

VICE CHAIRMAN'S VIEWS

It's October, the racing season is coming to a close and we can reflect on what has been a virtually uninterrupted programme of fixtures, more than could be said for 2012, the weather has been kind to us! I have witnessed some wonderful racing events at Tregaron, Tir Prince, Appleby, Musselburgh and York. I would have got to Corbiewood but a change in circumstances prevented it, a big disappointment. I particularly enjoyed Hellfield as I always do, it is well organised, well run, the people involved deserve much credit. Cullingworth offered its usual fayre but with increased prize money and higher entries - well done! York - I always enjoy York. The last meeting in September was amazing, as competitive as you could wish to see, some really tight finishes, shame about the prize money in the Book-makers Final, they need to be squeezed harder. Bye and large 2013 has been a good season of racing.

On a more negative note, we have a crisis that we must address, Track Stewards are falling by the wayside and not being replaced. Something has to be done, we have had instances of some grass meetings attempting to operate with only two Track Stewards, that is crazy. Fortunately BHRC Officials were able to be drafted in to assist, that shouldn't have to happen. We have a problem, we need suitable people to come forward, people of integrity with a reasonable knowledge of the rule book and with enthusiasm needed to be part of a Stewarding team. Should anybody out there be interested and require help or advice, please don't hesitate to contact me, I will be happy to help in any way I can. Remember, no Stewards, no racing - promoters be aware.

In another part of this publication you will have read about some radical handicapping suggestions put forward by our Chairman

and myself. Some of you will recall my banging this particular drum for some years now, Bob Lee has made similar proposals in the past. Unfortunately most of what we said fell on deaf ears and we have been stuck with a system that is archaic and not fit for purpose and no matter how much tinkering and amending is done it will never work, we need to move into the 21st Century and bring those luddite licence holders kicking and screaming with us. Are we brave enough to make that giant leap or are we to just accept the status quo and continue complaining that the system needs fixing with too many horses that can't compete, too many horses having to be turned out in a field or sold as riders - the choice is yours.

Using that famous Martin Luther King quote "I have a dream" that one day (and soon I hope) we will embrace a claiming/conditions race system which will be run outside our current monies won handicapping system and which will eventually allow us to faze out the monies won system and operate as almost every other harness racing jurisdiction in the world - let's do it!

Before I sign off I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the team of people responsible for putting on two wonderful series - Dave Wilson and Jacqui for the Breeders Crown at Tir Prince. A wonderful well-supported event, I really enjoyed being there. And the girls in the BHRC Office for resurrecting and organising the new Sire Stakes events at York. An amazing achievement it looks like the series will continue to be well supported and I thank them.

Hope you have all enjoyed the season as much as I have.

Barry Delaney