

All change at the top

The latest round of musical chairs - or more correctly saddles - has delivered a major re-shuffle in the ranks of top jockeys. Jamie Spencer's unexpected retirement sees up and coming star Andrea Atzeni leave Roger Varian and take up as first jockey to Qatar Racing who have poured a fortune into the sport over the past few years.



Andrea Atzeni

The 'boys in blue' - Godolphin Racing - have also added to the turmoil by abandoning Silvestre de Souza and using a wide variety of jockeys from the top 10. Speculation remains rife as to who will

end up where by the end of the season! But maybe this is a sign of the times that the 'old guard' are now on the way out to be replaced by the younger guns.



Royal Ascot gets new Group 1 sprint

It's long been thought that a Group 1 sprint for 3-y-olds has been missing from the calendar. So in mid June 2015 the Diamond Jubilee Stakes will now be a Group 1 event open only to 3-y-olds. Race planners have acknowledged that

although Britain can claim to put on the world's top races over a mile and more, that sprints for the classic generation have been overlooked. The hope is that this will be beneficial to showcase the potential of British breeding.

The season to be hopeful...



Autumn sees the start of all the major yearling sales which culminate with foal sales and the breeze-up sales early next year. Tattersalls, based in Newmarket, is the principal auction house but Doncaster Bloodstock Sales are an important source of next season's 2-year-olds too. Tattersalls were responsible for the sale of Camelot, Authorized, Motivator and

this season's champion Australia and top lots are likely to fetch 7 figures. Although Doncaster's prizes rarely match the dizzy heights of Newmarket, many top horses have been sold here - and some at bargain prices. So Doncaster is justifiably named as a good source of relative bargains such as top sprinter Sole Power, who fetched £32,000, but has now amassed over

£1.5 million in prizemoney. This season's top 2-year-old, Tiggy Wiggy is also a Doncaster graduate. Demand is likely to be strong this autumn and prices look set to rise again. The alternative is to buy at Tattersalls foal sale in December which will offer the hope of lower prices - but a year's further wait to reach the racecourse!

Snapshot

Divine White, shown here making her Newbury debut, has discovered blackberrying! Having watched them being picked she recently spends most of her time browsing the hedgerows...



Did you know?

Trainer Roger Curtis is to leave training to open a restaurant in Tenerife - hopefully no issues with beef on the menu!

WINNING POST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

AUTUMN 2014

Celestial Bay wins ridden by Richard Hughes



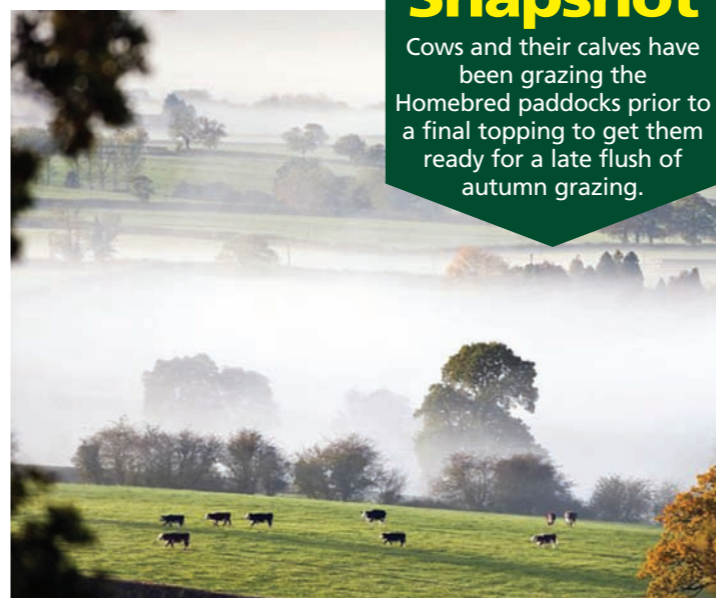
Just champion!

Celestial Bay rewarded champion jockey Richard Hughes for his helicopter dash from Salisbury to win on her at Kempton, enabling him to take over the lead in this year's jockey's championship. Stepping up in trip, Sky trailed the field until the runners straightened up for home but then swept past the field from last to first for a win described as 'a master class'

by commentator Mike Cattermole. Unsaddling, Richard said "She'll stay any trip - I was able to completely switch her off until the last couple of furlongs and she just came to life when I asked her for her effort". Sylvester called from Ireland and said "With her ability to win over such different distances, there's plenty more fun to come!"

