

ISSUE FOUR

HORSE WHISPERS

CHELTENHAM SPECIAL

12TH - 15TH MARCH 2024



**A SPECIAL
CHELTENHAM
EDITION**

INSIDE INFORMATION
**MEET LIAM
HARRISON?**

TEST YOUR
GOLD CUP KNOWLEDGE
with Chris Coley's quiz!

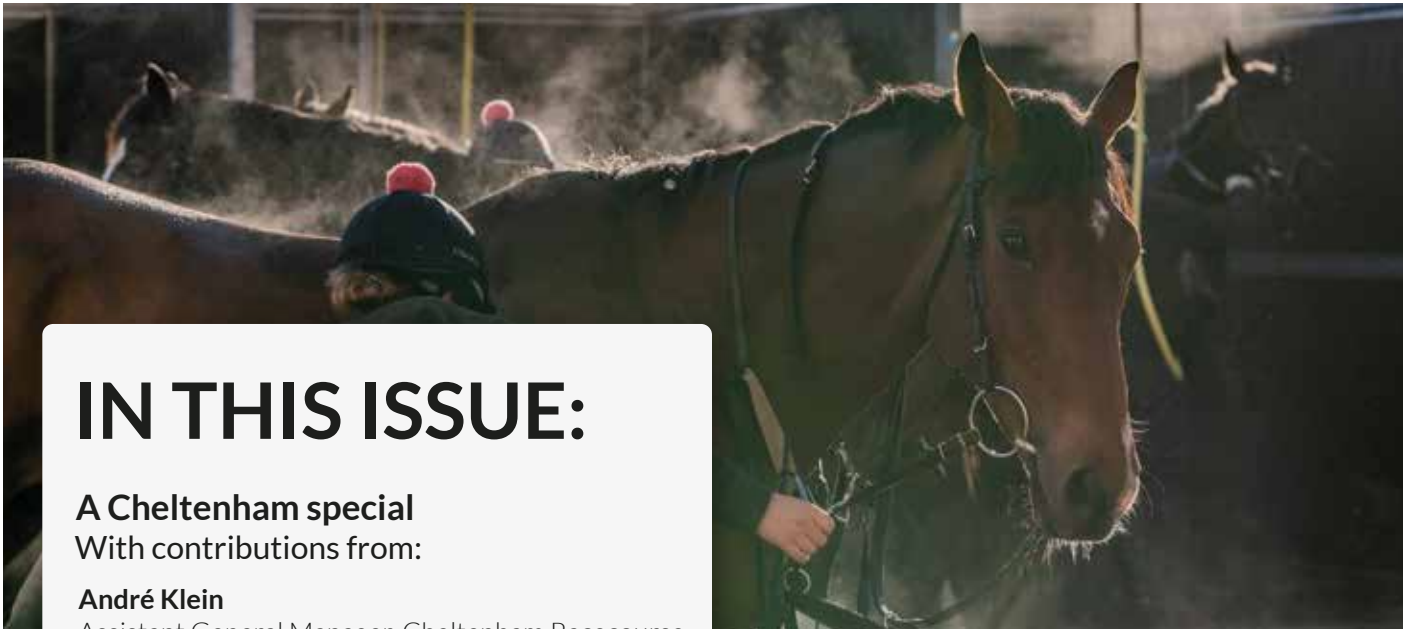


FERGAL O'BRIEN RACING

ISSUE FOUR

HORSE WHISPERS

WITH FERGAL O'BRIEN RACING



IN THIS ISSUE:

A Cheltenham special
With contributions from:

André Klein

Assistant General Manager, Cheltenham Racecourse

James Barnes

Owner at FOB

Wayne Barnes and Chris White

The Ref's decision is final!

Michael Silver

School chum of Chris Coley

Simon Claisse

Former Clerk of the Course at Cheltenham

Louis Gill

Photographer at FOB

Ollie Smith

Fence Attendant at Cheltenham

Neil Jukes

Race Reader, and Race Planner at FOB

Edward Gillespie

Supremo at Cheltenham Racecourse

Gold Cup Quiz

Test your knowledge in Chris Coley's Quiz!

Inside Information

Meet Liam Harrison, and learn more about his role

Welcome!

Welcome to the Cheltenham Special issue of the Fergal O'Brien Racing Newsletter.

