in 1.59.3 blowing the field away to win by 6 lengths.

There was an upset in the Stagbi 3 year old Championship Fillies division when

Oakwood Dynasty overturned Matadora for Sally Teeboon and Richard Haythornthwaite. The 4 year old Free For All went the way of the exciting prospect Oakwood Ardan in 2 minutes winning by 13 lengths for Claire Fletcher and team Haythornthwaite. Logan Fowler gave the Always B Miki daughter Pussycat Doll a master class drive in the Blossom Kelly 2 year old Fillies race just timing it right to win by a head on the line.

Then it was the race we were all waiting to see the Daniel Welling Memorial 2 Year old Colts & Gelding Group 1 race, it seemed to be a match race between the scotch horse Money Hill and the partnership of Flanagan, Brown & Gill's horse Onefortheroad. Onefortheroad left the gate with devastating tow for Richard Haythornthwaite and led the way, coming down the the halfway point Hugh Menzies brought Moneyhill to the outside of Onefortheroad they both locked together and pulled away from the field going the the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile marker then rounding the last turn it was clear there was only going to be 1 winner, Onefortheroad pulled away to win by 2 lengths in a time of 2.2.4 for Richard Haythornthwaite, Sally Teeboon and the partnership of Flannagan, Brown & Gill.

With that the Pact weekend 2023 drew to a close. A weekend of racing that was started by the Welling family in the loving memory of Daniel Welling, for those of you who may not be aware of the charity, it stands for The Parents Association of Children with Tumours and Leukaemia, a charity very close to the hears of the Welling family. All the proceeds from the weekend went to the PACT House in Sheffield in the loving memory of their son, Daniel Welling.

Stephen Lees Jnr

Well, 2023 you did not disappoint, the VDM, it just gets bigger and better every year.

This year saw 21 races (19 pacing and 2 trotting races) over the two day festival, with over £140,000 in prizemoney, with runners representing England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales with the champion 2 year old colt and filly both taking home a cheque for £20,000.

The Ed Telle Memorial Junior Free For All Pace saw champion trainer produce a clean sweep, a real family affair with husband William partnering Be Like Me to take out the premier prize, leaving son William Jnr partnering Comfort Zone whilst Alexis herself donned her colours to partner Yerkes Hanover to produce a 1,2,3 for the combined Laidler stables.



The Bernie Kelly Memorial Free For All saw Englands leading horses fighting for the honours. Sonofagun took an early lead, we all thought the writing was on the wall, however. super-sub Will Greenhorn had other plans, driving a patient race, letting Gunner do all the work, Movinup sat in the slip stream, popping out on the line to take the honours. It was a Laidler 1, 2 for stable superstars Merrington Movinup and Evenwood Sonofagun. The race pulled up in 1.56.6, the other horses



VDM Tir Prince 2023

lost nothing in defeat, with all 6 going under 1.57.4, for many a seasons personal best

Four year old Mares - a field of 10, representing England, Ireland and Wales saw John Richardson steering She's No April Fool by 10 lengths. A very promising racehorse and future broodmare.

Four year old colts and geldings - with England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales all represented who would take home the prize. In the end it was an Ireland one/two, with Gavin Murdock steering Churchview Camelot to a comfortable win.

Three Year Old Fillies - with 12 entries no elimination races were needed. Would Maidsweet be able to replicate her two year old performance? The winner in the end came from overseas and saw Irishman John Richardson take the pot with Rugadh Me Reidh, who had her rivals off the bridle from the final corner, and is certainly one to watch.



Three year old colts and geldings - 20 of the best 3yr old colts fought for their place

in the Sunday final. Heat one on Saturday saw the in form Ishoththesheriff fired from the gate, under a confident drive from son Ronald, win for the little guys when the Grieveson father/son team take the honours. Rhun Wilson took the other automatic place with the consistent Rhyds Dude. In Heat Two Mr Cool, Patrick Kane, made light work of gaining his ticket to the final with Ayr Corleon winning by an impressive 8 lengths.

Sundays final of 12 was made up of heat winners, 2nd place horses and 8 fastest losers. To many the question was - would The Sheriff be able to continue his winning run? Kane however had other plans and Grieveson wasn't able to get out of a box to show us. On this occasion Kane took the spoils with Ayr Corleon, however another day, a different race could produce a different result.



Two Year Old Fillies - Saturday saw two elimination heats with Pussycat Doll steered by Gordon Gilvear comfortably taking out Heat 1, following her over the line was Sweet Dreams from Ireland. The rest had to play a waiting game to see who would take out the places for the fastest losers. Heat Two - Always B Layla, had to play a waiting game, as horses drifted off the rail on the home straight Vicki Gill saw her opportunity and pushed for home taking the shortest possible route.

Following her over the line was Chasingthestars, out of the prolific brood mare Judy Hall.



The final on Sunday saw 8 of the best two year olds in the UK set to fight it out for the £28000 total purse. With all horses re-drawn for position picking out the winner was no mean feat. In the end Cullen steering the impressive Chasingthestars made light work of it, and looks a promising proposition for the rest of the stakes races.

Two year old colts and geldings - Saturday evening saw 25 colts and geldings in three elimination heats with first and second gaining automatic places in the final and the two remaining places filled with the two fastest losers. Heat 1 - saw the impressive Moneyhill continue his dominance winning by 10 lengths from Run a Smile.

In Heat 2, Gavin Murdock steered Oakwood Mick over the line from in 2nd place Ayr Dave who had had a somewhat torrid trip,



and is certainly one to put in the notebook. The crowd had to wait for the final heat which had to be re-run later in the evening after a false start.

Richard Haythornthwaite again fired Onefortheroad out of the gate, and followed the words of harness racing legend Arthur Slack - 'get out of the gate first and keep left'. Following him over the line to take the other automatic place was lesser known on these shores, Benny The Legend.

With Moneyhill on a wide draw in the final and Onefortheroad taking out Barrier 4 and heat winner Oakwood Mick drawn 1 it was anyone's guess who would take the spoils.

Haythornthwaite again fired his horse Onefortheroad out of the gate, and in his post race interview said from that point he was confident he would take a lot of passing.



Not only winning but Onefortheroad set a NEW 2yo colts TRACK RECORD p.1.59.6. The 2yo colt by SEE N SKI (USA) and out of BROWN EYED GIRL. A tremendous training feat for Sally Teeboon, her third VDM 2 Yr old Colt winner and her second successive year.

Leading trainer -
Alexis Laidler

Leading drivers -
Patrick Kane and Will Greenhorn

Well done to all who played a part in whatever way, you certainly put on a fabulous show and left us all wanting to buy into the dream for 2024.

Thank you to We Photograph Anything for their amazing photographs.



BREEDERS CROWN 2023

Ireland and Scotland ruled the Breeders Crown! STAGBI Breeders and Owners were justly celebrating their success at the Breeders Crown in August and the Scots were simply on fire.

Breeders Crown 2 year old Races

In the interest of welfare, the two year olds in the Breeders Crown are not required to run heats and finals. Thus, multiple divisions are held.

Top of the bill was once again Hamish Muirhead's **MONEYHILL**, who won the first Division of the **Group 1 Breeders Crown 2yo Colts & Geldings**.



MONEYHILL is a home bred by Tom Hill (US) out of Racezapan / Genghis Pan (US), winning in a time of 1.58.6 setting a **NEW TRACK and BRITISH RECORD** for 2yo Colts & Geldings.

It was most certainly a two horse race as VDM winner **ONEFORTHEROAD** set the fractions and led until the final stride until **MONEYHILL** ground him down and got his head in front.

ONEFORETHEROAD is another homebred – See and Ski (US) x Brown Eyed Girl / The Preacher Pan (US).

