

# Snapshot

Mmmm... spring grass! Backpacker, Prince de Galles and Homebred Star enjoy spring sunshine... and acres of new spring grass!



## Horses to follow

# Racing Authorities issue new Safety Guidelines

Racecourse parade rings are getting busier every season and the number of near-misses and actual incidents is increasing correspondingly. In response to the concerns of racing's various authorities, including the Racecourse Association (RCA), the ROA has decided to take the lead in advising members how to enjoy their parade ring experience at the same time as making it a safer place for all connections. This eight point Code of Good Practice, compiled by Council member Janet Menzies, is intended as a guideline for members:

1. Please abide by the RCA's request that owners do not enter the parade ring other than for business reasons or to view a horse with which they are connected.

2. Assist racecourse management by following the Jockey Club General Instruction that children under the age of 12 are not allowed in the parade ring.

3. Don't block up disabled access areas and do be aware of the special issues faced by wheelchair users within the parade ring.

4. Risk assessments show that large numbers of connections of syndicated horses pose particular problems in the parade ring. Spread the load by choosing to see your horse in the pre-parade ring, or after racing (hopefully in the winners' enclosure) instead.

5. Some new syndicate members are inexperienced around horses - be aware on horse walkways, crossing points and remain alert to the behaviour of other horses in the paddock at all times.

Most injuries are caused by other peoples' horses kicking out.

6. If you are a new owner, make a point of meeting the trainer in plenty of time so you can be shown into the parade ring.

7. The RCA has identified the major parade ring risks as coming from loose and unruly horses. This is more likely in two-year-old races on the Flat and National Hunt bumpers, so be particularly careful in one of these races.

8. Everybody wants to enjoy their parade ring experience to the full, but remember your thoroughbred racehorse is both valuable and highly-strung, so avoid loud behaviour and intrusive photography. When the moment comes for mounting up, stand well clear and leave it to the professionals.

After a great selection for the preceding flat season our team of horses over jumps proved a bit of a disappointment. But at least £10 staked each way on every runner produced a meagre profit. But our 10 horses managed only 5 wins and 15 places between them. Even more disappointingly they only managed a total of 24 runs - less than 3 runs each in a season! Regular visitors to the website [www.homebredracing.co.uk](http://www.homebredracing.co.uk) will already have details of our horses to follow on the flat this season. As always we've concentrated on those we feel are going to offer value rather than short priced 'certainties'. These are the horses we think will challenge for top honours this year:

### Colts

**Montgomery's Arch**  
**Oratorio**  
**Raydaan**

### Fillies

**Dash to the Top**  
**Playful Act**  
**Suez**



The paddock can be a danger to the unvary

Let us have your ideas and views...



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# WINNING P HOME BRED ST

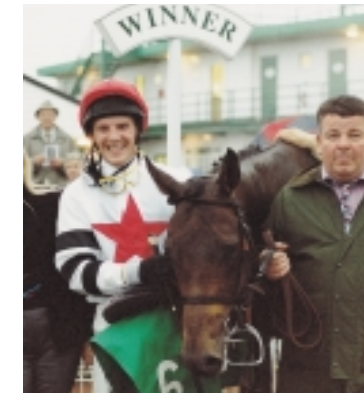
THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOME BRED RACING

3/2005

## So what are the odds?

New statistics issued by the BHB showing the number of horses who collected prizemoney in 2004 make sobering reading. The average racehorse only returns 26% of its owners' outlay and this excludes initial purchase price or breeding costs. This statistic also excludes the significant percentage of horses who never even make it to the track! The BHB says that the average cost of keeping a horse in training for a year is £16,500 and that owners are annually subsidizing racing to the tune of £220 million. In 2004 just over 18,000 individual horses ran on British courses, 7000 of which failed to collect any winnings or place prizemoney at all, and the top earning horses