Full of great interviews with people with Cheltenham connections.

Waiting for that special Cheltenham roar on March 12th.

*from
Fergal x*

Q&A WITH

ANDRÉ KLEIN

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER @ CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE

In your opinion what are the 3 greatest Gold Cup winners in history?

Golden Miller has to go down as the greatest, a controversial call for Arkle fans! He won five Gold Cups in succession from 1932-1936, missed the opportunity to run in 1937 because of a waterlogged track and then ran second in 1938 behind Morse Code. The fact he remains the only horse to win the Grand National and Gold Cup in the same year, 1934, gives him a special edge which has him a length in front of the others in my opinion.

Arkle is regarded as the greatest by many experts but this is on account of his beating the English hero-of-the-time, the 1963 Gold Cup winner Mill House. He beat him hands-down in successive years 1964 and 1965. For Arkle's third win in 1966 he was 1-10 favourite beating just five other runners. Amazingly, there had only been four, albeit high quality runners in each of his previous Gold Cup contests. No-one took him on due to his reputation which clearly matched his ability. His legendary status is unrivalled, but I struggle to rate him better than Golden Miller.

It's a toss-up between Best Mate, Kauto Star, Cottage Rake and L'Escargot for the third spot...and maybe Easter Hero, who won in 1929 and 1930. The headlines at the time were very generous calling Easter Hero, the greatest but his achievements were overshadowed a few years later by Golden Miller, so he is often a forgotten horse. L'Escargot seems to suffer that fate too. He won two Gold Cups and a Grand National but his contribution to racing's heritage is often lost in the mists of 1970's Red Rum mania.

We believe you have been touring the UK during the past few months promoting this year's race - tell us some of the more unusual places you have been!

I suppose the most unusual was on top of Snowdon with Graham McCourt, who rode Nortons Coin, the 100-1 winner in 1990. It was a full-on gale, and you truly couldn't stand up. Visibility was no more than ten metres. Graham, showed true grit and fighting spirit to reach the peak. The photo of him and his Cup at the summit is just magical. It was

reminiscent of Sir Edmund Hillary. Unbridled joy ... and well-earned relief! Hard to match that for a special moment. A recent trip to Lucinda Russell's was fun too where we let Corach Rambler and Ahoy Senor sniff the Cup. Amazingly no Scottish horse, jockey or trainer has ever won the Gold Cup in its 100 year history.

What will be your particular responsibilities over the 4 days?

My day starts with predicting the attendance numbers for our Senior Manager's meeting and finalising the list for the distribution of race cards - about 30,000 race cards go out on each day. We then have a number of different team briefings to attend pre-gates. For me, I then move to focus on Love Our Turf, and the team managing racegoer's arrival at the venue. I oversee a wide mix of things really; from the merchandise shop to all elements deemed GC100. In general though, I just support the brilliant teams I have reporting into me.

The four days just fly by, and the hardest thing for me personally is missing the opportunity to watch the races! I've not missed a Festival since 1989 and I lived in Australia and New Zealand for nearly 20 years. In my head, my most important responsibility is making sure our racegoers have as good a time as I did when I was a racegoer in the "old days". As I drive home each night the day's activities always tick over in my head and I question myself; "would I have enjoyed that day if I had attended it as a member of the public?" That's my yard stick of success. Thankfully at the Festival it's not hard to have a good time!

What is the most memorable Gold Cup you yourself have seen?

I think it was Minella Indo's win which took place behind closed doors. I feel very privileged to have witnessed it in 2021, working out on the track that year when so many people were only able to watch it at home. I wrote a chapter on the experience in the Gold Cup 100 book, Let No Memories Fade.



Which of the above cause you the most anxiety?

I've managed racecourses for over twenty years now and I don't get anxious anymore. I get excited, never more so than the Festival. It's an amazing buzz witnessing an event the scale of the Festival come together and then take place. It's impossible to have a true understanding of what it takes to pull the components of the meeting together until you are in the team doing it. I massively underestimated what is required before I started the job. I thought I knew it all, and as it turned out I knew next to nothing!

What crowds are you expecting this year?

We will never eclipse the crowds we had in 2022 but are confident at this stage Gold Cup Day should sell out. Ideally we would like around 250,000 people to come racing across the four days. The population of Cheltenham is about 120,000.