MONEYHILL is now a winner of 4 of his 6, having won the Junior Welsh Dragon



(Gp 1), BHRC Sire Stakes (Gp 2), VDM Heat, Breeders Crown (Group 1) and finishing second to **ONEFORTHEROAD** in the Daniel Welling (Gp 1) and VDM Final (Gp 1).

Congratulations to the connections of both horses, a very encouraging position for many to see home bred by stallions standing in the UK dominating in this manner.

The Scots continued their success winning the second Division of the **Group 1 Breeders Crown 2yo Colts & Geldings** with **BORN IN ISOLATION** – Tom Hill (US) x Born To Run/Kikikolt (US). Another sired by Tom Hill (US) in this his only second crop. A huge delight to STAGBI President Sue Young, who owns and stands Tom Hill (US) at her home in Hereford.



BORN IN ISOLATION has been competitive in his previous starts, winning a 2yo race in York in July, finished third in the Sire Stakes (behind Moneyhill and Onefortheroad), and third in the VDM heat. The colt was bred the Only Fools Have Horses Syndicate and purchased by Scott Cattigan at the York Standardbred Sale for £1,500.

Scottish owners were certainly on a roll and having had a succession of success with two year old fillies, the Gilvear family were certainly not going to miss out.



The first division of the **Group 1 Breeders Crown 2yo Fillies** was won in 2.01.4 by **PUSSYCAT DOLL**, another home bred filly by Always B Miki (US) out of an imported mare Puissant Hanover (US) / Somebeachsomewhere (US). This was her fourth win in 5 starts having won in York in July, Kelly Blossom at York, (Gp 1) & Heat of VDM (4th Final Gp 1). Owned & Bred by Steven Gilvear.

The second division of the **Group 1 Breeders Crown 2yo Fillies** was won by Irish filly **ALWAYS B PUFFIN (IRE)** – Always B Miki (US) x Hufflepuff (US) /Dragon Again (US), in a time of 2.03.6.



Breeders Crown 3 year old Races

With 2 heats of the **Group 1 Breeders Crown 3 year old Colts & Geldings** division, the one to watch was always going to be **AYR CORLEON** – Hasty Hall (US) x Sold Out (US) / Western Ideal (US). Ayr Corleon had 3 starts in Ireland as a 2yo, finishing second on each occasion. This year, 3 previous starts in GB and 3 wins in the Little Welsh Dragon (Gp 1) and the VDM 3yo Heat & Final (Gp 1). Last night, he once again demonstrated his supremacy. Another by the late great Hasty Hall (US), bred by Ryan O Neil at Ayr Standardbreds, Scotland purchased at the York Standardbred Sale for £15,000. One suspects that there will be plenty of interest and a higher price tag on his full brother, **AYR EXCHANGE** that will be offered for sale this year.



The **Group 1 Breeders Crown 3yo Fillies** was another win for Ireland. **PRICELESS (IRE)** – Sweet Lou (US) x Coalford Silk / Rogue Hall (US) Owned and bred by Sean Duggan. Unraced as a two year old and in her previous starts finished second in both the NWHOA 3yo Fillies (Gp 2) and the VDM 3yo Fillies (Gp 1). She may have been a little fortunate to avoid the driving incidents behind her in both heat and final, but she was in the right place at the right time and that ensured her Group 1 victory.



Breeders Crown 4 year old Races

Breeders Crown 4yo Colts & Geldings was won by Claire Fletcher's **OAKWOOD ARDAN (IRE)** – Sweet Lou (US) x Trend Setter (US) / Grinfromeartoe (US). An impressive horse that has a great turn of



foot and the ability to cruise away from his competitors effortlessly. He has several big wins under his belt already this year including the Senior Welsh Dragon (Gp 1), NWHOA (Gp2) and the

York 4yo Championship.

Breeders Crown 4yo Mares was won by **SHES NO APRIL FOOL (IRE)** – Sweet Lou (US) x Shesgotanattitude / Kikikolt (US) in a time of 2.00.7. This was her second back to back win at Tir Prince having also won the VDM 4yo Fillies by 10 lengths.



Another home bred and congratulations to John Richardson as Breeder, Owner, Trainer & Driver!

The Breeders Crown continues to go from strength to strength and over its xxx year duration has put itself firmly on the mat as one of our premier fixtures.

This year there was representatives from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales all contending for their share of the £72,500 purse.

In summary we saw Ireland take out 4 of the major 8 races, Scotland 3 and England just 1. We saw Sweet Lou head the stallion stakes with 3 of the 8 being sired by him, very closely followed by Tom Hill (2), and one each for Always B Miki, Hasty Hall and Puissant Hanover.

Congratulations David Wilson and Jacqui Mann for all their hardwork and of course to all the winning connections.

We thank STAGBI for supplying information and Jamie Gilmour - Wephotographanything.com for photographs

Trudy Launchbury, Amman Valley Trotting Club



I think I must begin by saying that Trudy really IS AVTC. Unlike most promoters, there is only a small volunteer committee, and we only see a few of them at the race meetings, but Teifion Thomas, Rob and Rose Hamer, Betty Eden never miss one. Trudy also has a small group of loyal helpers, Dai and Helen Langford and Alan and Susan Howells who with their family make a great job of keeping the track and café a real asset for Harness Racing.

It's always interesting to hear how people get into racing and while quite a few of us know that Trudy's husband Alf was a flat jockey, she also started her love of harness racing when they were both in Holland and Germany, he working as a jockey while she got a job in a trotting yard. At the time she admits to really not being that interested in harness racing, but when they moved back to Tairgwaith they lived near the old track, and Alf's dad used to work on improving it, with a small group of similarly minded mates. Names like Eric Jones and Cyril Lee will ring bells with many of us. When the owner of the local Post Office where Trudy was working decided to

sell up, she offered the place to Trudy to take over, and she and Alf bought it and ran the business for 18 years before it was closed. Trudy still lives there with her carpenter son, who moved back home from London two years ago.

The track was originally built on an old spoil tip, and lots of us can remember coming off after a race covered in black coal dust and spending hours trying to get the harness clean and scrape coal out of our eyes!

The stable block above the track was already in the family and was owned by Alf's family, his sister had show jumping horses and ponies before a riding accident took her life far too early. After that they kept the stables on and so began their life of harness racing horses. That was all Alf ever wanted to do, work with horses, so at least he got his wish, despite apprenticing as a carpenter, something his dad insisted on.

Trudy won't mind me saying she is no spring chicken, but she still works part time for the DWP based in Swansea as well as volunteering with local groups and working for many hours each week sorting out race schedules, cleaning the offices, toilets etc, arranging deliveries for the on site restaurant, liaising with the office and most of all applying for various grants which have enabled amazing improvements both on the now new track and of the facilities that are there.

Try the cafe bistro out next time you go racing, they do great coffee and lunches, as well as cakes and snacks, all being incredibly good value. Of course, the place would struggle financially if they had to rely on just racing, but they also welcome motor bikes annually. When there is no harness racing, there are various other events held on the track as well as community events throughout the year.

Having heard the list of all the things Trudy fits into an average week, I'm not sure how she does it, but as she finished by saying:

"You've got to keep busy, haven't you?"

Carol Jenkins, August 2023

Haugh Field 2023

As the Indian summer came to a conclusion in Scotland it also marked the end of the racing season at Haugh Field. The closing weekend as it is described nowadays is many a race goer's favourite weekend of the season, as the racing finishes, the fun begins in the bar where you may think it's auditions for a talent show as individuals turn their hand at the karaoke.

The end of the the 2023 season in Scotland marks another year where the whole country has to thank Hamish Muirhead and the SHRC Committee for keeping not only racing, but high quality racing, going through the loss of Corbiewood, and whilst trying to source land and support for a new hard track.