represented just 0.43% of the equine population. Fewer than 1000 horses won sufficient prize money to pay the £16,500 bill for their keep meaning that no less than 17 out of 18 racehorses needed their owners to dig deep in their pockets to keep them racing. Arguments continue to rage within the industry as to the importance of prizemoney which has a huge bearing on the income of trainers, jockeys and stable staff. Any further erosion of prizemoney will see standards generally decline resulting in fewer fixtures, fewer courses and fewer horses. So it's sad that British racing has become so factionalized with bookmakers, racecourses and owners squabbling over their share. Although it's clear that owners are



funding the the racing product, it's really time for all the different factions to stop squabbling and start pulling together to ensure that racing doesn't lose out to other competitive sports like football, golf and cricket. Coordinated promotion of racing will ensure bigger crowds, more television, more betting, more sponsorship - and ultimately more money for everyone - including owners!

## But maybe winning isn't everything!

We're always pleased to receive comments - particularly when they're complimentary! The following from Cliff and Pam Myers seems to indicate that perhaps winning isn't everything after all! "Last November we contacted you to enquire into the possibility of providing a 1% share in Homebred Buddy as a special Christmas present for our daughter and son-in-law. What a present this was for them -

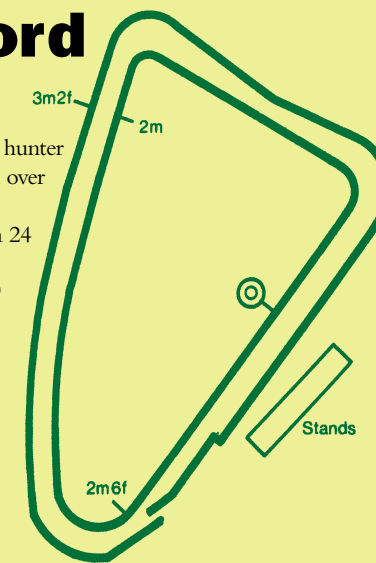
we have said so many times! We couldn't have chosen anything better - and this present has continued for 12 wonderful months for them... different races and functions, your newsletter and advice... every happening is relayed to us here in Spain. We have a lovely collection of photos as proof of how much they've both been able to enjoy "Ziggy" and the kindness and friendship you have all provided".

**OPEN DAY**  
  
**Sunday 17 July**

## Course factfile: Stratford

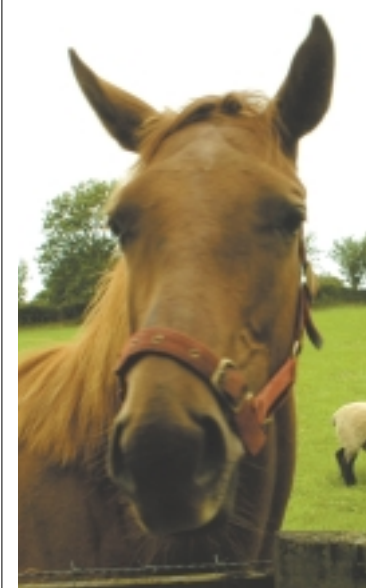
Stratford-on-Avon's popularity as a tourist attraction is renowned around the world, and anyone visiting this charming town can add to their enjoyment by spending some time at the racecourse. Meetings are always well attended and the crowds enthusiastic. The course has a brand new grandstand where many top trainers operate successfully on this triangular circuit. The left-handed jumps track rides well both on the hurdles and chase courses. Unless it rains heavily the course usually rides fast, especially on the straight. The high spot of the season is the two day (Friday

evening, Saturday afternoon) meeting in June, featuring the Horse & Hound Cup, a prestigious hunter chase which attracts entries from all over the country.  
**Location:** London 96, Birmingham 24 and Oxford 40 miles. The course is southwest of the town on the A439  
**Telephone:** 01789 267949  
**Trains:** Direct from Paddington  
**Celebrations:** **Fox and Goose** at Armscote - comfortable pub (with rooms) serving excellent food.  
**White Bear**, High Street, Shipston-on-Stour - traditional inn serving good food



## Watch out there's a thief about!

It's a sad sign of the times that we regularly receive mailings about preventing theft from farms. And sad to report, recently things have been going missing at the stud. Not valuable items but nonetheless annoying stuff to replace. Along one of the footpaths across the fields firstly a drain cover went missing. And then further along near the house the connector for the oil tank also disappeared - followed by logs from the woodpile. All just frustrating and we put it down to mindless vandalism. But when we discovered a cache of logs further along the boundary we made a note to keep an eye out for anyone planning to collect them. Amazingly, and very surprisingly, we caught the culprit red handed - our 2 year old Most Welcome colt! No wonder his bite is to be feared - he must have incredibly strong jaws to lift a heavy drain cover and equally heavy logs! But most alarmingly also the brain to unscrew a very long threaded connector from the oil tank. We wonder what he plans next!