Where will you spend most time on Gold Cup Day itself?

In all honesty, I am of no fixed abode but I do like being at the coalface, so I am more likely to be seen scanning tickets than in the Royal Box.

Do you sleep well over the 4 days?

I sleep terribly all the time and rarely need more than five hours and even then those hours only go unbroken once in a blue moon, which is a blessing when it comes to running multi day events. I simply don't need much sleep. Excitement levels are high and I tend to lie there wide eyed thinking about what I have forgotten and what tomorrow will bring!

Are there any new innovations at this year's Festival?

There are always new ideas being tried. I am looking forward to seeing how the Centennial Restaurant goes. It's replaced Champions Walk. It is also hosting our Legends Lunch for Gold Cup winning jockeys, trainers and owners on Festival Monday, which will be a fun thing to witness. The GC100 community art auction is something I am personally looking forward to promoting. We've had some lovely pieces of work donated. Hopefully it will raise some good funds for local causes.

Once the Festival is over is it true that you will then spend some time on your salmon river?

I am more trout loch than salmon river in all fairness. My favourite activity is walking miles through the heather clad hills in the Highlands of Scotland getting eaten by the midges in order to catch trout rarely bigger than a few inches long. I'd make a career of it, if I could. I'll be up there the moment the season finishes. Can't wait.





JAMES BARNES

OWNER AT FERGAL O'BRIEN RACING

The rare sporting events which last in the memory are rare, days where to be there was a privilege. Cheltenham is a tapestry of such moments, from Kauto Star's triumphant recapture of the Gold Cup to Sprinter Sacre's exhilarating return to reclaim the Champion Chase.

The first day of the festival holds a special place, with a special buzz, hope hanging in the air, and the weight of expectation. On the 14 March 2023, these sentiments were magnified.

It started with Marine Nationale in the Supreme Hurdle, followed by El Fabiolo in the Arkle, and then the stories really hit home. Corach Rambler winning for Lucinda Russell, a return to the scene of Brindisi Breeze and Campbell Gillies. Then it was Constitution Hill and Honeysuckle. We had emotion, we had superstars and the chance to say goodbye to a special horse.



RWC 2007 Chris White, Dave Pearson, Tony Spreadbury, Wayne Barnes

CHRIS WHITE & WAYNE BARNES

RUGBY REFEREES

Wayne Barnes the 2023 Rugby World Cup Final Referee is once again very much looking forward to his annual visit to the Festival.

Wayne has described the Festival as one of his favourite days of the year. He has been coming for a number of years as part of a group of Six Nations and International rugby referees very kindly invited to Prestbury Park.

Wayne will be joined by his World Cup Final Television Match Official Tom Foley and two Cheltenham based International referees, namely Christoph Ridley who refereed France v Italy in the 6 Nations this year and the trio's coach, former three times World Cup referee Chris White.

They will be teaming up again with Peter Jubb and Martyn Thomas part of the Fergal based 'YesnowaitSORRIES' syndicate and will no doubt be fielding many rugby questions and thoughts from the many supporters, guests and racegoers deeply interested as the 6 Nations reaches its climax on the 16th March.

RACING DELAYED BY SNOW!

GOLD CUP DAY 1987

MICHAEL SILVER

School Chum of Chris Coley

That's the day I remember not just because of the snow and the delay in racing after the Gold Cup but because I had a fancied runner in the next race...

The runner was Gainsay, a horse I purchased in Ireland as a 3-year-old through The Curragh Bloodstock Agency and through a friend of mine in the meat business, David Fields, I decided to send him to the Cotswolds to be trained by David Nicholson. He won his first race, a novice hurdle at Nottingham, but did not make that much of an impact until he won the big Novice Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day, a special day for me as I always had a box for friends and family at Kempton.

After that win the horse again disappointed and one day after another disappointment I met up with my great chum, Errol Brown of Hot Chocolate fame, with whom shared a few flat horses and I persuaded him to take up half a share in the horse. Errol was a great fan of Jenny Pittman and it was he who suggested we should make the move to Jenny's! The horse flourished

and we made the decision to run him in the Ritz Club Chase at the festival with Ben de Haan to ride him as Mark, Jenny's son, would struggle with the weight.