This season we have had the privilege to witness some brilliant performances, the first meeting kicked off on the first Friday in June where the now exported I SHOT THE SHERRIF stamped his authority among his 3 year old competitors.

The Scottish Oaks winner, locally trained by Hayley Cassells, was Imperial Flame who also won a heat on a rain soaked mucky track in July. Trainer Hayley Cassells

also enjoyed success with the now exported GD's Thunder giving her a winner at each of the first four meetings.

The second meeting saw a blistering start when FOLLOW THE STARS won his first of two of the STAGBI 4 year old races for English raider Alf Swinbank, who is a regular supporter of racing up here in Scotland. On the closing weekend, Alf, Joy and others endured an early morning call when their accommodation experienced a fire alarm. Nobody was injured!

The third meeting, a rain soaked Friday night, tested the dedication of the most hardened race goer. Spectators saw the Scottish Oaks winner Imperial Flame come home to win with relative ease, other handicap heat winners include Some Fantasy and Tyler Camden but it was the Appleby Sunday winner STASHTHECASH that stole the spoils in the final after driver Hugh Menzies managed to get the 7 year old mare to start in much better style after missing the break in the heat.



The next meeting saw the ultra consistent Raymond Camden hand success to father and son team Billy and Ronald Grieveson

in Heat 1 of the John Govan and Friends Heat. Other heat winners were GDs Thunder and Merrington Movinup, the final was reduced to 7 runners after Movingup and Live in Star were disqualified for going before their handicap mark.

In the end it was the GROUP 1 Welsh Classic winner BLUE LA VIDA LOCA that gave trainer Mark Eltringham yet more final success and also a treble on the day after Ryan Inglis steered Eugene Silver over the line in an earlier race and leading driver James Haythornthwaite also visited the winning enclosure with Mayfire. Ishotthesherriff made a successful return trip north of the border when landing the LPD DEMOLITION 3 year old race.

English Raiders were prominent again at our fith meeting where we saw them take away the spoils, taking 3 red rosettes south of the border for trainer Sam Howard who quoted "winners are like busses, wait all year for 1 and 3 come at once", when Imperial Magic Miss successfully claimed her maiden tag between Mayfellden Ivor added to the tally, winning both his heat and the final.

We also saw the second heat in Scotland of the QUEEN OF THE TURF series where the Tony Allan trained BRYWINS MYBEACH turned the result over from the first heat winner Stashthecash. Both horses are now being prepared to go and fly the Scottish Flag in the final at the much loved Aberystwyth fixture, which we all welcome back to the fixture list.

The sixth meeting saw the highlight, the Jimmy Muirhead Scottish Classic final, where, yet again, it was all about Merrington Movinup who absolutely loves this meeting. What an accolade to win this final, but, for a horse to win this final for the third year in succession must be recognised as a major feat for both horse and trainer. This is possibly the first horse to win the same final on three consecutive

years.

However, trainer Alexis Laidler didn't want Movinup feeling too special, she too enjoyed success with a 4 timer with Stateside Buggy landing the a maiden race with ease before Thinking of Daddy won Heat 1 of the Jimmy Knocker Rennie handicap. Other heat winners on the day were Littlemill Jamie who enjoyed his second win of the season this time in the hands of William Greenhorn and Alrightjeff with Gregor Menzies. One of the highlight stories of the meeting was when Josh Heath got his elusive first win on board with family horse Sper Buggy. The camp saw further success when Lou Hall trained and driven by Andrew Cairns picked up a red rosette.

The first final saw Scottish Champion trainer Keir Cullen stamp his authority to make sure that the prizemoney didn't go south of the border when Onlybayinthevillage won by 2 lengths to



Littlemill Jamie.

The closing weekend is the one everybody want to win at Haughfield and spectators were thrilled by some great racing over the two days with 10 fantastic races on Saturday followed by a further 7 on Sunday.

Saturday's card started off with Stamphill Ghost breaking his maiden tag for the Laidler stable, the haughfield trained Top

Dollar showing he was too good for his rivals, as he dropped back to a ratings race after competing in all the top 3 year old stakes races this season. The first heat saw the recent low grade final winner Onlybayinthevillage show that he's capable of more wins as he goes through the grades. The second heat was won by Brywins Mybeach before the top heat was won by Check on William doubling up Keir's wins.

Keir didn't need to wait long before having a treble when the GROUP 1 VDM 2 year old filles winner Chasing the Stars won impressively, breaking the track record.

Not to be out done the Group1 Breeders crown winner MONEYHILL let Grant dictate the pace on Born in Isolation before thrilling the crowd with a nail biting finish as the two pacers went to battle in the home straight. the judge was called and Moneyhill was declared the winner as well as the words NEW TRACK RECORD for son of Tom Hill, who broke the 10 year old record held by BURNING DUST.

All eyes were now clearly focussed on the MATT TURNER MEMORIAL - early electric pace saw Raymond Camden leave the gate and gain the early advantage from favourite Onlybayinthevillage who was parked on the outside with Greentree Precious on the rail in third, as they approached the half, Ryan Inglis decided he wanted to send Brywins Mybeach 3 wide to try and clear the front two as they came back towards the field, This move didn't go to plan, big Raymond and Only Bay went toe to toe with the mare, this however made sure that there was going to an exciting finish. Around the last bend Tyler Camden and GDs King came to the party, at this point there was a handful of horses with a chance of winning the big

final, it was, in the end, the recent Brough winner GDs King who took the gold for the Haythornthwaite's before heading to the Invitational Grass Champion FFA at Aberyswyth later in the month.

As the curtain fell on the penultimate meeting, the attention turned to social activities, and a night out in the bar with friends, and the birthday celebration for (he who knows everything about everybody) John Smart was given his own surprise when greeted by friends and family from all over the UK and Ireland, for a surprise party. The now 40 year old, is recovering from the party he knew nothing about.

Day two some sore throats, tired eyes and heavy heads were not quite ready for the bright eyed bushy tailed Watson Harrop and Acrophobia who quickly took out Race 1. Race 2 (Heat 1) went the way of another North of England horse, this time with Lee Fletcher at the controls of the lightly raced, talented Little Professor.

The second heat went the way of inform Oakwood Banba who followed up her win at the prestigious North of England Wolsingham Show the week before after making the switch to the Champion Trainers stable

The maiden pace and went to the Gilvear stable with their interesting prospect, Keep her Sweet who was commanding and professional in her attitude as she took her maiden tag.

We saw drama in the Stagbi 3yr old race when the leader Rhyds Applered's driver, Andrew Cairns experienced problems when trying to pop the plugs, which unfortunately saw the novice 3 year old son of See and Ski drift off the rail, leaving a passing lane for James Haythornthwaite,

who was only too happy to take up the opportunity, and take the race with Toreador.

The penultimate race of the 2023 season was the Jessie Jones Young Drivers Race, although there was reduced entries, the race still kept the spectators on their toes, it was however, Mac McMeekin who stole the show with the Group 2 Boughrood winner Annivi, giving yet another win for northern raider, trainer Mark Eltringham. The second horse gave Callum Murdoch a great spin as the Pro Bono Best gelding ran yet another consistent performance, when undertaking his fifth run in 7 days.

The final race of the season, The Hugh O'Neil final couldn't have been closer with the decision going the way of the judge, who had to resort to the photograph to pick the winner between the two heat winners who came all the way from the north of England to battlegrounds of the 1314 Battle of Bannockburn. In the end, it was separated by just a nose, the Little Professor held the rail on the far side and Oakwood Banba partnered by Rocker Laidler, on the near side.

As the clouds closed over and the rain began to fall the judge made the final call for 2023 - the winner, to be and crowned

the Hugh O'Neil Memorial Pace winner was Oakwood Banba.

