

# Racing Legends: Eclipse

Eclipse, whose name is borne by the oldest Group 1 1/4 mile flat race, was foaled in 1764 and proved to be the first truly great racehorse. A grandson of the Darley Arabian, he was bred by William Duke of Cumberland at Windsor Forest. On the Duke's death in 1765, he was bought by a Smithfield meat salesman called William Wildman for seventy-five guineas. A massively-built lengthy chesnut colt with a white stocking on his off-hind leg, Eclipse was so temperamental as a young horse that his owner considered gelding him. To have done so would have undermined the entire future of the Stud Book over the next 200 years! Eclipse did not race until he was five, when Wildman took him to Epsom for a £50 Plate to be run in three four-mile heats. The course began in the region of Lord Derby's house, The Oaks, and would finish on the Downs. He won the first heat easily, whereupon the legendary Irish gambler Colonel Dennis O'Kelly bet that he could place all five runners in the second heat in the correct order. The bet was accepted, and O'Kelly stated that his forecast was: 'Eclipse first, and

the rest nowhere!' - meaning that Eclipse would finish a distance (240 yards) in front of his rivals. Eclipse did so and O'Kelly collected. A month later, O'Kelly bought a half-share in Eclipse for 650 guineas, and eventually the other half for 1000 guineas, after a game of chance over the price. Under O'Kelly's guidance, Eclipse became a legend. He was never beaten, and never extended, in eighteen races. Indeed he was so vastly superior to any possible rival it was almost impossible to make a match for him. It was said that Eclipse could run a mile in a minute - a claim that casts doubt upon the accuracy of timing!



Eclipse was the sire of three of the first five winners of the Derby, and almost all the great horses of the twentieth century trace back to him. On his death his anatomy was examined in detail by an eminent young French veterinarian whose paper on the subject was largely responsible for the foundation of the Royal Veterinary College in London. His purpose had been to determine the reasons for Eclipse's amazing speed, generally attributed to his exceptional heart-room. Eclipse's skeleton was eventually re-assembled, and now stands in the National Horse Racing Museum in Newmarket. *Eclipse - the daddy of them all!*

## The long wait!

Now that our latest foal has arrived safely this is some background on foaling. The normal gestation length for a thoroughbred mare ranges between 320 and 365 days averaging 340. Studies have shown that colts are born 2-7 days later than fillies. Mares foaling in late Spring/early Summer have been shown to foal about 10 days sooner than the early foals that we aim to breed for racing as we want our 2yr olds not to be disadvantaged by a late birthday. As our foals will be born at an inauspicious time we need to foal the mare inside. She will be introduced to a specially prepared box with observation camera and will need to be watched when we think foaling is close.



Therein lies the rub. Though the mare will show some classical signs of readiness, these again vary. Most foals will be born when the mare feels she is safe and the world is asleep ie the wee small hours of the morning! All this means that the stud-person will be keeping a close eye on her in the field during the day and in her box at night - on duty until about 3.30 am possibly for many days only for the mare to settle down to sleep at 4am for another night, leaving us wide awake! Maybe some lack of sleep is the price to pay for the amazing privilege of helping your mare and befriending her youngster in its earliest hours (it's now called imprinting). More importantly, after many years of straightforward deliveries, it's true to say that without intervention, both Pharly Green and Keep a Welcome would not be with us.

promoting its new floodlit track - which will host 49 meetings this year. Lingfield's plans are being reviewed by the company's incoming chairman Raymond Mould, who has been asked to run the slide rule over the company's planned projects. However, if he gives the green light, the company is set to file a planning application with the aim of getting work started as soon as possible. The application should be in by the first week in April. Lingfield has consulted extensively

with local people and the development means there will actually be an increase in greenbelt land. Lingfield is part of the Arena Group which is keen to improve the return the company gets on its vast land bank. The group has been trying to build a casino at Wolverhampton racecourse but its original proposals were torpedoed by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. It would also like to better utilise land at Folkestone racecourse.