However, imagine our anguish as the snow covered the course and racing was delayed (the fear being that as the Gold Cup had been run the course officials might just abandon the rest of the card). However, our hopes began to rise and racing duly recommenced... Gainsay's instructions were to lead from the front and the further the race went, the further he extended his lead and strolled home to win.

I remember my old school chum, Chris Coley, coming down to join us in the Winner's Enclosure but truly what I remember most is that over the loudspeaker, as the horse came back into the paddock, suddenly we heard Errol singing "I Believe In Miracles". It was one of his hits at the time and I remember Edward Gillespie coming over to us and asking us "if we liked the song?" That was Edward to a tee and what quick thinking on his part...



Gainsay wins at Cheltenham 1987 - R-L Jenny Pitman, Errol Brown, Michael Silver, Chris Coley

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH FORMER CLERK OF THE COURSE SIMON CLAISSE

It is naturally tempting when reflecting on over two decades of Festivals to focus on the outstanding sporting moments. Amongst a plethora of memorable races that I had been privileged to watch, the highlights include Best Mate's three Gold Cup wins in the early 2000s, Hurricane Fly's two Champion Hurdles, Kauto Star's two Gold Cups, Sprinter Sacre regaining his Queen Mother Champion Chase in 2016 following his heart issues, one of the most moving moments in my time at Prestbury Park, and culminating in the surreal Festival of 2021 when, run behind closed doors, the Irish won 23 races including Honeysuckle's first Champion Hurdle.

But the role of the Clerk of the Course is to plan, organise and manage the racing and do whatever is necessary to keep the show on the road whatever challenges arise, not to admire the performers; my time at Prestbury Park came with plenty of curved balls to keep me on my toes. It was somewhat ironic that my last Festival in 2021 should be run with no spectators due to ongoing Covid restrictions when my first

Festival in charge in 2001 never happened because of Foot and Mouth despite trying twice to stage the event firstly in March and then in April. That in itself should have been the only major hiccup at the Festival during my tenure, but the elements conspired to intervene in both 2008, more on that one in a moment and 2013, when temperatures dipped on the Tuesday morning to -12C. The frost had got into the ground under the covers and I recall rather too confidently telling Radio 4's Today Programme listeners at 0830 that morning that all would be well with a delayed start at 2pm as the cross country had no hope-although our 1030am inspection was touch and go, we opened the gates and successfully ran the card.

Described by Andrew Franklin of C4 as the "turning of a



sporting disaster into a sporting triumph", it was the events of 2008 that I will always remember as the highlight of my Festivals. Through the Tuesday night we experienced wind gusts approaching 60mph, something we would normally emerge from with perhaps some minor damage out on the course and to the temporary structures as these are partially sheltered from the normal prevailing winds from the south and west by the higher ground on which the stands sit. But on this occasion, contrary to our forecast, the wind came in from the east, roaring across the centre of the course and slamming into the temporary

structures that sit stand-side between the last hurdle and the two furlongs pole up the home straight. On arrival at 0445am, coming into the enclosures from the west, the damage from the wind looked initially superficial, but it soon became apparent from early conversations with the security and catering teams that there was significant damage on the course facing side of the tented village which had happened in the last hour. The top of a two-storey marquee and been completely flipped on its head, landing on another structure, and rendering large parts of the area unsafe. Out on the course significant damage had been done to the running rails and wings and the canter down to the 2m start, which also served as the access to the gallops for morning exercise for up to 90 horses, was strewn with the remnants of the speaker poles, speakers and cables which had not survived the onslaught.

By 0530am it was clear to Edward (Gillespie) and me that we would not be racing that day, but before making any public announcements we had to decide what to do with the day's principle races in terms of rearranging when they would take place. With the wholesale move of the card to the Saturday out of the question, we initially began with the historical approach of salvaging the feature Grade 1s, but with a good forecast we took the decision to look at staging all seven across the next two days, by starting racing at

1230pm and running 10 races on the Thursday and 9 on the Friday. Understandably we needed buy-in from our broadcasters, participants, the racing authorities, sponsors, service providers, (drs, vets, police, ambulance, fire, security etc) and so Edward and I spent a somewhat busy few hours between 6 and 8am making sure we could actually deliver. By 0830 that Wednesday we had announced our plan and then turned our attention to the clear up from the night before and refining the management of 19 races in the following two days.