And just like that the committee and race goers are making preparations and looking forward to the 2024 season.

The whole team involved with racing in Scotland deserve a big round of applause as they continue to keep the sport going through difficult times. This however, can't be maintained without the public through the gate everyweek, the generosity of the sponsors, the support of licence holders from the north of Scotland down to the Wales and West HRA committee for providing Haugh Field with two heats of their Queen of the Turf series. It just goes to prove that the whole of the UK is one big community. Last but not least the horses and their connections who supported every single meeting from juvenile racing, handicap racing and trotting races.

Thank you everyone for supporting harness racing and keeping racing in Scotland going. See you all in 2024.

Thank you

Charles Inglis

Photos courtesy of Anne Sproul



Tir Prince Crock of Gold Night

Two Yr Old Futurity (Fillies) saw a field of five face the starter, however a poor start by Rhyds Kandyapple put paid to her chances. Oakwood Foresure made an electric start, leading from post to post, she saluted the magpie at the top of the home straight going on to take the honours by 9 lengths in an impressive 1.59.5 from Pussycat Doll. Owned by Peter and Tracey Davison, trained by Sally Teeboon and driven by Richard Haythornthwaite.



Two Yr Old Futurity (Colts) saw a dramatic twist with odds on favourite Moneyhill being withdrawn late on veterinary advice.

A reduced field of 7 started the race, Sweet Trip took the early lead from On Fire Aladdin who sat patiently letting Vicky do the work, making a move mid race Cairns on On Fire Aladdin tried to take the lead, but had to work hard for it, finally on the back straight, he had the clearance needed and the run on Always B Colour.

On Fire Aladdin always looked to have enough in hand and in the end pulled 1.5l clear, in 2.02.3 from Always B Colour. Owned by Jim Stewart, trained and driven by Andrew Cairns.

BHRC Oaks – a field of three contested the 1.5 mile BHRC Oaks.



Imperial Flame made the fastest start and cut out all the early fractions. The Hayley Cassells trained horse was left doing the bulk of the work until making the final turn for home when all three horses lined up for the final charge, with any one of them having a chance of winning. Oakwood Dynasty showed she just had more class winning for Robert and Joan Stewart in 3.10.9, trained by Sally Teeboon and driven by Richard Haythornthwaite.



BHRC Derby saw a see-sawing



between Strictly Tyler and JD Camden. Greenhorn drove a waiting game, having JD Camden always in a prominent position, off the final corner he made his run, when and where it mattered, winning by 3l. JD Camden owned by Patrick Anderson, trained by Hugh O'Neil and driven by Will Greenhorn, in 3.08.7.

CROCK OF GOLD – the best 7 pacers, including; Northern Pride, Newtown Jody, Be Like Me, Merrington Movinup, Miraculous (his 6th appearance and going for a third Crock of Gold), along with



Evenwood Sonofagun (going for his third title) and reigning champion Live in Star going for his second.



The race did not disappoint. Northern Star, quick to strike his hobbles took pole, reigning Champion Live in Star was the first to challenge, and when not able to head Northern Star found himself parked out, at the three-quarter pole Gunner made his presence felt but still Northern Pride battled on, off the final corner the cavalry pounced, with the ever impressive, Evenwood Sonofagun now 11 years old, taking his third Crock of Gold crown in 1.57.6, from Newtown Jody and holding on valiantly to third Northern Pride. All 7 horses came home in under 2.00.0 minutes.

Other winners on the night include Marthella, Frankie B and Oakwood Hey Miki (1.58.5).

The evening was also all about paying tribute to John Blissett who was one of the stalwarts of our sport. John died suddenly in August and we cremated early this month. At the meeting tributes were paid to him, Joss Edwards drove in his colours in the first of the two trotting races.

At the end of the evening his ashes were scattered on his beloved Tir Prince track.

RIP John Blissett.

Julie Park

Pictures courtesy of Graham Rees

The Calendar

The Calendar this year will continue to be in a paper format (at least for this year) for those who requested it

As per usual we request that any individual, promoter, advertiser with any content send it to us ASAP (we collect information all year around)

We prefer content by the end of the preceding month (this allows us 2 weeks to produce the artwork, 1 week for printing and a week for postage)

Please get your Dec content in early!





Aberystwyth



WWHRA went out with a bang, when racing returned to Aberystwyth in September. They staged a 14 race card (which included 2 saddle trots and 2 trotting racing) and had entries from all over the British Isles and Ireland and winners coming from Scotland, England, Ireland and of course Wales.

The plans are for a return to this prestige fixture again next year.

WWHRA have worked hard this year to find sponsorship, and have promoted the Queen of the Turf series for mares, and the 4 & 5Yr Old Grass Track Championship, both of which help to promote the longevity of our seasoned racehorses.

The headline races included: **THE QUEEN OF THE TURF** - which saw 10 of the best mares line up behind the start car, it was Scottish raider BRYWINS MY BEACH who took the bounty home and made the long journey all the worth it. The 7 year old mare our of Maple Hanover by Star on the Beach has been a regular visitor to the winners enclosure, is owned Gary Allan, trained by brother Tony Allan and driven Ryan Inglis.

THE WALES AND WEST 4&5yr OLD CONDITIONED SERIES FINAL - saw a reduced field of 6 horses, rated 21– 56, running in a preferred format, battle for a total purse of £3250. This time the premier prize remained the welsh side of the border, being won by the 49 rated horse TOMMY SHELBY owned, trained and driven by Marc Jones. Marc bred this 4 yr old son of Eagle Luck, out of Striking Mambo. The finale of the day was the **GRASS**

CHAMPIONSHIP FFA, with 8 horses being invited to compete for a prize purse of £4000. The eight horse race was won by the Marc Jones owned APOPKA G. Apopka G was trained by Alexis Laidler and driven Rocker Laidler.

In closing we would like to say well done to all the winners and of course the WWHRA Committee on a successful return to racing at the Tan-y-Castell track.

The meeting also saw the return of local boy (well man) Gareth Dowse (41), who managed to plan a visit home with a chance opportunity to pick up a few catch drives at the meeting. Unfortunately there was no fairy tale trip to the winners enclosure for Gareth, but he was kind enough to give up some of his valuable time back home to tell us about his life stateside.

Gareth who started driving here in GB aged 17 when at college, decided to head stateside for the summer holidays. Sending emails to a few trainers, he hooked up with Joe Pavia, working for him at Pocono for a couple of months before heading back to Aberystwyth to complete his college course.



Gareth tells us that he remained in contact with Joe's Assistant Trainer Todd Stone and when college finished there was never anything career wise this side of the water that floated his boat, "the only thing I wanted to do was the horses", so having made the brave decision to go back stateside, I got back in touch with Todd and packed my bags to make a go of the horses full-time.

I guess this move really didn't come as too big a surprise, we had always had horses in the family, and helped others with their horses, so it had always been a big part of my life. It all started with my grandad, passing down to my dad. I hope it passes on to my children.

Initially I was at the base of the pyramid, I got the lowest wage and worked the longest hours, I was lucky, Ray Schnittker recognised that I had a passion for the horses. I was a regular attendee at race meetings, even when we didn't have runners, to me it was much, much more than a job.

Ray, took me under his wing. He helped me to progress. Paul Docherty had worked for Ray for a lot of years, unfortunately he passed away in 2009. At this point, Ray made me his no 2 guy.

In 2017 I decided to give it a go on my own as a trainer. I've now been training for 6 years, I'm based in Wind Gap in Pennsylvania, my local tracks include Pocono Downs, Chester (Harrahs, Philadelphia) and Yonkers.