# WINNING P RACING ST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

3/2006

## Improving the odds for the horses...



The runners set off for another race at the Cheltenham festival

This year's Cheltenham Festival sadly underlined the risk for horses. The unacceptable toll followed hot on the heels of the existing debate about racecourses providing suitable ground to prevent injury - and Homebred racing has been campaigning for changes to race programming to help (see p.2). The ground may, or may not, have been a factor at the festival, but race times were alarmingly fast - some 7 or 8 seconds quicker than standard which is equivalent to a furlong! Given that the ground was riding on the soft side of good on the opening days and good on the others suggests that jockeys must, in part at least, be responsible. As all drivers are reminded - speed kills and this is clearly true of jump racing. Issues, of course, surround the horses themselves and it's a growing trend that flat horses now go on to race over obstacles.

They're quicker and therefore more competitive but simply don't have the frame and bone of traditionally bred jumpers who'd be too slow on the flat. So today's jumpers are performing to higher levels whilst being less able to withstand the demands - a recipe for disaster. Other factors include race planning and it's questionable whether handicaps, which are designed to ensure every horse has an equal chance, have any place in a championship. Handicaps are inevitably more competitive and giving the less able a better chance may mean being asked to perform to a level that would otherwise be beyond them. Much research is currently being undertaken into genetics and how some horses may be predisposed to injury and in the long term this may provide some answers. But solutions are needed in the short term.

- Our suggestions include:
- **Elimination of handicaps at championship meetings**
  - **Championship meetings to be condition races only**
  - **1 fall rule for jockeys** (automatic suspension for jockeys falling or being unseated twice within 6 rides)
  - **Incentive awards for jockeys avoiding falls**
  - **Reschedule NH Flat races earlier on cards**
  - **Horses not allowed to run twice over obstacles within 4 days**
  - **Reconfigure course layouts to slow race times**
  - **Cheltenham to revert to traditional 3 day meeting**

If you have any thoughts or ideas on the issue let us know!

## Snapshot

Homebred's filly foal by Hamas just grown enough to be able to check goings on in the rest of the yard!



## Did you know?

The most successful broodmare ever was Charivari, foaled in Australia in 1929, who was daughter of Melbourne Cup Winner Comedy King. Charivari produced 16 foals all of whom were winners including 7 who won 'black type' races.

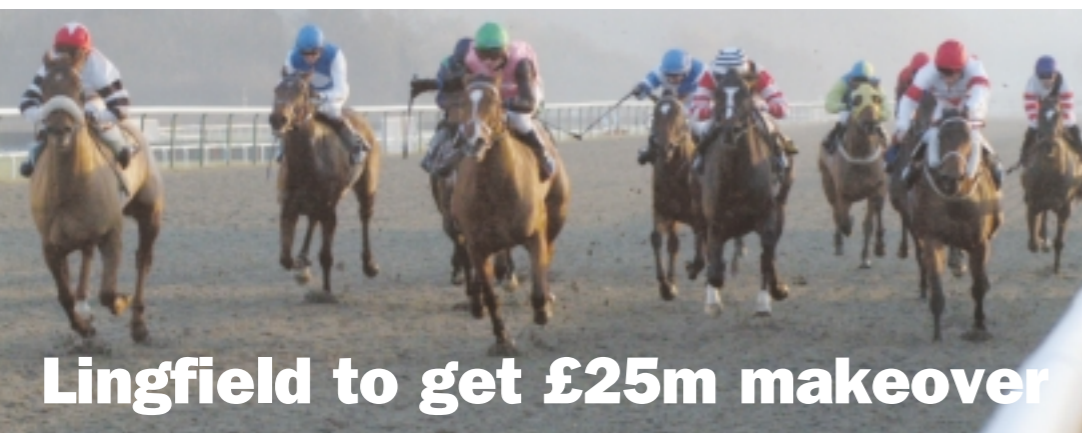
## Stable visits

The improving weather makes watching horses work on the gallops considerably more attractive! As always please call the office if you'd like to arrange a stable visit so that we can try to ensure you can see your horse in action.

Let us have your views...