The logistics of what we had to achieve were something no racecourse in this country has ever had to face, but the willingness of everyone involved in the delivery of those two days was just phenomenal. If ever there was an example of "where there's a will there's a way" this was it and the collaboration of everyone involved was just awesome. By the time the jockeys were legged up for the Vincent O'Brien County Hurdle at 5.20pm on the Friday, nearly two hours after Denman had won the Gold Cup, I remember Ruby Walsh, with two winners on the board for the day and riding I'm singing the blues for Paul Nicholls, saying to me as the horses circled in the parade ring "I'm ready to go home now"!

He wasn't the only one.



MY FIRST EVER CHELTENHAM PHOTO

AN UNOFFICIAL ONE!

FROM LOUIS GILL



I suppose some photographs are more poignant than others for different reasons. The pictures that you hold closest to your heart are not always technically the best, but have meanings attached to them that far outweigh what the image may lack in other areas. Whether it's a memory, a sense of nostalgia, a person or a place that you love, all of these things can contribute to making an image great.

The photograph that I've picked of Cheltenham is this from the 2011 Gold Cup. It was one of the first times I'd tried to photograph a racehorse, a real window into what my future would look like. Back then I could have only dreamed I'd be doing what I'm doing today. I was 17 back in 2011, obsessed by racing and photography, but probably racing more so. I didn't really have the money to go to the festival every day, if not at all. I also had to skive from school and college to make it every year, which had become a regular joke at school. This particular year my father and I headed to the back of the racecourse, to the footpath and watched the Gold Cup come past. I managed to take this picture which includes an unbelievable four winners of the big race (Denman, Kauto Star, Imperial Commander and Long Run).

Fast forward to 2024 and photographing and filming racehorses is my full-time job and even more ironically, I live exactly (because I've counted it especially), 186 seconds away from the very spot this photo was taken! 2011 Gold cup was my favourite one of all time, from where we were you couldn't confidently see who the winner was, so we had my dad's radio playing 5Live. It was the race that had everything, broke my heart when Long Run came past Kauto and Denman on the way to the last, but it was the changing of the guard. The final chapter in the Kauto vs Denham era and the two best staying chasers of my lifetime, battling it out at Cheltenham for the final time.

ON DUTY AS A FENCE ATTENDANT

OLLIE SMITH



First and foremost, my role out on the racecourse is for the safety and wellbeing of the horses and jockeys during racing. I have an allocated area in which I am responsible for 2 hurdles and 3 chase fences on both the old and new courses, 2 cross country fences and I am also equipped with a Gator Buggy to cover the ground as first response in which the main convoy cannot access during any chute races such as a 2m 4f.

During a race, I will replace broken hurdles or straighten out fence birch, tread in the ground, react to any fallers and catch loose horses. Everything happens so quickly so I have to be extremely alert and always expect the unexpected.

During Festival week, I also manage the racecourse gallops in the mornings, supervising the Irish teams and making sure everyone is safe and sound.

LIFE IN THE PRESS ROOM WITH NEIL JUCKES RACE READER

Having worked in racing and been around horses all my life, the thrill you get in the morning of a much-anticipated Tuesday in March seemingly never tires. Thousands make their way to Prestbury Park, with a large contingent coming via the Irish Sea, to see the very best racing has to offer. My week, however, is quite different to most on course, for I spend my time tucked away, working in the press room, located just along from the Cottage Rake bar.



From the outside, many assume the press room is full of people who have it relatively easy, turning up and sitting in the best seats in the house, before writing copy or broadcasting live to capture the magic of the event. However, many are in the press room as early as 7am and do not leave their stations until very late, making it a long and tiring week. At that time of night there is of course the reward of a smooth departure from a near empty car park.

Within the press room itself, little departments working as bubbles in the corners of the room emerge. The commentators, the Press Association, the Racing Post, the Irish Press, Daily Newspapers, Betting personnel, TV crews etc, all working from dusk till dawn to make the industry look as good as it can be for Horse Racing's feature event.

From a personal perspective, as well as a free sandwich and race card (which I usually have stolen by my son) the press room is an opportunity to catch up with colleagues who I see just a few times a year. There is plenty of light-hearted banter, differing opinions, and of course, judge and jury after a 'questionable' ride, making it an atmosphere I look forward to each March. And just like the 75,000 in attendance, we all jostle for a position in the viewing area ahead of the first race and 'that roar' at 1.30 pm on the Tuesday and for the blue riband races the rest of the week.