My life as a trainer started with just 3 horses which I self-funded, I have to say it got off to slow start, there were bumps in road, and at one point questioned my decision. Luckily, after 3 months or so it did start to take off. It kind of happened in an

unexpected way with what you could class a reluctant participant.

The horse in question, questioned his desire to be a racehorse, luckily for me, he turned it around, with a second and then a first, both for reasonable prize money. At this point I quickly put him up for sale, and then re-invested this money and the prizemoney to upgrade the type of horses in the barn. I just kept repeating this cycle of buying, racing, selling and re-investing in more and better horses.

Last year I was lucky, I was Leading Trainer at Yonkers with 173 wins, this by far best year. I started with a target of \$1 million dollars prizemoney for year, and got there by May. So I increased my target \$2 million, getting there by end of August and then just kept rolling. I ended up at \$2.9 million starting with just 9 horses, finishing the year with 35 and having 9 people working for me.

I currently have 23 horses in training, some self owned and some are syndicated upto a maximum of 50%. Some trainers prefer a model where they do not own the horse, but for me, I believe, the greater the risk the greater the reward. Have faith in yourself. This year (2023), I have focussed more on Pocono or Chester, with day time racing, this allows me to be home with the children at night. I had a bit of a slow start to the year, but it has picked up this last two or three months.

Racing stateside is a 7 day week industry, however I do try not to enter on Sundays, trying to keep this as a family day. We pretty much race all year round. I still concentrate on seasoned race horses, over stakes horses, just moving them up the grades.

Gareth shared some of the differences



between GB and USA, telling us the winters get pretty tough, It gets so cold when you breathe in it freezes the hair in your nose, the summers are a lot hotter than here. I have to say it is pretty miserable training horses in winter, the summers however more than make up for it. Spring and autumn are generally the easier months to train. Nobody trains on grass in America, I didn't see all weather tracks until went up to Tir Prince.

Horses don't tend to get a big break / time off in America. As the season is 52 weeks, horses are just given a little break especially the higher grade horse. The lower grade horses tend to just keep racing, unless their particular track is closed. I think part of this is the process stateside, if a horse does not race for 30 days it has to re-qualify. Also many including Jimmy Tacter and Jeff Spelling - doubt the wisdom of giving good horses a lot of time off, feeling that they can become accustomed to not having to work hard.

Another big difference in the US is that many trainers work out of a training centre that can hold hundreds of horses, the one I am based at holds over 400 horses.

We asked Gareth what his plans were for the future: "trying to maintain numbers in training, keep the win percentage and purse money up". I don't see stakes horses in my future, however never say never, I want to continue what I'm doing, at the level I am doing it.

We've heard a whisper that you fell in love with Bobby Camden and have hidden him in your suitcase - "yes, I drove him over the weekend, the owners floated the idea of Bobby going to USA, I liked the way he felt and thought he might be worth taking a risk on". I'm taking a 50% ownership, the current connections are retaining 50%, when his racing career is over, the plan is to send him back".

How long will it take to get Bobby stateside? "Shipping wise hopefully he will be over within the next month, subject to tests. Quarantine UK side (very short , somewhere in the region of 7 days), and he can be picked up from the airport Stateside straight away.

We would like to thank Gareth for his time, we wish him well with Bobby Camden, and hope we will get an update for a future BHRC Calendar.

*Charles Inglis and Julie Park
Photos courtesy of WWHRA*

BHRC Facebook Page

Should any promoter have information they want posting on the BHRC Facebook Page please send your request to the office. Where it is an urgent notice (ie a meeting cancelled due to weather, please phone either the office (if in office hours, or a Director if out of hours).

For general posts please allow 24 hours in racing season for posts to be published. We will try to upload before where possible, however this is not always possible due to the streamlining of our office staffing.



CHILDREN'S PONIES
* EXHIBITION DRIVES *





CHILDREN'S PONIES * EXHIBITION DRIVES *



BRITISH RECORD for 2yo Colts & Geldings



Moneyhill

Congratulations to connections of **MONEYHILL** a home bred, by Tom Hill (US) out of Racezapan / Genghis Pan (US), owned, bred and trained by Hamish Muirhead, and driven by Hugh Menzies who broke both the track record and British Record for 2Yr Old Colts and Geldings at the Breeders Crown in August at Tir Prince.

Hamish shared with us that he has known from back in March that Moneyhill was going to be exciting, and boy he has not disappointed - what a debut season he has had, from 7 runs he has had 5 wins and 2 seconds, he has clocked 1.58.6, amassed prizemoney of £17,763 and left us all eagerly waiting in anticipation for his return next year, and his 3 year old campaign.

A disappointingly tough draw, when drawn 8 of 8 in the VDM final, showed us all his true potential when coming 2nd to Onefortheroad, however in the Breeders Crown different day, different draw he showed us all just how good he was, not only winning but taking out the 2yr old Colts and Geldings Track and British Record.

Moneyhill has gone on to win the SHRC 2 Yr Old Colts, breaking the SHRC Grass Track record for 2 Yr olds on Hamish's own track at their two day Murdoch Fixture, when beating Borninisolation by a head.

Hamish shared with us that this boy is really laid back at home, spends his days languishing in his paddock, and would only be upset if his hay rack was not brim full. When asked about his plans going forward, Hamish laughed and told me he was heading to 22 acres of good grass with a playmate, before returning for a 3 yr old stakes campaign.

Unfortunately for us all, there is no yearling to eagerly look forward to, there is however a foal at foot - a full brother to Top Dollar, (Afewdollarsmore), when cheekily asking for plans for next year it was no surprise to hear that Razepan will be returning to Tom Hill for a little romance and hopefully then another superstar to look forward to.

CONFEDERATE: UNTOUCHABLE?



In North America there is always a superstar, and now it's Confederate's turn to take centre stage. The son of Sweet Lou owned by Diamond Creek Farm, PA, and trained by Brett Pelling recently paced in 1.46.1 at the Red Mile in the \$80,000 3yo Colts and Geldings Kentucky Sires Stakes Championship Series, winning easily with driver Tim Tetrick motionless in the sulky and consequently breaking the 3 year old pacing record.

Confederate was also supplemented into the Cane Pace at the Meadowlands, at the cost of \$35,000. The cost to supplement proved to be insignificant and he repaid his owners faith in him winning the race in a time of 1.47.3. Tim

Tetrick followed that up with a victory at Pocono in the \$300,000 Max C. Hempt Memorial pacing the mile in 1.48.3. Then perhaps his greatest victory of 2023 came in the Meadowlands Pace in 1.47.

All of the victories have resulted in Confederate racking up \$877,929 (as of 8th September 2023) in earnings.

Confederate will be racing again in the \$400,000 KYSS on the 17th of September, where there is no doubt he will put on another show.

Callum Murdoch Sept 2023
Photographs courtesy of Harnesslink.com



Through a Fan's Eyes

Or not through eyes this time, I should rename this one Through a Fans Ears.

Sitting at Lampeter Races on a sunny afternoon all alone, Mr D sadly was working, I closed my eyes and listened to all the sounds, archiving them in my mind for that stressful day in work or night time when sleep evades me due to brain in overdrive. I will pull these sounds out from that tranquil afternoon and many other meetings I have been to this season and re live the memories.

All I need to do is close my eyes and I'm taken back to the track, happy chatter from the refreshment and beer tent, friends catching up sharing a few tales of races run in previous years happy memories of absent friends, the whirr of the generator the distinctive purr of the ice cream vans engine as it keeps those ices cool, and who does not hear that sudden slam of the portaloo doors, bookmakers encouraging and enticing us to make that last minute bet, before the commentator announces "They are scoring up" or "Starter calling all the drivers into line" and the characteristic call from one particular starter "Got to go drivers got to go". The wonderous sound of hooves thudding down on the turf, drivers shouting as they jostle for positions, the start car accelerating away, the clashing of wheels, puffing and snorting from the fine-tuned athletes of the track working hard, I must point out that I refer to the horses here, although I am sure the drivers are finely tuned too.