Guryl - looking guilty!



## Snowy Mantle in foal to Group 1 winner

*Snowy Mantle winning at Nottingham*

Homebred mare Snowy Mantle returned home in early May from Pitchall Farm Stud having been tested in foal to July Cup winner Hamas. If all goes well we look forward to her foaling again in March.

Snowy Mantle is already dam of multiple winner Snowed Under currently in training with James Bethell - as well as our own two year old filly Divine White (by College Chapel) who's in training with Amanda Perrett.

Coincidentally Hamas comfortably beat College Chapel when they met in Europe's top sprint event - so anything Divine White does we hope that a Hamas foal might do even better!



*Barn owls breeding again*

## New species make themselves at home

The stud is now in its second year of survey by the RSPB under their Farm Alliance Scheme which aims to build a national profile of bird populations and advise farmers how to improve and maintain suitable habitats.



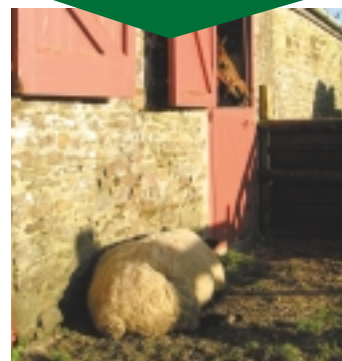
*(Above) Tree sparrow boxes  
(Below) Little grebe nest*



Volunteer 'twitchers' start their surveys in the very early hours at the stud have to run the gauntlet of negotiating our 2 year old colt's field without being detected - Gwyl displays territorial behaviour which makes tyrannosaurus rex appealingly cuddly! It's great to know that our barn owls are back and breeding and the lake has attracted two new species for us this year - Greylag Geese and Tufted Ducks. We also have tree sparrows which are now on the 'endangered/red list' and the stud has been provided with 20 nest boxes by the RSPB to encourage them to breed.

## Snapshot

True loyalty - "Rambo" the sheep never leaves his lifelong friends' stable door until his hero (our 2 year old Most Welcome colt "Gwyl") is turned out into the paddock every morning.



# Horse code...

A horse greeting another at a distance will neigh loudly, then stand rigidly to attention, with head raised and ears pricked, while it concentrates on listening for a response.

Horses that live together or are members of the same family recognise each other's neighs and the sound carries a considerable distance, so the neigh is important in keeping track of the whereabouts of the individual's companions or herd. The nicker is a more intimate form of communication, used by a mare to her foal, by close friends when they come into immediate contact and as part of the courtship routine. A horse that knows and trusts you may nicker when you approach it, especially at feeding time! It occurs when horses are concentrating on each other at close quarters and may vary in tone from welcome to warning. When horses that are uncertain of one another meet, an initial nicker may be followed abruptly by a squeal which is a strong form of warning and may also signal resentment and rejection. The squeal may be accompanied by striking out with a forefoot especially by mares. Squeals may occur in mock fights, in anger or irritation and during courtship. The stallion's scream of challenge is probably more prevalent in film and literature than in real life. The scream is the ultimate verbal expression of equine rage, whether emitted by stallion, mare or gelding, and whether in a sexual or other connotation. It should have no place in the normal communication of horse and human, and if it does occur, there is a serious problem in hand. Horses snort loudly when surprised or astonished by something strange.