Snapshot

Cows and their calves have been grazing the Homebred paddocks prior to a final topping to get them ready for a late flush of autumn grazing.



Moore slams fixture congestion



Ryan Moore - critical of planning

Ryan Moore has hit out at racing authorities for poor race planning: "It is pretty disappointing when a racing nation like ours continually dresses up its shop window for the weekend then proceeds to stick as many market stalls as it can in front of it on the Saturday, only to move it down an alleyway on the Sunday." "Because that is what racing at Newmarket, Ascot, York and Chester on Saturday and - with all due respect - moving on to Southwell, Stratford and Perth the following day, effectively achieves. It wouldn't happen in Australia, France or Japan, to name just three other countries."

It has been four years since Newmarket moved the Darley July Cup to a Saturday slot and, although the day's clashes have been raised during the BHA's fixture consultation, any change during an already busy stage of the season would require all racecourses to approve it. "Some heads should be knocked together, compromises made, agreements reached, maybe compensation paid, and a proper schedule would result for the benefit of all."

Clare Balding to quit Channel 4?



Clare Balding

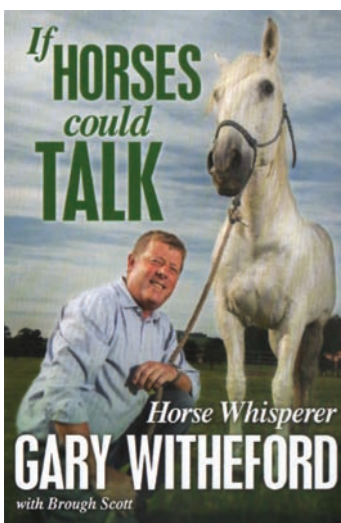
Despite racing being at the centre of Clare Balding's life, it seems she's set to quit her role as the anchor for Channel 4's racing coverage. Clare says she has been 'over committed' with other sporting tasks away from racing - such as the Commonwealth Games, golf, tennis - and more. Clare says "Racing is a very, very hard sport to keep up with if you're not doing it full time and I'd be the first to admit I suffer from that". Her departure may well trigger another review which could result in racing coverage disappearing from terrestrial screens altogether.

Did you know?

Jockey Fergal Lynch has returned to ride in Britain after a six year ban for race fixing.

Did you know?

The 39 jockeys involved in the fiasco at the start of the 2014 Grand National were cautioned by the BHA after being found 'only partially to blame'.



Straight from the horses mouth

'If Horses Could Talk' charts the life story of Gary Witherford, one of the country's leading horse whisperers. The book details trials and tribulations of his life and the discovery of his quite extraordinary empathy with horses. Witherford's training methods are based on his observation of horses in the wild. He is renowned at solving behavioural issues and equine traits, with a philosophy that there is always a possibility of change and the chance of a better life for both horse and owner. Co-writer Brough Scott said: "Anyone who has ever had anything to do with a horse will be mesmerised by Gary's story". If Horses Could Talk was published by Racing Post Books on September 26.



What are sore shins?

Sore shins in the young thoroughbred racehorse in training are so common they are often regarded as more of a nuisance, a temporary setback, rather than a genuine veterinary problem.

Signs and symptoms

Not surprisingly, given the name of the disease, the principal clinical sign is that of pain as a result of firm pressure with a finger or thumb applied to the surface of the 'shin'. In certain cases, the soreness is very focal to one area, and in other cases, is much more widespread. The shin may feel 'soft' and spongy to the touch. These horses are often not perceptibly lame when trotted in hand but often show a gait abnormality typical of bilateral forelimb lameness, i.e. lame in both legs equally. They often trot with a short choppy action and don't 'bounce' off the ground.

Why does this occur?

In simple terms, the reason for the development of sore shins is always an abrupt increase in the speed of exercise. Bone is a living, breathing, adapting organ which is exquisitely sensitive to the demands placed upon it and has in-built

mechanisms which change on an almost hourly basis to allow it to adapt to those demands. Over a period of days and weeks the old damaged bone is removed and new structural elements are added in an exquisite self-repairing cycle. So why does this go wrong?