The commentator keeping us all up and pacing with the action, the enthusiasm in his voice as they advance around the track, the finish made more exciting by his

interpretation, his own personal stamp.

The joy of hearing the horses hooves thumping down on the turf, drivers shouting as they jostle for a better finishing position, the shouts of encouragement from the spectators, trainers willing their horse over the finish line and of course the roar of celebration as they cross the line in that winning position.

For some meetings, the sound of children enjoying the bouncy castle and the all too familiar crying when it is time to come off and that is just from the parents.

I have been lucky enough to hear a red kite calling from above that distinctive whistling cry, more a familiar sound from the Welsh tracks, Tregaron seem to always have two resident kites in attendance.

The final sound which always makes me spring into action is the water bouser at York having been soaked once I now listen out for the tractor as I am not partial to a shower mid afternoon

Summer draws to a close Autumn is just sat waiting in the wings, its back to school for me, but thankfully there are still more race meetings to go.

From this fans point of view racing this season has been outstanding, from the maidens right the way up to the seasoned campaigners.

Highlights of this season first and foremost seeing our friends and making new ones.

However, seeing the young up and coming drivers of the future in the pony exhibition races which have been very well supported, has been a thrill. I love to see their little beaming faces, they may be sat behind their ponies but you can see in their faces they are really driving Sonofagun or Rhyds Passion.

So nice to see the future of harness racing on the track, these youngsters are a sheer joy to watch and what a fantastic opportunity they are being given. The exhibition races are so well attended and supported, it is not just the infectious smiles on the children's faces but the adults accompanying them, the proud mums, dads, grandparents etc accompanying these little drivers.

This is the beginning of these youngsters harness racing journey, those cheers and claps will be etched in their memories for a long time. Hopefully we will see some superstars come through from these young saplings.

We have coming up through the ranks some very talented young drivers and successful young trainers. I wish them all well. In a

small minority sport, we need to grow our own future, it is pleasing to see that we even have a young commentator who has grown in confidence and gone from strength to strength every season, along with a very talented young lady who has taken on the role of media through her live streaming and now track photography. I have a growing collection of her work adorning my walls.

Well done to all the youngsters, the sports future, nice to see them being encouraged maybe we will see some junior stewards, starters coming up through the ranks one day.

I wish everyone a happy, safe, and healthy winter humungous thankyou to everyone involved in this sport we appreciate all that you do to make this happen. Mel D.

We thank Mel and David for their continued enthusiasm to the sport. Perhaps Mel has been a bit kind in her write up, she has not mentioned, the all too often, shouting, or swearing, that a few licence holders feel, is the appropriate way to resolve a problem, when something has not gone their way.

We all agree that we need more people who have no direct connection to the sport to come through the gate, or for financial investment in our sport. The million dollar question is how do we do this. We do however need to start from the bottom. It pains us as Directors to have to say this, but until we can take some baby steps the sport cannot move forwards.

We have heard it several times, and we often feel it ourselves. Our sport is its own worst enemy. One of the biggest problems we have is with conduct. We have too many instances where, when incidents happen on the track and they overspill off the track with licence holders verbally and sometimes thankfully less so physically attacking other licence holders and officials.

How many of us can say we are happy to take anybody not connected with the sport along to view it. Recent cases of verbal abuse at Amman Valley, York and now Wolsingham continue to give the sport a bad name. This along with the negativity on Social Media, and sadly links to road racing must be dealt with in order to give the sport a chance.

John Blissett

The colours were black and white, the man inside the colours was someone who had the respect and admiration of the harness racing fraternity – his name was John Blissett

Sadly, John passed away in August, leaving behind a grieving harness racing community, but one richer for knowing this master reinsman.

John followed in the footsteps of his father Charlie with a passion for horses and harness racing, and the interest started early. Snowy Evans trained horses for John's father Charlie in the late 50's, with John doing a fair amount of the working out of the horses at home as well as driving in races.

John would race at the old Manchester track in Droylsden, steering both pacers and trotters, with some of the square gaited athletes imported from Denmark. One trotter that John struck up a good rapport with was Bannockburn, who won a number of races on grass.

The Blissett family had a strong association with the Droylsden venue, Charlie's business was importing timber and the London businessman made a major contribution in improving the facilities at the track.

Blissett junior relocated to North Wales in the 60's, at the time of probably the biggest game changer the sport had known in Britain, the opening of Prestatyn Raceway.

Nowadays, pacing in Britain is the subject of a major North American influence, back in the heady days of Prestatyn there was a heavy Australasian involvement, after all it was New Zealanders Noel and Bill Simpson who masterminded the Prestatyn facilities.

At this time there was a spell of regular racing twice weekly and young John would be rubbing shoulders and competing with a team from down under, the likes of Trevor Payne, Dick Lee, Norman Sait and Ray Green.

John would be driving in most races and generally winning at least two per meeting in front of the enthusiastic crowd under the



lights. At this time, he would be driving against another homegrown talent by the name of Ian Pimlott.

Sadly, for the sport in this country things didn't work out for Prestatyn, so this led to John making the move to the Midlands, based near Wolverhampton, where he worked for Joe Watton driving pacers imported from the US.

Of course, John drove regularly at Chasewater, partnering horses for trainer Brian Ackers.

During his career John sat behind numerous winners and won most of the big races, with horses such as the Danish trotter Immy, Goodstock, the mare Nancy Mur and Ted Trot who all benefitted from the Blissett golden touch. In fact, Ted Trot went on to race in Holland.

After the Chasewater days John would regularly have his passport stamped with working trips in Australia, New Zealand and Europe, this included working as an Assistant Trainer in Toulouse, where he also



John Blissett with Zegasus Hollandia and Charlie Ball, receiving the trophy for the John Players Final from John Play Rep and the Gold Leaf Girls

Later in his career Tir Prince opened for business and John headed back to North Wales where he was based with his partner Jane Patterson. He also sold harness equipment around the country.

How about this for a bit of trivia, did you know John was an extra in films driving? Try the Tommy Steele musical film - Half A Sixpence.

The measure of respect for John was evident at race meetings after his passing, with silence observed, followed by dignified,

heartfelt rounds of applause.

We all had the upmost respect for him, a master of the sulky who went about his business in the most respectful and professional manner.

He adored harness racing and harness racing adored him.

My gratitude goes to Ian Pimlott for the details in this tribute, Ian knew him better than most, he summed John up by saying,

“he was a friend, competitor, always open to questions and willing to advise”.

John Blissett enjoyed the best of harness racing in this country, a time when people went to the races suited and booted, and there seemed to be more respect for competitors and officials alike. John was a gentleman, a true professional, and an extremely wise man.

In fact, at his last meeting, the Saturday of the VDM at Tir Prince, the last thing he said to me was, “there are too many of the wrong types in this sport”

We all listened to John Blissett.

Darren Owen



It's Spring here now in New Zealand which means the return of grass track racing, kicking off at the Methven Trotting club under NZ's number one ski field.

Everybody involved in the sport here eagerly awaits the top horses returning, getting prepared for the NZ Cup in November. The stake money has increased, as have all races thanks to British company Entain. This year the cup is worth \$750,000, up from \$600,000 last year.

AN UPDATE FROM BOB MEADOWCROFT

October, as a lead up to the Cup sees Kaikoura's two day meeting, with huge





crowds expected to attend this seaside track. This year the club is running a "quick fire" meeting on the Sunday whilst the better class of horse will race on the Monday.

