

AN EXCITING FESTIVE PERIOD



It has been a very busy festive period with plenty of runners and some great functions.

Our first winner of the month was Snowy Evening who is a gorgeous looking horse and has always shown a lot of promise, but just needed time to mature and develop.



Snowy Evening

Whilst he has improved his technique over fences, he is not yet the finished article, so it was lovely to see him jump so well at Doncaster and go on to win impressively.

Later in the month he did get beaten but as we know there is still some work to do, he should turn into a decent horse with time.

We always like to have runners and winners at our local track in Bangor on Dee so to see Horacio Apples winning there this month was wonderful. We always felt he would improve for a fence, it has just taken a little bit of time to get him there, but he put in a fantastic display at Bangor and won impressively.

He is a lovely big horse who will continue to develop with time and will make a tough staying chaser.

Cheltenham is a track where everyone wants to have winners.

Over the past few years, as the quality of our horses has increased, we have had more runners there.



Horacio Apples



White Rhino

White Rhino was a very close second earlier in the season so to go back and win there was extra special. It was however a very difficult time as we lost Gesskille earlier that day, making it very tough for everyone involved. To have a winner at Cheltenham is a fantastic achievement and it was a terrible shame for his owners that their success was tinged with the inevitable sadness of the day.

It has been a wonderful journey with White Rhino, he showed little promise on his first three starts and could barely get round, even though we knew he would improve with time. He got an initial handicap mark of 74 and won on handicap debut. He has now won 5 races since that and been second twice with a current rating of 129, that is an increase of 55lbs!

We always felt he would be at his peak when he went over fences so what he is doing over hurdles has really taken us by surprise and given his owners an amazing journey. He is such a lovely horse, a gentle giant who is so tough and honest.



Dandys Derriere

Dandys Derriere won in great style at Wolverhampton in the 6f handicap under a lovely ride from Harry Russell. He had a lovely position through and stayed on gamely up the straight to win nicely. Lovely to see plenty of Dandys' dreamers there to enjoy the evening and I am sure he can push on now and win more racing having had a wind operation and he has settled down a lot.





TRIBUTE TO GESSKILLE

Losing any horse is tough and nothing prepares you for it. We spend so much time with our horses you can't fail but become attached. We had been involved with Gesskille since he was a foal so we had seen him grow up and develop into the horse he was.

We put so much into ensuring all our horses have a life well lived and want for nothing so that they go on to fulfil their true potential and it is this that gives me strength that Gesskille had the best life. Having won on the big stage at Auteuil and Aintree he really helped propel Henry's career and put our yard in the spotlight, we will forever owe that to him. He was such a star and Rachael and Henry were both extremely attached to him.

He was previously trained by Francois Nicolle, running to a high standard and was second twice at Auteuil. We were very lucky that Dad's syndicate allowed us to train him. We took him hunter chasing which he seemed to relish, down in grade and, being able to dominate, he won both with ease. We then went to Auteuil twice that spring where he had a first and a second before having a break. The following season he put in two amazing performances at Aintree, finishing second both times, and then going back to Auteuil and winning.

This season he topped it all winning The Sefton at Aintree. Being a local track and where my father was chairman for 25 years made it extra special, and a day I will never forget.

He was an amazing horse; I will always remember what he achieved for us.



EVENTS:



WREATH MAKING...

We always try and put on varied events for owners and December was especially busy with our monthly Owners' Morning with breakfast on the gallops, wreath making and a lovely evening wine tasting.

All were well attended and enjoyed by all.

The wreaths everyone created were so beautiful and I even made the soup myself!



Tanners' Wines very kindly came and did our wine tasting ten days later which we held in the new Owners' Room.

The evening was a great success and we all learned plenty, notably to put the decanted port residue in our gravy!

Tanners provided delicious canapes to accompany the wines and it was interesting to see how the wine flavours altered with different foods.

...AND WINE TASTING

We have lots of events coming up so please keep an eye out on Racing Manager for more information.