In my opinion, the Cheltenham Festival is the very best racing has to offer, and whilst my week in the press room involves a quite different approach to the majority of the audience in attendance it is a privilege to be there.

As stated before it is a long week but it is questionable if I am as weary as those who have been in the Guinness village all week!!!!

CHELTENHAM SUPREMO FOR 32 YEARS

EDWARD GILLESPIE

For a third of the Gold Cup's century, I was in the privileged position of effectively being the custodian for the race's delivery and, on occasions, its reputation. I started with the unique responsibility of engineering the return of the 1980 Gold Cup won by Tied Cottage to the owner of runner-up Master Smudge following the winner's disqualification. That heralded an extraordinary sequences of events through a decade that took the race from being the high spot of the Jump Racing season for those who followed the sport to becoming front page news as an international sporting event thanks to Michael Dickinson's Famous Five, the mare Dawn Run becoming still the only Champion Hurdle - Gold Cup winner and in such dramatic fashion, The Thinker ploughing to victory with butter on his hooves after a long snow delay which included the collapse of a grandstand roof and Desert Orchid prevailing in conditions that would have prevented racing on any other day.

For several of those 80's Festivals, we had a course inspection on the immediate build up or on Gold Cup Day itself. The most extreme action to with we resorted was to summon up a fleet of helicopters in an attempt to dry the ground with their down-blast. It proved to be an ineffective exercise except to show how hard we were trying, gaining media coverage with photographs and cartoons that further boosted attendance in days when customers paid on arrival. Thursday's attendance rose from 32,000 in 1981 to 75,000 in 1989.

Wrestling with the elements continued into the next decade with the 1995 Gold Cup run on a combination of the Old and New Courses in order to circumvent un-raceable ground, conditions that played to the strengths of Master Oats. On the evening prior, Philip Arkwright, Clerk of the Course, and I had dinner with Vincent and Jacqueline O'Brien in the Prestbury House Hotel, Philip needing to pop out every 30 minutes to phone the Head Groundsman to see how the rail readjustment was going.

Off-stage dramas will always be part and parcel of a

race that means so much for those preparing horses that will probably only have one realistic chance of winning. In 1994, we took as much pleasure in seeing Jodami run his race and finish second as we showed in welcoming the winner French 'invader' The Fellow.

Jodami's trainer Peter Beaumont had confided with us that he had good reason to fear the previous year's winner would be 'got at'. We put together a plan that covered Jodami's every movement once he arrived at course, including security guards either side of him from the moment he left the stables to prevent what might have happened to Playschool in 1988 when Trainer David Barons believed the favourite - ridden by Paul Nicholls - had flopped after being slapped on the backside on his way from the pre-parade ring. For Jodami, we invented a new tradition of the previous year's winner leading the parade and being flanked by the huntsmen as a final measure to deter any would-be snipers.

Only one other Gold Cup got close to the pre-race excitement that had come with a very raw, novicey Dawn Run's bold assault on the crown after parting company with Tony Mullins at the January meeting. That was in 2010 when sponsors The Tote launched a battle bus to promote the rivalry between stablemates Denman and Kauto Star. That succeeded in getting followers of each contender to declare their support by way of scarves and other bunting. As Imperial Commander was led into the Winner's Enclosure, I cast a rueful smile at the tent by the Arkle Statue that was stocked full of placards prepared for distribution to celebrate victory for either of the other two.



GALLOP TO GLORY!

with OUR **CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP** BASED QUIZ

Please see below 12 questions all requiring an answer which is that of a Gold Cup winner since the last World War. For each answer you will find a cryptic clue or a dictionary definition.

- 1 ...Its dark purple tubular flowers open to reveal white stippling and prominent stamens.
- 2 ...A bronze sculpture by Rodin.
- 3 ...Ruled from 1811 when his father's illness was judged to be permanent.
- 4 ...A major in the Lancashire Fusiliers who rode Father O'Flynn to victory in the Grand National.
- 5 ...A marathon would definitely be one of these!
- 6 ...Where you might go racing in Barbados?
- 7 ...The standard literary and official form of Chinese.
- 8 ...You would be "not alone" in France.
- 9 ...A shotgun with a very small calibre shell.
- 10 ...He would have been a warrior and a skilled horseman living in southern Russia or part of Ukraine.
- 11 ...An edible terrestrial snail usually served in the shell with a sauce of melted butter and garlic.
- 12 ...A short river following through Upper Swell to Stow on the Wold and flows into the Windrush, a tributary of the River Thames.