Sunday there are 8 races with the meeting starting at 3.30pm and races run every 15 to 20 mins, instead of the normal 30 to 35mins. This is always a very popular meeting with scenery unmatched anywhere in the world.

In May 2023 the TAB announced the strategic partnership arrangement with Entain, a leading betting agency in the UK and Australia.

HRNZ (Harness Racing New Zealand) has funding to the tune of \$54.4 Million from Entain and the TAB will give a significant return, increasing stake money right through all classes of horses. The lowest class of horse will race for \$10,500 minimum.

September is Blue September for harness racing. A dozen drivers will be wearing blue driving pants and should they win Prostrate Cancer will be gifted money from

the drivers and their sponsors. Indeed, this is a very helpful fund for the Prostrate Cancer organization.

Last year \$50,000 was raised by the drivers. Already this month they have banked a few thousand.

Water Walker for unsound horses

The benefit of the water walker was highlighted last week when MacAndrew Aviator won the big race at Addington Raceway.

Originally trained in the deep south on the beach, MacAndrew was suffering from hind suspensory leg problems. Beach training horses suffering hind suspensory can be funny and the connections of this horse, being an open class pacer, decided to send the horse to Stephan Boyd in West Melton, Canterbury who operates a Water Walker. .

The Walker has proved hugely positive, strengthening horses up without putting strain on legs

Bob Meadowcroft



Yearlings to follow



Albies Mambo



Rockin Mambo / Frisco Jenna

Happy Lou

Sweet Lou / Happy Daisy

Colt, brother to Ima Happy Fella (exported to USA), Daisy Doon and Vincent.



Oliver O'Mara - it's a family affair

On just his fourth drive Oliver O'Mara (15) made his first trip into the winning enclosure at York in the Jessie Jones Young Drivers Down Syndrome Awareness Pace.

Oliver son of 'A' Class Driver and Public Trainer Vicki Gill was always going to drive. Swapping his pram for ponies, and now ponies for a sulky it was only a matter of time before he picked up a red rosette.

How fitting it was then, that he won his first race in a series designed to help our young drivers make that step up whilst increasing awareness of Down Syndrome, at his home track, at their premier meeting, held in memory of track owners son Daniel Welling.

It was clear for all to see the pride in the face of mum 'Vicki', and the family photos will always be a memory of that first trip into the winners enclosure. Well done Oliver.



Judy Hall

How many mares can we say have 3 of their progeny racing on the same card, never mind win? I bet there are very few, and having asked around nobody has yet named one! Our hats must be raised to JUDY HALL dam of 9 foals, 3 of which have been exported, who achieved this amazing feat back in July at York when Born In Lockdown, Followthestars and Chasingthestars all visited the winning enclosure.



Born in Lockdown, owned by Richard Walker, trained by John Nicholson and partnered by James Haythornthwaite

JUDY HALL (Can) imported from Canada by George Harrison and purchased by Richard Walker, raced in GB 2007-2010, with 10 wins from just 32 runs she had an impressive strike rate of 32%, winning the BHRC Pacing Futurity, SHRC 2 Yr Old Futurity and the 3 Yr Old Welsh Dragoness amongst others. Since commencing her second career she has had 9 foals: Itsmycheck (2012), Borntorun (2014), Takemetothelmit (2016), Star Attraction (2017), Wasntexpectingthat (2018), Followthestars (2019), Born in Lockdown (2020), Chasingthestars (2021), Northern Lights (2022).

Owned and at times trained by Richard Walker, she has certainly proved to be a prolific brood mare. Judy Hall has currently scanned in foal to Rockin Mambo. Richard has confirmed that Northern Lights will be heading to the York Sales in October where I am sure it will attract a lot of interest.



Followthestars, owned and trained by Alf Swinbank and partnered by Ryan Inglis

Chasingthestars owned by Peter McAllister, trained by Keir Cullen and partnered by Will Greenhorn





Happy Retirement

50

YEARS * NOT OUT * LAST CALL

After 50 years of Peter called his last race at Stanhope in September. The BHRC would like to thank Peter for his contribution to the sport over the last 50 years and wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

INTEGRITY UPDATE

The Integrity Team continue to work with other international promoters and governing bodies to share information and best practice, making new 'friends' at the WTC in Berlin.

We remind all trainers of their duties to be aware of the Y Section of the BHRC Rules and Regulations and the changes publicised on the website on the 5th May along with the published Unformed Classification List. If in doubt, ask your vet.

Desk based sampling: earlier this year as trainers renewed their licences we provided them with a BHRC Medication Book. Trainers had been informed that we would be carrying out sampling of these books.

For integrity purposes, we politely remind all trainers that they MUST notify the office when stabling horses away from their registered base (ie for race days which involve overnight stays or overnight stays at a veterinary practice etc. Horses must always be located at the registered yard.

In early May we carried out our first sample, asking approx. 10 trainers from all three licence categories, across Great Britain to submit copies of their medication records. We have recently just carried out the June sampling, targeting different trainer categories, across all geographical areas.

We thank trainers for their timely responses. A list of all trainers sampled to date are printed on pg 55 of The Calendar.

We continue to work with other Governing Bodies and countries in our quest to improve the integrity of our sport. Recent meetings with America and at the WTC have proved to be particularly helpful, we are positive that the information shared with us will help us in our quest for a clean sport.

Testing so far: we try to keep the website as up-to-date as possible, but as of 11 September we had carried out 115 tests, of which were 78 full blood and 37 blood gas, tests. We have carried out two elective tests and therefore self-funded, as well as pre and post race tests on race days and 12 out of competition tests in various geographical areas. Testing has taken place at meetings up and down the country, testing not only winning horses but also placed and unplaced horses.

All full blood tests have been sent to Newmarket for analysis.

Results are being returned in approximately 6 working days, we check the Integrity email daily, and ring the responsible person and the track promoter the same day to update them of the results.

We have an excellent working relationship with Newmarket Laboratory who are equally passionate about cleaning up equine sport.

This season (to-date) we are in receipt of 2 positive tests.

There are a number of rolls in the Integrity Team taken up by various volunteers, from Race Day Tester (which involves accompanying the vet), administration of process (sending samples, recording samples sent and matching to lab receipts, processing results and updating spreadsheet, notifying trainers and promoters of test results, as well as the team that are involved in the preparation of cases when a positive test is received. We must not forget our external panel members who are professionals from the equine industries who offer their valuable time to ensure we have a system admired on the world stage.

Who is HENRY HILL?



The UK racing scene has been set alight with talent from British bred horses in 2023, and one of the UK's up-and-coming sires, HENRY HILL, has been the talk of the British Harness Racing circuit this season. With racing progeny of 3YOs and younger, he has collected many young winners who have also won at Group Stakes levels, and he has more to offer in the future line up of youngstock at Coalford Stud.

Who is Henry Hill?

Henry Hill (p3 1:50:1) is by the top US stallion and USTA 3YO Pacing Colt of the Year, Meadowlands Pace Winner, Roll With Joe (p1:48 and purse winnings over \$1.8 million) out of Bliss N Vinegar, from one of the greatest maternal families in the sport, 'Golden Miss.'

Although young, Henry Hill was tipped for great things in his racing career. Prepped to become the best 4YO Colt in North America, his racing career was unfortunately curtailed

due to injury. Trained by top US trainer, Tony Alagna, Henry Hill caught the eye of the 'Armada' trainer, and he too saw his great potential from a young age. Tony Alagna was kind enough to offer a few words on the great up-and-coming young sire. "Henry Hill will produce a top-class horse. He never got the chance to show how talented he was, although you could see a glance of how good he was in those early races. Henry will be a big hit, from a quality, top class breeding pedigree. Henry (Hill) was always one of my favourites, and that is saying something." In Tony's opinion, Henry Hill was up there with his favourites alongside none other than Captain Treacherous p3 1:47 (\$3,148,657). Henry Hill only raced on a handful of occasions, but his blistering speed and power caught the eye of many.