The sound is accompanied by the horse drawing itself up to be as impressive as possible, evidently to intimidate the subject of the alarm. The situation occurs when the horse is not frightened enough to run, but is thoroughly alerted - and alerts its companions - to the possible threat. When a horse snorts, its whole body vibrates with the tension of readying itself for fast and violent action should the threat develop into real danger. What happens next depends upon the behaviour of the handler, rider or other horses, or of the threat object. Some horses, particularly highly bred ones, exhibit the sound called 'high blowing', a series of snorting sounds made in rhythm with their breathing, especially when cantering. It is usually a sign that the horse is feeling good. Other noises include grunting, when the horse is making an effort, especially against its own will; sighing, just as a human might and, again, associated with having made a strong effort; and groaning, which may be associated with pleasure, as when stretching out in the sun, or with pain. All the sounds made by horses are significant, if the handler understands them. It is well established that the horse will respond to the voice and even learn to obey vocal commands,

but the handler must be aware of the effect of different types of sounds, use them appropriately and consistently and be able to differentiate between soft, firm and harsh tones. Horses communicate by smell and touch as well as sound. We can communicate in return by touch and sound, and be passive communicators by allowing them to smell us. Another means of communication, which the horse uses continuously, is posture, that is, body language. Appreciating this is probably the most important key to gaining the horse's respect and its attention to the learning process. Many owners have difficulties because they do not realise that this is a two-way process. They may be aware of what the horse's body language means to them - for example, if it lays its ears back and snakes its head forwards, it is going to bite - but they are unaware of what their own body language means to the horse. For example, if you raise your hand sharply in front of the horse's face, intending to stroke it while you are perhaps chatting to someone else, how is it supposed to know that you are not going to hit it? That fast movement of your hand into its blind spot is perceived as a threat.

# Diagnosing future performance

Tracheal washes involve sampling the material carried up into the trachea from the lower airways as a result of fast exercise. They are a means of monitoring the health of the lower airways.

Tracheal washes performed after a light canter only, or not after fast work at all, can give a falsely positive indication of lower airway health. For a representative sample the equivalent of twice up a 4f hill gallop at a reasonable pace is needed - not necessarily a piece of "work", but not far off. The ideal time to trach wash is approximately 20-40 minutes after the gallop - too soon and the lower airway material may not have reached the trachea (e.g a bleed) - too late and the material may have gone and a falsely clear sample will be collected.

Scoping alone without trach washing is not enough - mucus is seldom seen in the trachea when trach washing, yet many of these trach washes are abnormal on analysis.

Assuming a clear trach wash is normal and a cloudy one abnormal does not work - many trach washes that look clear to the eye will have significant numbers of neutrophils ie. evidence of active inflammation and possibly infection. Similarly some very cloudy trach washes are not full of mucus and cells but just post infection protein debris - which is not significant.

After sample analysis vets report the presence and degree of mucus, cloudiness, fresh blood, active and degenerate neutrophils, macrophages and siderophages. An overall inflammation score is given which distils the whole analysis such that 0/12 or 1/12 is normal; 2/12 is more or less normal, but 3/12 or more is abnormal and a poor racing performance would be predicted. A standard sample of the trach wash is cultured overnight in an incubator and assessed for the degree of growth of clinically significant



*Racehorse on a treadmill at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket*

bacteria - not bacteria that do not matter and are only contaminants. The bacteriology report is available the day after the cytology report. If a significant bacteria is cultured it is then recultured in the presence of discs impregnated with antibiotics to determine to which antibiotic it is most sensitive - this is a sensitivity test and is very useful clinical information.

Trach washing is now an indispensable tool for monitoring a racehorse's health and the interpretation of results is critical to race planning and identifying the need to make changes to a work routine or to start treatment. But most importantly it can prevent the problem of running a horse when it shouldn't and so prevent any long term damage - as well as avoiding any short term disappointment for owners.

## Open Day at the Stud - Sunday 17 July



We're pleased to report that there's already a good response to the Open Day at the Stud which continues to grow year on year. We'll again include a parade of the Llanwnnen Foxhounds which was such a big hit with owners last year. We're also arranging a visit to Peter Bowen's yard at Letterston - please let us know (01293 884433) if you'd like to be included, or simply want more details, directions or info about places to stay.