TIEBREAK!

Name the 3 horses that you think will finish 1st, 2nd and 3rd in this years Gold Cup (3pts X 1st, 2pts X 2nd, 1pt X 3rd)

ANSWERS TO BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 14TH BY EMAIL TO CHRIS COLEY..

CHRIS@CHRISCOLEY.CO.UK

Answers will be revealed in Issue 5 of the Horse Whispers Newsletter

RACECOURSE QUIZ

LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

THE ANSWERS:

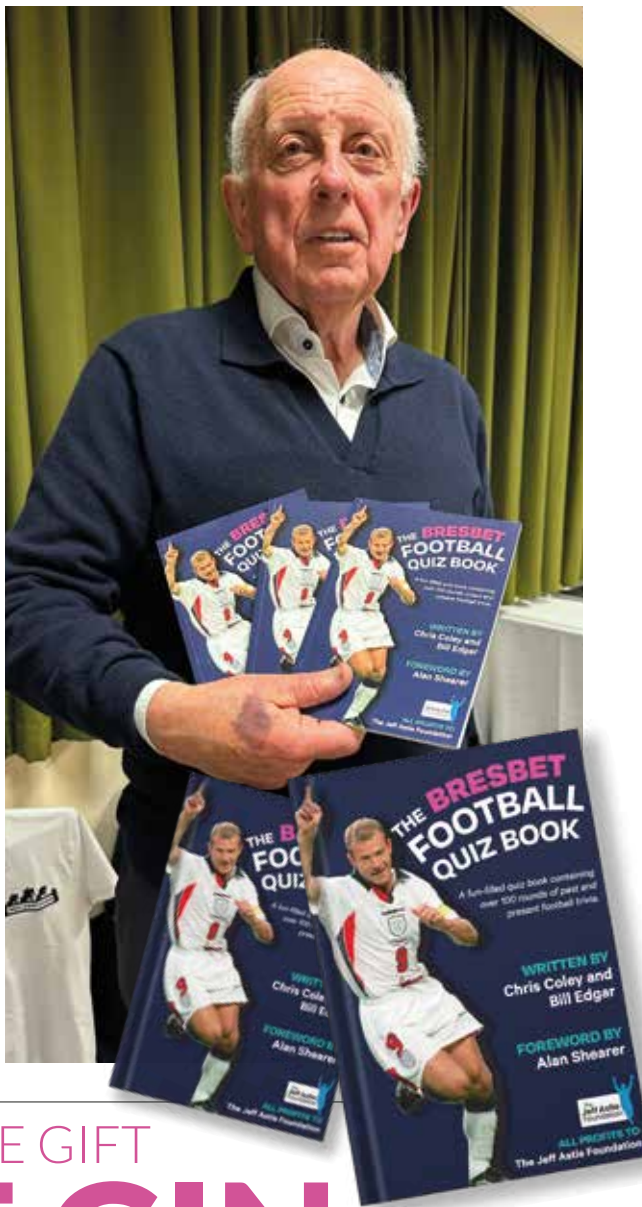
- 1 **Cartmel**
- 2 **Bangor On Dee**
- 3 **Lincoln**
- 4 **Wrexham**
- 5 **Kempton**
- 6 **Newmarket**
- 7 **British Grand Prix**
- 8 **Perth**
- 9 **Great Yarmouth**
- 10 **Derbyshire**

There were 7 all correct answers received and the first name pulled out of the hat by Fergal was...

LEE CARSON

WELL DONE TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!

NEED A THOUGHTFUL GIFT?
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!



FOR THE FOOTBALL FANATIC:

Dive into the exhilarating world of football with our captivating quiz book that promises over 100 rounds of past and present football trivia!

This fun-filled compilation, crafted by the brilliant minds of our own Chris Coley and Bill Edgar, offers a football fan's dream, covering an extensive range of topics to test your knowledge and ignite your passion for the "beautiful game".