Closely followed by Coalford Stud, the chance to bring Henry Hill back to the UK arose and Henry Hill's progeny have quickly made their mark on the British Harness Racing Circuit in 2023. A stunning 16hh stallion, Henry Hill has covered only a few UK mares, mostly belonging to Coalford Stud. Henry Hill currently has 3 year olds and 2 year olds racing in 2023, including some top class stakes horses and winners such as:

I SHOT THE SHERIFF 3YO p1:58
COALFORD GOODFELLA 3YO p1:59
COALFORD TOPGUY 3YO P1:59
COALFORD TURNITUP 2YO p2:03
COALFORD HITMAN 3YO p2:03
COALFORD MADEMAN 3YO p2:02
COALFORD ONEOFUS 3YO p2:03
COALFORD JIMMYG 3YO p2:03

This is just the start of the exciting prospects that Henry Hill has to offer. COALFORD ANNABELLE (yearling filly) is offered for sale at the York Standardbred Sale in October 2023,



a half sister to Champion Group 1 Stakes Filly COALFORD SWEETLOU p2:00 £25,000 (NWHOA 2YO Filly Champion, 2YO Black Horse 2YO Fillies Champion, York 3YO Fillies Champion) and a full sister to top class 3YO COALFORD TOPGUY p1:59, from the immediate family of GB Export COALFORD SUNSHINE p1:53 \$80,000 and Hall of Fame COALFORD TETRICK p1:55 £50,000.

A line-up of 10+ yearlings are to follow in 2024, which will include foals such as:

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD DAWN (Dam of GB Export COALFORD SUNSHINE p1:53 \$80,000) (Colt Foal)

HENRY HILL OO GOLD DIGGER (From the same maternal family as LOUS PEARLMAN) (Filly Foal)

HENRY HILL OO MYSTIFY (A SUNSHINE BEACH sister to LOUISIANA) (Filly Foal)



Coalford Turnup NWHOA 2YO Fillies Champion

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD SEE (York 3YO Championship Winner 2021) (Filly Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD SKI (Top Class Stakes Mare) (Colt Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD JOIEDEVIE (By SUNSHINE BEACH) (Colt Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD SOUL (By SUNSHINE BEACH) (Filly Foal)

HENRY HILL OO BLACKWELL MINOGUE (Dam of NWHOA 2YO Fillies Champion COALFORD TURNITUP, COALFORD ONEOFUS) (Filly Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD WISH (Dam of COALFORD PROMISE, COALFORD GETTTON) (Colt Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD SURPRISE (Dam of COALFORD EARL, COALFORD HOPE) (Filly Foal)

HENRY HILL OO COALFORD SUGAR (Same maternal family as COALFORD TETRICK, COALFORD HONEY, COALFORD DAWN, COALFORD SWEETLOU, COALFORD SUNSHINE, COALFORD TOPGUY) (Colt Foal)

An exciting time for HENRY HILL, and we are very excited to see what the future holds for this talent from the US and UK mares involved in British Harness Racing. If this is what Henry Hill can produce in this short spell, then the future is very bright for his enigmatic progeny.



Coalford Goodfella York 3YO Colt Champion

BHRC MEDICATION BOOKS SAMPLED

Name	May	June	July	Aug
Allan, Gary		x		
Bousfield, Kit				x
Cassells, Hayley	x			
Clarke, Simon			x	
Cullen, Keir	x			
Dyer, Jess	x			
Edwards Joss			x	
Eltringham, Mark			x	
Evans, Mike				x
Foody, Jack				x
Gill, Vicki	x			
Gilvear, John			x	
Hall Kia			x	
Harrop, Watson Snr				x
Haythornthwaite, Teresa		x		
Holmes, Rebecca		x		
Jones, G D Alan	x			
Jones, Marc			x	
Laidler, Alexis			x	
Langford, Emma		x		
Lord, Shelagh				x
Maw, Joe		x		
Menzies, John				x
Muirhead, Hamish			x	
Nicholson, John		x		
Park, Brian	x			
Paterson, Gregor		x		
Podmore, Cheryl	x			
Shields, Cathy		x		
Stanley, Noah Jnr				x
Swinbank, Alf		x		
Taylor, Robert				x
Teeboon, Sally	x			
Wakefield, Debbie			x	
Wilson Rhun			x	
Winter, Jimmy				x

SUSPENDED/WARNED OFF PERSONS and SUSPENDED HORSES

From the 1st April where persons are suspended (because of breaches of rules, or unpaid debts*), the Directors have made the decision to list them on the website, and to publish names in subsequent editions of The Calendar.

A list of horses suspended, or their offspring, because of integrity issues, or due to the non-payment of debts by an owner, will also be published on both the website and in The Calendar.

For the avoidance of doubt (and to protect potential purchasers), the suspension (under certain rules) will apply whether or not the horse remains in the same ownership at the time that the costs order was made.

David Moncrieff:

DKs Deuce, DKs Happy Forever, DKs Happy Moments (and any offspring of)

*for clarification of a 'debt' this is where an aged debt has not been paid, or an agreement to pay off an aged debt (over 30 days) has not been made or kept up to -date.

Triple Crock of Gold Winner

EVENWOOD SONOFAGUN 11 year old son of The Firepan out of I'm The Last, bred by John Nicholson, owned by Raymond Huschka and trained by Alexis Laidler, adored by Rocker Laidler and admired by so many, made history at Tir Prince earlier this month, when becoming the first horse to win not 1, not 2 but 3 Crock of Gold's. At 11 years old, and having performed at the highest level for so long connections are now considering if the Crock of Gold was to be his last race.

In a career spanning 9 seasons, 7 of them here in the UK and two stateside. With 55 runs Sonofagun has made an impressive 33 trips to the winners circle (a strike rate of 60%), amassing prizemoney of approx £70k (in the UK), and lifetime earnings of £250k, picking up prizemoney in 46 of his 55 GB races, he has continued, year on year to impress us.

Sonofagun has won the hearts of the true harness racing enthusiast.

Career highlights include:

- Group 1 Crock of Gold Final (triple winner)**
- York Saddle Race - Winner (Record)**
- Group 1 Park Lodge Classic Final**
- Group 1 Famous Musselburgh Pace**
- Blossom Kelly Memorial High Grade Final**
- Group 2 Crock of Gold Heats (multiple)**
- Battle of the Big Guns**
- Group 1 British Pacing Classic**
- Free For Alls (multiple wins)**
- Bernie Kelly Free For All**
- 1 mile track / British Record (1.54.6)**
- Tregaron Welsh Classic**

His impressive resume includes a world record, British Record and Track Records, winning FFAs, Group 1 and Group 2 Races, Crock of Gold Heats and now 3 COG Finals, and many other premier races at premier events on both hard tracks and grass over different distances, an ultimate athlete who has continued to entertain us.

He has a British Record of 1.54.6 at York, a world saddle record of 1.57.5 along with numerous sub two minutes clocks and other track records, to his name. Gunner has certainly fulfilled every dream imaginable.



Evenwood Sonofagun



Whatever stable you follow, and everybody has their own personal favourite stable and own favourite horse, but to train a horse at such a high level, for so long, to achieve what they have, has to be recognised as a fabulous training achievement. For the impartial spectator, Gunner has been a war horse.

The sport will certainly be poorer for the retirement of Gunner, whilst we appreciate that Gunner deserves to go out at the top whilst he is fit and healthy, it cannot go without saying that, when the time comes, he will be missed by many.



EVENWOOD SONOFAGUN

**Triple Winner of Crock of Gold
Horse of a lifetime**