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## Lingfield to get £25m makeover

Lingfield has been a happy hunting ground for Homebred and trainer Gerry Enright

Lingfield Park has plans for a major redevelopment to compete with the recently revamped Kempton Park. The proposal includes the building of a 120-bed hotel, a clubhouse for the neighbouring golf course and a leisure club whilst buildings across the road from the Surrey track will be converted to residential flats to satisfy a growing need in the fast-expanding community near the course. Kempton, owned by Racecourse Holdings Trust, has been aggressively

## OPEN DAY



Sunday 16 July

## Memorable Quotes

"A good horse trainer can get a horse to do what he wants him to do. A great trainer can get a horse to want to do it"

Monty Roberts

## Did you know?

The highest ever rated horse over hurdles was Night Nurse who achieved a Timeform rating of 182 just 2 in front of his great rival and dual champion hurdler Monksfield.



# Jockey Club stood down

More than 250 years after the Jockey Club was formed at the Star & Garter pub in London's Pall Mall to control the proliferation of unregulated racing, it has now handed authority over to the new Horseracing Regulatory Authority (HRA). This is just part of sweeping changes which are to brush aside the long established traditions of racing's administration. Although composition of the HRA is remarkably similar to the Jockey Club it replaces, the intention is that it will be more forward looking in its mission to enhance and maintain the integrity of British racing as well as safeguarding the interests of all its participants - including the four legged stars. Many of the changes are the result of persistent intervention from Europe requiring racing's regulators to be demonstrably independent. Rulings in the European Court have already resulted in plans to reorganize racing's finances through data rights being overturned leaving the industry desperately needing to secure its financial future before the Betting Levy expires. The bookies continue to profit at everyone else's

expense and since the sale of the state owned Tote to racing's administrators has also been scuppered as being deemed illegal 'state aid' they're now waiting in the wings for this last jewel to fall into their grasp. In the face of such adversity it can only be hoped that racing's wide ranging interest groups can unite to ensure that this isn't the beginning of the end - but rather the start of something much, much better.

## Welcome return



As the picture shows our unraced 3 year old Keep a Welcome has had a tough winter turned out - this was in mid March. He's since completed five weeks roadwork with Sheena Hill and is now home for the spring grass and looking in great shape. He'll have more roadwork in June and then go into training immediately after the Open Day on 16th July and should be ready to run by the autumn.

## Snapshot

Pharly Green poised to take up the lead soon after halfway on her recent Plumpton debut



## Homebred's campaign gets positive response

After our youngsters Home Rule and Sweep Home both being seriously injured in NH Flat races we have been campaigning to get these races included earlier on the card. This would help ensure that inexperienced youngsters don't have to race on rough, cut up ground. After our views were aired in the Racing Post, Ruth Quinn, the BHB's Director of Racing told Homebred: "You make a good point and one which we have certainly debated internally before now. Historically we have had little success in persuading racecourses to run their bumpers earlier on the card. Injuries, of course, could happen under any code and or, any type of ground, but I accept are probably more likely to occur in NHF races due to a number of factors such as: the ground, the distance, and the large number of unraced/inexperienced horses competing. It is a subject which is definitely worthy of renewed debate, particularly in the light of tendon injuries being such a topical issue and we will ensure that the subject is prepared for the Jump Racing Committee to discuss at their next meeting". Subsequently the Jockey Club has announced measures clamping down on overzealous commercial ambitions of racecourses by instituting penalties when their turf does not come up to scratch.

Tony Goodhew, the Jockey Club's director of racecourse services, said: "We are looking to impose financial penalties if, in the opinion of our inspectorate, abandonments of conditional fixtures or related ones around them are caused by the additional wear and tear." This is a significant move by the Jockey Club. It displays a desire to restore some control over the fixture allocation process in the face of an expanding fixture list and accelerating commercial ambitions, which are providing additional difficulties for groundstaff and growing concerns among trainers. The load of the fixture list seems to have become a hot potato since comments by Henrietta Knight, echoed by trainers Gary Moore and Nick Gifford, that racecourses "Cannot stand the load they have to bear". Goodhew added: "There are commercial reasons why additional fixtures may be attractive to a racecourse, but it must give assurances extra groundstaff have been hired and extra agronomy undertaken. We would like to have a financial penalty in place should that fixture be lost as a result of the damage of additional runners." It's been encouraging to see the NH Flat race at Sandown Park's recent televised meeting being brought forward on their card.