A special treat awaits in the 'Extra Time' round, where questions are intricately linked to the insightful podcast 'The Rest is Football,' featuring the legendary trio of Gary Lineker, Alan Shearer, and Micah Richards.

With a foreword penned by the iconic Alan Shearer himself, this quiz book isn't just a test of your football knowledge; it's an immersive experience curated by experts and endorsed by football royalty. Embark on a journey through the sport's rich history, iconic moments, and the wit of the podcast personalities as you tackle each round. Whether you're a seasoned football aficionado or a casual fan, this quiz book is your ticket to hours of entertainment and a chance to prove your football prowess!

[SHOP AT GREATQUIZBOOKS.CO.UK](https://www.greatquizbooks.co.uk)
[OR FIND IT ON AMAZON](https://www.amazon.com)

GIVE THE GIFT OF GIN

Have you seen that we have our own branded bottle of gin?

Drawing inspiration from Fergal's rich heritage and the picturesque rural landscapes of the Gloucestershire farm, Ravenswell Gin emerges as a contemporary rendition of the timeless London Dry Gin.

This gin pays homage to tradition with a juniper-forward and citrusy palate, seamlessly blending the classic with the **distinctive flavors of the Irish countryside**.

Infused with Rowanberries, Elderberries, and Hawthornberries, alongside floral notes of Rose Petal, Lavender, and Heather, Ravenswell Gin achieves a **harmonious and smooth profile**. The result is a clean yet raw and visceral palate, effortlessly balanced by a beautiful mouthfeel and a lingering finish.

As a novel addition to the offerings from Fergal O'Brien Racing, creating our own branded gin was an adventure of flavors and discovery. Now available, we invite you to savor Ravenswell Gin and share your thoughts with us. Embark on a journey of taste that **reflects both tradition and innovation** in every sip.

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INSIDE INFORMATION

with LIAM HARRISON

HOW DID YOU GET INTO RACING?

My mum always used to watch racing on the TV so I watched a lot of it before I knew how to ride. Through my Great Uncle William we went to some local Point-to-Points. I loved it and started to have some riding lessons and then got into pony racing. This then led me to riding out for Neil Mulholland who was local to me.

HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK FOR FERGAL?

I finished school when I was 16 and I did 1 year full time with Neil. I was good friends with Connor Brace and we used to speak on the phone most days. One day he said to me about coming up to Fergal's. I spent a morning there, loved it and soon started full time for Fergal with an amateur license.

NOW YOU HAVE LOST YOUR CLAIM HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED?

Thankfully since riding out my claim last May the momentum has kept going and I have had 24 winners since then. It can be a tricky time so I'm glad the winners have kept coming. I have some more outside rides and I have found that spending slightly less time in the yard has allowed me to focus more on my race riding and

fitness which I think has helped me greatly.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BEST DAY'S RACING SO FAR?

Winning on Petite Power at Cheltenham probably still tops it. It was my first ride at Cheltenham, part of a treble on the day for Fergal with a winner each for Paddy, myself and Connor. Just a great day!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE RACECOURSE AND WHY?

Cheltenham! I've loved Cheltenham since before I could even ride a horse! It's a magical place and winning there is a feeling like no other!

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF RACING?

I don't have many, it's mainly all about racing however I love all sports and try to play some of them when I can... oh and of course watching Leeds Utd!!

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

For as long as I can remember my dream has been to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Hopefully it will happen one day...

Photo credit: Pat Healy



MERCH RELAUNCHED!

Fergal O'Brien Racing is thrilled to announce the relaunch of our highly anticipated merchandise line, now available on our web shop!

Introducing the Core Bundle and the Premium Bundle, each curated with the signature style and quality that embodies the essence of Fergal O'Brien Racing.

Whether you're cheering from the sidelines or embracing the thrill of the track, our new merchandise line is your ticket to embodying the spirit of Fergal O'Brien Racing.

Head over to our web shop today to explore the new merchandise offerings and secure your bundle of choice. It's time to gear up, show your support, and be part of the FOB Racing legacy!

SAVE!

WITH SPECIAL CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL WEEK

CORE BUNDLE

Core Polo: XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3-8XL

Classic Beanie: One Size

Fleece Gilet: S, M, L, XL, 2-3XL

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