Loading adaptation mismatch

Studies using strain gauges placed directly onto the front of the cannon bone in two-year-olds and older horses show us that the strain experienced by younger horses (strain is a measure of the degree of deformation of the bone for any one load) is as much as 40% greater than in older horses. In other words, the innate strength of a two-year-old cannon bone is simply not as great as in the older racehorse. This extra strength has to come by adapting and developing the bone in the way we have already described during the period of training and results in the markedly different shape and thickness of cannon bones of an untrained two-year-old and a trained older horse. The 'shin' of cannon bone will often literally double or triple in thickness in response

to training. The problem of the racehorse trainer is that the heart and lungs adapt to exercise far more quickly than does bone. This means that taking an unbroken yearling from the paddock and training it to run quickly results in the animal being able to attain speeds far higher than those its bones have adapted to deal with.

How do we treat them?

In order to treat sore shins successfully we need to appreciate the events that have led to their development. This is done by reducing the amount or speed of exercise, or both, for a period to allow the bone to catch up. Bone requires very few loading cycles in order to get the message that it needs to change its shape and strength.

Did you know?

Stratford has become the 20th racecourse to receive the Gold Standard for their hospitality extended to owners on racedays.

Australia's breeding centre under threat

The battle between Australia's thoroughbred breeders and the powerful coal-mining industry has taken a major swing in favour of the miners. In July, in an announcement that stunned the breeding industry, the NSW government's Department of Planning went against the IPAC recommendation and approved the Drayton South mine, slap bang in the middle of the southern end of the vast Hunter Valley. As it is, the existing massive Drayton mine is already close enough to the farms to cause considerable concern. The government's decision to approve the Drayton South mine has appalled the Hunter Valley Breeders' Association. "It also displays a total disregard for the health and safety of the families that live on our stud farms - less than 500m from this proposed open cast coal mine".

Australia's Hunter Valley is under threat



The race to the top...

The British Jockey Championship titles are awarded to the jockey or jockeys who have numerically ridden the most winners during a set period, which define the Flat, Jump and All Weather Horseracing Seasons. Whilst Ryan Moore and Richard Hughes are in a fight to the finish for this year's flat title - here are the other championships:

Jump Championship: Winners in National Hunt races from Sunday 27 April 2014 to Saturday 25 April 2015.

Flat Championship: Winners of both Flat and All Weather races taking place from Saturday 29 March 2014 to the last race at the Doncaster turf meeting on Saturday 8 November 2014.

The Hunter Valley, about two and a half hours drive north of Sydney, has been Australia's iconic thoroughbred breeding district for 150 years, but in that time it has shared the great wealth of the rich soil with the coal miners. The area has grown in prominence as an international thoroughbred nursery as some of the world's leading breeders, including Coolmore and Darley, have taken up large holdings and spent a small fortune on infrastructure and horse flesh. Under Australian rules, farmers cannot refuse miners access to their properties for testing. What happens after that rarely falls in favour of the farmers. If the breeders lose this battle, there is no doubt that the existence of Coolmore and others in that part of the Hunter Valley are under threat and alternatives will need to be found.



Ayr Racecourse - Scotland's finest!

Scotland's 'No' vote welcomed by racing

Scotland's decision to reject independence by a margin of 55 per cent to 45 per cent has been welcomed by the racing industry in Britain. A number of figures within racing in Scotland had stated their uncertainty about what would happen to the industry in the country if a 'Yes' vote was successful with many worried that racecourses would have to close due to a funding shortfall.



Hugo Palmer - relieved at outcome

"Phew," wrote Harriet Graham, a trainer and clerk of the course at Musselburgh and Perth racecourses, on Twitter. Her feelings were

echoed by others in racing. Trainer Hugo Palmer, who is based in Newmarket but born and brought up in Scotland, said: "Being Scottish born and raised I'm incredibly proud and relieved to wake up to the news that I'm still British." Bruce Jeffrey, agent for Ryan Mania, the Scottish born Grand National winning jockey, wrote on Twitter: "Looking like 28 from the 32 regions have voted for better together. That surely tells the story." Bookmakers had predicted a 'No' victory in the run up to the referendum with the pro-union campaign 1-6 for victory on the eve of the vote.

The result of the vote made one London punter particularly happy as they collected £1,093,333.33 from a £900,000 bet placed with William Hill on a 'No' vote. In the five regions where Scotland has racecourses, all voted 'No'.

The ideal Xmas present

A share in a Homebred horse makes a great present which can be shared for a year - and provides a framed photo to be given on the day. www.homebredracing.co.uk

Did you know?

Apprentice Jack Garrity (who rode Make A Fuss) has landed the job with top trainer Richard Fahey.