## Wincanton is tops with owners

Wincanton is the inaugural winner of the Racehorse Owners Gold Award for the racecourse best serving owners' interests. The criteria by which each was judged included prizemoney, sponsorship, badge allowance, owner's facilities and catering. The other courses who made it into the shortlist included Cheltenham, Exeter, Haydock, Kelso, Market Rasen, Newbury, Sandown and Stratford.



# Homebred's flying filly takes off!



This is Homebred's filly foal by Group 1 winner Hamas - Sam - putting her foot to the floor. She's a really speedy type and just loves to gallop. Sam and her dam have left home and are now at Dairy House Stud in Wiltshire where Snowy Mantle is due to be covered by the stud's Group 1 stallion. Septieme Ciel was a top class miler winning five group races in France, including the Group 1 Prix de la Foret, and is the product of two of the very best racehorses of the era - by Seattle Slew out of Maximova. Seattle Slew won 14 races and was champion 2 and 3 year old in the USA winning The Kentucky Derby, The Peakness, The Belmont Stakes and The Marlboro Cup to name but a few.

Septieme Ciel's dam is an equally successful line - Maximova being a multiple group winner including the Group 1 Prix de la Salamandre. Maximova's dam was also a winner and foaled 3 individual group winners whilst the granddam produced top flight racehorse and multiple Group 1 winner Nonoalco. Septieme Ciel's appeal as a stallion is not just his exceptional breeding but his serious racecourse ability at 2 and 3 years over distances of up to a mile. He has also proven himself at stud having already produced numerous Group 1 winners including American Gypsy, Vivid Angel and Sixieme Sens and was the leading sire of juveniles in France in 2003.

## Did you know?

The world's youngest jockey was Frank Wooton who was born in Australia in 1893 and rode his first winner in South Africa in 1903 aged 9. His family moved to England where he became the youngest ever champion jockey at the age of 15 in 1909.

## Well... stone the crows!

The Kempton Park executive are hoping for a quieter start to proceedings ahead of further all-weather fixtures at the track. Racing was delayed for 25 minutes on their opening day when stones were discovered on the newly-laid Polytrack surface. Julian Thick, managing director of Kempton Park, commented: "We are totally

satisfied the stones that were found on the racecourse were not actually part of the track construction make-up. Some of the stones found on Saturday have been sent away for analysis as efforts to discover the source of the problem continue, but the suggestion is that resident crows and seagulls may be responsible!" (or passing flying pigs perhaps).

## Name our filly

The best suggestion for a racing name for our new filly will win a free share in her first year. Ideally we like to combine an element of the sire (Hamas) and her dam (Snowy Mantle) with something relating to 'homebred'. The connotations of Hamas make it tricky... and politically dodgy suggestions such as 'Icy Blast' may not be appropriate!

## The verdict on racing's new daily

There was a time when racing supported two national dailies - The Sporting Life and The Racing Post. Traditionalists liked the broadsheet Sporting Life and the newer tabloid Post earned the nickname of 'the comic'. Now only the Post remains - but has new competition in the form of the Sportsman which sells for 40p less. Judging from the news stands it doesn't look as though the Sportsman is selling many copies. The Post pre-empted its rival's launch with a typographical make over - which has been a seriously retrograde step.



The Sportsman is aimed at a wider sports betting market and is certainly well presented. No doubt the respective websites will ultimately be the real battleground.

## Course factfile: Towcester

Towcester is a near circular track of 1 1/4 miles of which the last 6 furlongs are a stiff uphill climb making it one of the toughest tracks in the country - particularly when it's riding soft. It's said that few front runners can last out on the run in. This popular jumping only track, which offers unrivalled viewing for spectators, has recently undergone a total redevelopment and now offers free admission to all. Understandably they get big crowds.

**Location:** London 70 miles, Birmingham 50 and Northampton 9.  
**Routes:** Via M1, A5 and A43  
**Telephone:** 01327 353414

**Trains:** Euston - Northampton + by bus or taxi to course.  
**Celebrations:** The Roadhouse, 16-18 High Street, Roade (01604) 863372  
**French Partidge,** Newport Pagnell Road, Horton (01604) 870033