Upcoming Trips:

- A trip to the Dublin Racing Festival
- Cheltenham Race Day at Stockton Hall
- Picnic at Bangor-on-Dee races
- Willow Weaving
- Foal Show in Cercy-la-Tour, France (TBC)
- Ascot Race Day at Stockton Hall
- Newmarket Jockey Club Rooms and Races trip (TBC)



HARD WORK FROM ALL THE STAFF

Working with horses may look glamorous at times, but largely it is extremely hard work with long hours and early starts in the dark, cold and wet.

We have such a good team here and I am so grateful to them for the hard work they do.

Over Christmas especially, there is lots of racing and the staff are wonderful at juggling their family and outside commitments to always make sure that we are staffed as we need to be.

The wet weather recently has made it even tougher, with stables and equipment getting soaked and extra time needed to clean and dry it all.

We take the staff out most months to thank them for their work and we had a fun evening for our Christmas party. We went to an Italian in Chester for food followed by Escape Rooms where Craig Nicol's team won. We had a few drinks afterwards, but everyone was in work on time the next day albeit with a few sore heads!





INTERVIEW WITH PAOLO GUASCO - OUR REGULAR VET

FAMILY LIFE

The boys and Sienna are growing up fast and they are so lucky to have the yard and its surrounding outside space to be able to play in. The staff are so good with them. The recent bad weather has meant however that every time they venture onto the yard they get covered in mud. Bring on the summer!



I've recently rediscovered a love of gliding from my younger years and I use my time in the air as valuable headspace. I did have a little mishap last week where I misjudged my height and couldn't get back to the airfield so had to land in a field. Having made such a mess in his wet field I was expecting a very angry farmer but he could not have been nicer and was happy to tow me out with his tractor.

All the other club members came to help take the glider apart so we could get it back to the airfield. I have not been that cold and wet for a very long time!

1. Where did you grow up?

Born and raised in a little village North West of Italy, not far from Turin. We had a beef farm and a small factory producing Salami, Ham, Parma ham etc, which sadly are no more. You can pick your friends but not your family. I went to University in Turin, then I took off and started traveling for work and ended up in the UK.

2. How did you get interested in becoming a Vet?

According to the old ladies in the village, I wanted to become a vet as a kid but I don't really remember that. When I finished high school I thought I was done with studying but Mom and Dad said that they were going to support me for University if I wanted (back then tuition was £1000 pr year, way more affordable than today), so they asked me what I would want to study. I replied chemistry or physics, to which they replied - we ain't gonna pay for that - so Vet school came in as a natural choice. The rest is history!

3. Why do you specialise in horses?

It wasn't my first pick, I only had one horse myself, when I was a teenager. No one in my family is into horses! Initially, I wanted to become a cattle vet and do a bit of mixed practice in Italy. I started shadowing a few cattle vets who were pretty good to me, then I met one of my infamous mentors, Big Gianni, who had lived and worked in Kentucky for like 10 years in the eighties. He sent me to Kentucky to shadow some of his friends there and learn as many tricks as I could. His plan was actually pretty crafty as he wanted me to go there, learn, come back, and sell me his practice so he could retire. Anyway, when I got to Kentucky, I started enjoying dealing with horses more and more, was offered a job there and kept focusing on racehorses since.



4. What is the most challenging part of the job?

Getting paid! Actually, probably paperwork.

5. Do you enjoy running your own business?

Yes - a leap of faith for sure going from employed to self-employed, but it was one of the best decisions I could take. On my first day trading, I was 200k in debt from buying all equipment and drugs! In fact, I remember two things very well - how little enjoyment I was getting on being a hired gun and how anxious I was on the first day of business, just to realise a few hours later I was so busy I was going to be fine!

I was very lucky though in having clients that were loyal to me and supported (and still are supporting) us all the way through.

6. What is the most frustrating part of your job?

There isn't really a frustrating part I don't think, this job can get you tired and worn out but is hugely rewarding. I don't see myself doing anything else really, our daily grind involves basically driving to friends and have a chat with them, looking at pretty horses and trying to make them feel better, drinking coffee then driving off to see more people and horses, my lifestyle could be a lot worse!

THREE TO FOLLOW

Owners:

Gary Phillips 58
Steve Parry 50
Stephen Adams 50

Staff:

Ryan Day 45
Paddy Chesters 45
Paige Gore 40

To keep up to date with runners, and hopefully some more winners, don't forget to visit our website, follow us on Twitter and like our page on Facebook.

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